Partnerships and Innovation

for Accelerating the Implementation of the SDGs in Cities

Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation

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Contents

Urban Partnerships for the SDGs

Globally, progress on the SDGs has stalled, and even reversed due to the impacts of COVID-19. At the current pace, few, if any, countries will meet the SDG goals by the 2030 deadline. To accelerate global investments and policy reform impacts, leaders must enable cities and subnational governments to play a much larger role in goals from health to housing. Public, civic and private urban leaders, with the right resources, are able to respond quickly to the immediate needs of inhabitants. Cities are the perfect laboratories for adapting best practices and testing innovative ideas, iterating and scaling up successful programs, and sharing results among city networks. Global leaders, focused on the transformation of deeply entrenched 80-year-old post-WWII financial systems, are essentially trying to turn an aircraft carrier on a dime to address economic, social and climate crisis with new investment models. Meanwhile, cities, home to the majority of the world's population, are expected to grow by about 2.3 billion people by mid-century.

The responsibility of cities leaders is to figure out ways to be responsive to both local social and economic crisis without leaving people behind. Cities are responsible for 80% of global GDP and over 70% of global CO_2 emissions yet are also concentrating poverty and inequality: one in three urban residents lack access to basic services such as adequate housing, transport, water, sanitation, and electricity, and about 86% of city dwellers are exposed to unsafe air pollution. It follows that managing this rapid urbanization will be key to progress to meet the SDGs. It's also one of the most complex challenges facing humankind, asking us to build dynamic partnerships and collaborate at scales unimaginable to previous generations, even ones who went through world wars. As urban populations continue to rapidly increase in population and resource consumption, cities are uniquely able to drive a just transition to a more equal, inclusive, low carbon, resilient economy in balance with nature.

The case studies in this report demonstrate how leaders are responding quickly to the impacts of urbanization, concentrated poverty, food insecurity, inequality, climate change and disaster risk with new and innovative partnerships and policies. As the High-Level Political Forum community looks at Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities and Goal 17 on partnerships for the Goals this year, this report, with case studies from both the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation and the WRI Ross Center Prize for Cities, reflects the true essence of that combination. With over 10,000 cities and millions of towns along the urban-rural spectrum, the only way to flatten the SDG learning curve is to strengthen the networks on which cities depend. The faster people learn about potential solutions, the faster they can implement them in their own communities and build "The Future We Want".

Innovative City Partnerships

The following cities from the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Guangzhou Award) and the WRI Ross Center (Prize for Cites) are spotlighted for the transformative impact of their initiatives and the power of their example to build partnerships and cooperation that can lead other cities towards a more sustainable future:

3 QUITO, ECUADOR
Eco-efficiency Ordinance for the Metropolitan District of Quito (Guangzhou Award)

4 SAINT LOUIS, SENEGAL
Regional Mangrove Restoration Program (Guangzhou Award)

5 ROSARIO, ARGENTINA
Sustainable Food Production for a Resilient Rosario (Prize for Cities)

6 MILAN, ITALY
Milan Food Policy
(Guangzhou Award)

1 ODISHA, INDIA
The Urban Wage Employment Initiative
(Prize for Cities, Guangzhou Award)

8 AHMEDABAD, INDIA
Women's Action Towards Climate Resilience
for the Urban Poor (Prize for Cities)

7 DAR ES SALAAM,
TANZANIA
School Area Road
Safety Assessments and
Improvements (SARSAI)
(Prize for Cities)

2 CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis
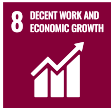Program (Guangzhou Award)

The Future of Innovation is in Cities

Innovative initiatives that built partnerships and fostered cooperation

01 ODISHA, INDIA
The Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI)

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Odisha exemplifies how cities can promote sustainable business practices, foster entrepreneurship, and ensure decent work even in crisis by partnering with local community groups that can identify community project needs and quickly provide work for returning migrants. Programs like the Urban Wage Employment Initiative led to decent work with economic growth goals that are ecologically sound and socially inclusive (SDGs 8 and 9).*

The COVID-19-induced national lockdown in India highlighted the economic and housing vulnerabilities of the urban labor force, composed largely of migrants from lagging parts of the country working in the informal sector in primary cities such as Mumbai and New Delhi. The lockdown led to a mass migration of that labour force back to rural towns and provincial cities with historically weaker economies. Former residents of Odisha, a lagging state in India, were among those reverse migrants looking for refuge and a livelihood in the state they once left for better fortunes elsewhere.

