

Future of Cities/Cities of the Future: Unlocking Inclusive Innovation in Cities

Why do we engage in cities?

The UNDP innovation work shows that the most interesting and novel insights and experiences in policy work come at the intersection of industries, sectors and perspectives. Similarly, with the emerging work on cities, we are seeing a set of experiments that sit at the cross section of new approaches and technologies. These could either end up reinforcing existing inequalities and growth patterns or be leveraged for more inclusive and participatory development. Cities are on the forefront of how this question pans out.

[UNDP's NextGenGov agenda](#) also recognizes cities as one of the spaces for experimentation, given their emergent leadership in international governance, like climate change, and new civic accords. It is at the city level that we find a diverse and dynamic set of actors, connecting, engaging and networking, and cutting across silos to improve life in cities, across three domains: public space, resident life and public administration. We also identify innovation in governance of finance hitting the ground running in cities — from reforming the municipal bond markets and democratizing access to finance to mapping economy in real time.

This is the reason we are organizing the Venice Forum on the Future of Cities/Cities of the Future; for municipal partners, external experts, and UNDP colleagues working at the intersection of innovation and cities and committed to making cities more livable. The Venice Forum will be co-hosted by UNDP and the Slovak Ministry of Finance, and is funded by the Transformative Governance and Finance Facility II and the UNDP Innovation Facility. The Forum will be held in conjunction with The European Cultural Centre (that hosts the Exhibition “Time-Space-Existence”) that will host its first conference under the title of “Shaping the City: A Forum for Sustainable Cities and Communities” (<https://www.shapingthecity.org/>) that will gather researchers from 57 universities working on the cutting edge of urban development.

Background

By 2050, the UN foresees that 66% of world’s population will be living in metropolitan cities and, thereby, increasing pressure on municipal governments to provide reliable access to public services. With this expanding population, there is a global shift to cities as primary agents of innovation and intervention and a general consensus that, to accommodate these new patterns, they be resilient, economically vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, accessible, well-governed, and well-planned. To many cities, these demands elicit uncomfortable growing pains that force existing structures, policies, and regulations to stretch or break. To ease growing tensions and prevent breakage, there is increasing interest amongst cities to explore a new generation of “smart,” responsive, and inclusive approaches that address common challenges faced from these demands, responding to the needs of and integrating all segments of the population.

UNDP has been supporting local government across the region to provide mechanisms for [accountable governance](#), [environmental](#) sustainability, women’s participation, health and [livelihood development](#). UNDP’s venture into the Future of Cities is in support to the ongoing efforts of the UNDP to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda and advance SDG’s by localizing them within the complex organism of cities, as well as leverage UNDP’s existing resources on smart cities.

However, we are aware that the interconnected nature of urban development issues requires going beyond sector-specific or technical solutions; it must also address the way in which we manage affairs and support peoples’

wellbeing and development in the urban setting from an intersectional perspective. As endeavors toward a new social contract for global citizens continues, emphasis on building trust should focus less on lack of trust in government, and more about the need for government and institutions to trust its residents. The most interesting and novel insights and experiments in policy work in the past 15 years has come at the intersection of industries, sectors, people and perspectives where decentralization of economic and political power is fundamental to rapid adoption and integration of the global goals.

Where do we engage in cities?

We see three key domains where life in cities takes place: **Public space** - physical space where business, social, political, economic and other activity takes place; **Resident life** - encompassing all citizens, residents, visitors and others, and their life in public space and in relation to the governments, and; **Public administration** - city administration in charge of providing key services, managing public funding and overall creating the basis for sustainable and inclusive development. To date, most work has either taken place with high focus on one area (public finance management) or at most two (citizen participation in public budgeting). The emerging innovation in cities are taking place across all three- in other words leveraging all three domains for the highest impact.