In response to the unexpected reverse migration triggered by the pandemic, the state government launched the Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI). UWEI sought to pro-actively blunt the impact of pandemic-induced unemployment by guaranteeing large sectors of the urban workforce a minimum number of workdays annually at a specified daily wage. To this end, the state of Odisha planned a series of small but much-needed public works improvements and created a salary pool from resources drawn from ongoing national and state welfare schemes. In addition to mitigating the economic stress due to the pandemic of the impoverished urban labor force, the state government has adopted the initiative as a long-term measure for poverty alleviation and an implementation of labor-intensive public works designed to improve the quality of life and economic activity of the city-region.

02

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Program (WISP)

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Cape Town's WISP program demonstrates how cities can address the production patterns that are at the root causes of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss by supporting strategies that drive circular local economies, reduce the carbon footprint of urban systems and support decent work in green industries (SDGs 12 and 13).*

Cape Town in South Africa (pop. 4.7 million), which has formal and informal industrial economies, is embracing an economic development model called the Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Program (WISP). WISP is a platform that helps with transforming the largely consumptive and wasteful linear economy into a more circular economy model with the motto "One company's waste is another company's resource." The initiative is a free facilitation service that seeks to create mutually beneficial links or synergies between member companies, no matter the size, output, or formality status. It connects companies so that they can identify and realize the business opportunities enabled by utilizing unused or residual resources from other members. The resource exchanges divert waste from landfills, generate financial benefits for members, reduce the carbon intensity of production processes and create jobs, ultimately making the manufacturing sector more competitive and resilient to climate change.

WISP is the result of a collaboration between public, private and academic partners. The initiative is funded by the City of Cape Town as part of its sustainability initiatives, and is delivered by Green Cape, a not-for-profit company, in collaboration with the University of Cape Town. Since 2013, when it began with a landfill diversion program, university researchers have conducted material flow analyses (MFA) in industrial areas to determine new circular resource opportunities. Cape Town modeled its approach on the UK's National Industrial Symbiosis Program, which was visited. Nonetheless, "the skeleton is based on the UK model, but context always matters," explained WISP program manager Emmanuele Kasese.

WISP demonstrates the continuing need to accelerate city-to-city knowledge sharing and how a city can successfully adapt a concept like the circular economy to local conditions, which in turn, provides a case study for other similar cities to emulate. In Cape Town,

Green Cape adapted a formal economic model from the UK into one that leverages a network of formal and informal members. This iterative innovation can now be used and adapted by other cities with sizeable informal economies. The program fosters resource efficiency and reduces pressure on limited landfill capacity, but also educates local businesses on the value of their "waste" and encourages them to think differently about the processes and products they create.

03 QUITO, ECUADOR
Eco-efficiency Ordinance for the Metropolitan District of Quito

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Quito demonstrated how cities can develop policies that work with, not against, the private sector, to incentivize energy and water security and affordability while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and creating healthier places to live in (SDGs 6 and 7).*

In 2016, Ecuador's capital city, Quito (pop. 1,847,000), passed the Eco-efficiency Ordinance for the Metropolitan District of Quito, which incentivizes the construction of high density "green" buildings (energy and water efficient, sustainably sourced construction materials) on key transportation nodes and with provisions for affordable housing. As important, the Ordinance deploys the concept of land value capture to ensure that the city retains its share of the land value increments generated by greater density and land use allowances in designated zones. The Ordinance not only helps to create the conditions for sustained demand for its new public transit system (Metro) and curbs on urban expansion, but it also bolsters community and developer support for green building construction and a more equitable distribution of the financial benefits associated with denser development. To take effect, the Ordinance also has relied on partnerships with community leaders and universities to determine the parameters of local area plans around transit stations, but also ways to calculate and recover the uplift

generated by development in those areas. The city calculates that it has generated approximately $10.7 million in revenue from the sale of development rights.

The Eco-efficiency tool for the Metropolitan District of Quito is innovative because of its purposeful combination of environmental, transportation, housing, and public financing objectives and planning innovations. The use of land value capture also signals the city's determination to ensure that the benefits and burdens of urban development (densification) are equitably shared by the public and private sectors. The initiative is a strong example of ecologically and financially sustainable urban development practices, a core objective of SDG 1 (no poverty), while the successful implementation of the Ordinance will deliver outcomes consistent with SDG 3 (good health and well-being for people), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate action).

04 SAINT LOUIS, SENEGAL
Regional Mangrove Restoration Program

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Saint Louis exemplifies how cities can find new ways to work with adjacent municipalities to restore regional ecosystems and reduce the economic need to over-deplete those resources. As a result, cities investing in nature-positive infrastructure and industrial processes support and preserve life on land and below water (SDGs 13 and 14) and help countries meet the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.*

The Departmental Council of Saint Louis in Senegal developed an innovative approach to environmental governance that integrated the restoration of mangrove ecosystems across three municipalities with strategies for addressing urgent urban climate challenges and enhancing livelihoods through the promotion of resilient and structured economic activities around mangroves. The objective of the initiative was to restore the mangroves of Saint-Louis of Senegal (1,000 hectares) that are threatened with extinction due to climatic and anthropogenic pressures, with a rate of loss of 9 hectares per year, mostly due to the deforestation for firewood and farming activities. Mangrove restoration activities are critically important to global climate action, as they sequester carbon at a rate of two to four times greater than mature tropical forests and store three to five times more carbon per equivalent area than tropical forests like the Amazon rainforest.

Located near the mouth of the Senegal River and 320 kilometers north of the Senegalese capital Dakar, Saint Louis has a population of over 312,369 and is in the Sahelian Region of West Africa, where poverty is most widespread and where resilience is weakened by environmental, political, demographic, economic and security challenges. The mangroves span across three municipalities in Saint Louis, yet prior to the initiation of the initiative, local elected officials had not sufficiently integrated mangrove protection into their local sustainable development policies. The lack of coordination across municipalities undermined any single effort to deal with and conserve the mangrove ecosystem, thus prompting a call for a new approach to manage an ecological feature that did not obey administrative boundaries.

Over the nine years of the intervention, more than 50 hectares of mangroves have been regenerated, which is equivalent to a sequestration rate of 350 tons of carbon annually. The mangrove growth rate has risen to 7 percent per year and the clearance rate is down by 25 percent. Nearly 80,000 people from over 50 organizations were involved in the initiative, representing local authorities, academics and environmental experts who were engaged to support the local private sector, civil society organizations and community organizations. Women, mostly from poorer households living in proximity to the mangroves, have greatly benefited from the regenerated mangroves as a source of shrimps that fetch a good price on the local market.

Alternative fuel sources in the form of biogas were offered to households previously dependent on mangroves for firewood and an effective community awareness program was launched, including inter-generational dialogues in schools that inviting elders to tell historical stories about the times when mangroves were abundant to encourage young people to actively contribute to its regeneration.

05 ROSARIO, ARGENTINA
Sustainable Food Production for a Resilient Rosario

5 GENDER EQUALITY

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Working with non-governmental organizations, Rosario demonstrates how cities can find new ways to address hunger, improve food supply chains and reduce carbon emissions (SDGs 5 and 12).*

Initially launched in the wake of the Argentinian economic crisis of 2001. Rosario's flagship urban and peri-urban agriculture program has evolved to become a cornerstone of the city's response to increased flooding and heat events. The program, designed to help improve food security and nutrition for low-income residents by strategically repurposing public land and private peri-urban spaces, now helps improve resilience to extreme events and reduce carbon emissions via more compact food supply chains.