At the same time, new experiments in the cities that are built on a foundation of 2 or more new approaches (more on this below) are leveraging the power of all 3 domains. Identifying and seeding future work across these intersections is the defining feature of UNDP's work on future of cities. This would demand in particular investigating how new technology, new data, social innovation approaches and innovative financing, combined, could bring about breakthroughs that improve life in cities by cutting through existing siloes.

Objectives

The Venice Forum has the following objectives:

- Open the space for substantive discussion and exchange of experiences among actors coming from different backgrounds and contexts, who are working across the three domains: public space, resident life and public participation
- Map out the leading thinking and experimentation on how to address the growing pressure on cities, with specific focus on leveraging new data, citizen engagement, horizon technologies, and innovative financing methods in the context of cities
- Create an informal network of top-notch practitioners, working across different sectors and applying innovative methods in addressing systemic challenges in the city level
- Strengthen existing and develop new partnerships with leading organizations and 'development mutants', to collaborate on experimentation within the framework of #NextGenGov and UNDP's evolving work on future of cities from an innovation angle
- Stress-test and validate UNDP's thinking and approach around Future of Cities, both within the event and at the Shaping the City conference, feeding into the design of the Istanbul Innovation Days workstream on cities
- Develop action plans, including partnerships, for moving participating cities' initiatives forward

The Forum is an external facing event, a first step in what is intended to be a scoping out of emerging trends. It is open to city administrations, private sector, urban activists, academia, UNDP offices and other stakeholders - including confirmations from Dark Matters Lab, Climate KIC, DemoSoc, HIVOS, Uber Movement, and the Creative Cooperative/European Street Design Challenge. Follow-up touch points will include Istanbul Innovation Days and ongoing engagement of the innovation team and other relevant experts with Country Offices and municipal partners in designing and testing cutting-edge approaches with integrated horizon technologies.

Agenda: Venice Forum on the Future of Cities

October 2018 | Venice | Italy

DAY 1: October 12, 2018

8:30 -9:00	Check-In // Coffee + Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Opening Remarks UNDP + Ministry of Finance Slovakia
9:15 - 10:15	Future of cities: Shifting paradigms and new approaches Ray Boyle - UNDP
10:15 – 11:00	State of Play in Cities: Moonshots and operationalizing dreams Milica Begovic - UNDP Indy Johar - Dark Matter Labs Giulio Quaggiotto - Climate KIC Kiran Jain - Neighborly
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:15	x-Section: New Infrastructure Janine Huizenga - Creative Cooperative Santosh Rao - Uber Movement Phil Tinn - MIT Zoltan Bartalis - European Space Agency
12:15 – 13:00	Reverse Engineering for your City // Session #1
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch Break – Open Air-Matchmaking
14:30 - 14:45	Report Back
14:45 – 15:45	x-Sections: Municipal Back Office & Resident Participation Giuseppe Pocara - Author, Disco Sour // Bruegel Matt Stempeck - Bad Idea Factory Julia Hoffman - HIVOS Anthony Zacharzewski - The Democratic Society
15:45 – 16:30	Reverse Engineering for your City // Session #2
16:30 - 17:00	Big Brain: Open discussion on blind spots and opportunities

17:00 - 17:30 From the Field - Closing of Day 1

DAY 2: October 13, 2018

9:00 – 9:30 Check-in // Coffee + Breakfast

9:30 – 10:15 City Perspectives - Key Takeaways from Day 1
City representatives share their work and what's next

10:15 – 11:15 x-Section – Digital Economy
Juan DiazB - World Building Institute
De Kai - University of Science & Technology, Hong Kong
Lejla Sadiku – UNDP

11:15 – 12:00 Reverse Engineering for your City // Session #3

12:00 - 13:00 **Working Lunch**

13:00 - 14:30 HotSpots & BlindSpots // Session #4 – continuation from working lunch
Identification of blind spots, opportunities, and partnerships for the different strands of work.
Work-planning on the global project on SDG Hotspots supported by the Innovation Facility.

14:30 – 15:00 Closing by UNDP & Ministry of Finance Slovakia
15:00 Departure to Shaping the City Conference