The collapse of the Argentinian economy in 2001 sent Rosario into a rapid downward spiral. With more than half of Rosario's population below the poverty line and a quarter of its workforce unemployed, desperation even led some to start looting supermarkets. To respond to this crisis, the municipality launched an urban agriculture program in partnership with a local NGO, the Center for the Study of Agroecological Production (CEPAR), and the national Pro Huerta program for family gardens.

Demand for fresh produce was so high that the city quickly opened a new market to enable growers to sell fruits and vegetables directly and provide new sources of affordable and healthy local produce to residents.

As the economic crisis stabilized, the municipality planned for the future of the urban agriculture program. It began working with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat)'s Urban Management Program and the National University of Rosario on an inventory of vacant and underutilized urban land that could be repurposed into agricultural plots. The inventory found that 36 percent of the municipal area was suitable for agriculture conversion. In 2004, the mayor approved a municipal ordinance allowing the city to grant temporary tenure of vacant land to the urban poor for urban agriculture.

While the program helped reduce food insecurity and alleviate poverty, extreme flooding brought a new crisis threatening lives and livelihoods in Rosario. In 2007, record-shattering rainfall forced the city to evacuate over 3,000 people. Recognizing that the flooding would only worsen with climate change, the Department of Water Management created a flood risk map to identify problematic zones of the city and inform development priorities in the Urban Plan of Rosario 2007-2017. The new plan included Parques Huerta (Vegetable Garden Parks), an initiative aimed at converting underutilized land to green spaces to help absorb excess water and prevent floods.

Recognizing that the city's resilience depends not just on converting land in inner neighborhoods but also on protecting its rapidly urbanizing surroundings, the municipality passed an ordinance in 2011 designating 800 hectares of peri-urban land to be used for agroecological production as well. Formally adopted into the city's strategic plan and launched in 2015, the Green Belt Project helps contain urban sprawl while restoring land in an ecologically sensitive manner. It also increases Rosario's resilience to floods and expands the total land available for food production.

Rosario has continued its commitment to urban agriculture and climate resilience, opening five additional Vegetable Garden Parks. The city's holistic approach has left enduring positive marks on people's livelihoods and well-being, while reducing food import dependency and food insecurity. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with the delivery of vegetables, for example, are estimated to be reduced by as much as 95 percent. Urban agriculture is still a growing movement across the city. Today, more than 2,400 families have their own gardens and practice environmentally sustainable agriculture.

06 MILAN, ITALY
Milan Food Policy

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Milan highlights how exploring and adopting new models of governance allows cities to create new cross-sector approaches at multiple scales (local, national, global). In Milan, these new models led to better urban health, reduced waste, and stronger linkages between urban and rural communities to improve regional food production practices (SDGs 5,12).*

Located in northern Italy, Milan is the second most populous city in the country after Rome, with a population of approximately 1,300,000 and a density of 7,533 people per square kilometers. The city's primary sources of prosperity include trade, tourism and the creative industry.

In the process of setting the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" for the Universal Exhibition, hosted in the city in 2015, the municipality of Milan created the Milan Food Policy program. The Milan Food Policy is an innovative planning strategy that integrates and implements a "Food Cycle System" throughout the city. A key innovation in the policy is the new model of governance combining the global scale with the urban level that is based on an integrated cross-sectoral approach among public agencies, social organizations, research bodies and the private sector.

Since 2016, the Milan Food Policy has been working to put into effect five priorities: i) access to healthy food for all; ii) sustainable food production; iii) food education and awareness; iv) food losses and waste management; and v) scientific research promotion. To date, the policy has generated more than 40 initiatives related to the reuse and recycling of waste food and the reduction of miles needed to procure food for the city. New procurement practices focusing on sustainably produced food for all the city's publicly-funded meals (in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc.) are transforming the farming practices around Milan and creating a new dynamic in urban-rural linkages. The policy initiative additionally cooperates with other international organizations, including EUROCITIES Working Group Food, the EU Platform for Food Losses and Food Waste and the C40 Food System Network. More importantly, the project facilitates the exchange of knowledge throughout the community, local organizations, and international partners through the Milan Pact, an award system focusing on city-to-city exchanges and cooperation on sustainable food policies and practices.

07

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA
School Area Road Safety Assessments and Improvements (SARSAI)

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Focused on creating safer journeys to school for children, Amend, in Tanzania, is a small non-profit that uses School Area Road Safety Assessments and Improvements (SARSAI), an evidence-driven package of interventions that includes infrastructure improvements, behavioral education and advocacy to decrease child road traffic injuries and deaths in Dar es Salaam and other fast-growing sub-Saharan African cities (SDGs 4 and 9).*

Dar es Salaam is one of Africa's fastest-growing cities, on track for 20 million residents by 2050. However, it and other cities across the region are struggling to keep up with the safety and road infrastructure demands of rapidly growing and motorizing populations. Children who walk to school must navigate a chaotic and dangerous mix of fast-moving vehicles without safe pedestrian routes. Many are killed in road crashes, while injuries force others to miss school or endure life-long disabilities.

When Amend started in 2005, there was little attention paid to child road traffic injuries in the region and no reliable data on the magnitude of the problem. Amend's initial interventions, focused solely on education and behavior change, proved insufficient in reducing roadside crashes. In 2012, Amend launched SARSAI at two schools in Dar

es Salaam, with support from the FIA Foundation, an international charity. The team first identified the most at-risk schools using public data and community reporting. Then the Amend team, which included community relations experts and road engineers, developed tailored infrastructure modifications designed to reduce risk hot spots for each school area, including new footpaths, zebra crossings, bollards, speed humps, and routes that travel along less busy roads. At the same time, they taught the children at each school crucial safety practices.

Between 2013 and 2014, Amend expanded SARSAI to more schools in Dar es Salaam and built key relationships with local authorities, who approved the technical plans in each case. Community members – including teachers, parents and municipal engineers – also became active participants in SARSAI, from the benchmarking of injury rates to follow-up monitoring and educational courses.

Amend's partnership in 2015 with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) helped cement the credibility of the approach. With the CDC's support, Amend carried out a population-based, randomized control study of 18 schools in Dar es Salaam, based on a sample size of more than 13,000 school-aged children. The study, published in the British Medical Journal in 2018, showed a 26% reduction in road traffic injuries at schools that received the intervention. After one year of study, SARSAI interventions were brought to the control group as well.

In 2017, following a $1.7 million grant from the FIA Foundation and the Puma Energy Foundation, Amend began expanding SARSAI to other cities. With offices in Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania, it has now brought the program to more than 50 high-risk school areas in nine sub-Saharan African countries. In Dar es Salaam, Amend continues regular incident monitoring and retrofitting of high-risk schools while building capacity among public officials to embed children's safety measures into roads as they are built.

08 AHMEDABAD, INDIA
Women's Action Towards Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor

SDG Urban Partnerships: *Women's Action Towards Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor is an example of an innovative approach to building partnerships between community groups in slum communities and municipal governments to prioritize social inclusion in efforts to reduce poverty, increase well-being and gender equity and promote local leadership that can develop affordable solutions that address climate change (SDGs 1, 5 and 13).*

The Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) is empowering women in slum communities to be climate champions for themselves and their cities. Slum dwellers the world over face increased exposure to the effects of climate change, but women in particular are often at the front lines, given their high likelihood to work from home. MHT formed a partnership with the local municipal government in Ahmedabad and technical experts to develop low-cost, effective solutions. Building on local women's deep knowledge, this partnership trains champions to implement pro-poor solutions.

In 2010, a deadly heat wave claimed more than 1,300 lives in one month, serving as a wake-up call for the city. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) prepared its first Heat Action Plan in 2013, building on a track record of successive urban development and slum upgrading programs. MHT had worked alongside the AMC for more than 20 years on slum housing and water and sanitation infrastructure to bring the benefits of urban development within reach of more residents.

In 2014, MHT decided to more consciously incorporate a climate resilience perspective into its work. MHT quickly understood that many climate-resilient solutions already existed. However, there was a gap between the solutions on offer and the specific needs of slum communities. MHT began forming partnerships with technical institutions and innovators, leveraging its networks and reputation among slum communities and AMC officials, to improve understanding of the challenges faced by residents.

In 2015, MHT began piloting its partnership model, with designated local women leaders called Vikasinis taking the lead in organizing focus group discussions with residents. Together the Vikasinis and residents identified extreme heat, flooding, water scarcity and vector-borne diseases to be the major climate risks affecting their communities. MHT then held a variety of stakeholder and coalition building workshops with technical experts and local leaders to develop actionable solutions.

After training women for almost a year, MHT started a climate surveillance system, setting up monitoring stations and training children to collect data on larvae breeding spots. The drive was hugely successful. Using evidence from these drives, communities sent requests to the AMC to clear drains, pave streets, connect water and sewer lines, and install streetlights. Communities also acted on their own, organizing waste collection campaigns and planting trees.

Meanwhile, MHT encouraged families to make climate-resilient investments by demonstrating cool roofing solutions, such as white paints and thermocol roofs, as well as sprinkler taps, rainwater harvesting systems and mosquito nets. The cool roofing solutions garnered particular interest from the AMC Health Department, and MHT was brought in to share knowledge for the development of the city's 2017 Heat Action Plan. Due to MHT's longstanding collaboration with the AMC, they have also been able to put community climate resilience on the broader municipal agenda. MHT and the Vikasinis contributed directly to the 2017 Ahmedabad Heat Action and the city's 2019 Monsoon Action Plans. The model has scaled beyond Ahmedabad as well, reaching over 125,000 people from 107 slums across six other South Asian cities, including Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Ranchi, Dhaka, and Kathmandu.

Conclusion

Cities are critical to attaining the SDGs due to their population concentration, economic significance, and existing infrastructure. By implementing sustainable practices, promoting social inclusion, and fostering collaboration, cities can contribute significantly to achieving SDG 11 and creating a sustainable and inclusive future.

City-scaled partnerships play a crucial role in attaining the SDGs. Goals to eradicate poverty, promote equality, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all can only be accomplished if we transform our cities, together. The case studies in this report demonstrate that urban stakeholders can catalyze urgently needed innovation and demonstrate scalability when they:

- **Build local coalitions that can mobilize new resources**: Reaching the 2030 SDGs requires significantly more financial resources than currently available. While central governments are responsible for setting the enabling legislative frameworks for public-private-community partnerships, building stronger coalitions between public, private and civic partners at the city level can leverage financial resources and expertise to invest in initiatives that demonstrate faster results.

- **Use these opportunities to strengthen stakeholders' organizational capacity**: In addition to pooling resources, stakeholders that work together broaden their experience and skills, increasing their organizational capacity to be innovative. Capacity-building activities can include training programs, knowledge-sharing workshops, and technical assistance, which empower stakeholders to take effective action toward achieving the SDGs in their respective communities and areas.

- **Promote more inclusive and multi-stakeholder engagement**: The SDGs recognize that achieving sustainable development requires the active involvement of all sectors of society. Partnerships can be platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement and participatory decision-making and accountability. Cities are at the core of such inclusive approaches when they work to find common ground and co-ownership of solutions and ensure that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and considered.

- **Take calculated risks to test new solutions**: Local leaders who seek out new forms of collaboration and opportunities to explore new approaches, technologies, and business models to tackle complex challenges are critical for reaching the SDGs. Successful innovations at the local level can move quickly, providing evidence for scalable solutions that can be replicated in different geographies, socio-political contexts and economic conditions.

- **Commit to sharing practical knowledge and expertise**: Partnerships and communities of practice facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices. Celebrating accomplishments like the case studies in this report provides crucial leadership by urban organizations that bring unique perspectives, experiences, and skills to the table. This sharing of knowledge helps accelerate progress toward the SDGs by avoiding duplication, identifying successful approaches, and scaling up impactful interventions.

In conclusion, strengthening and promoting urban partnerships and collaboration are essential for achieving the SDGs. The challenges cities face are too great to solve alone. When cities encourage new collaborations, listen to diverse stakeholders, re-combine and seek out new resources, and foster knowledge and innovation, they can bring about great changes that create a more sustainable and equitable global community. These efforts ultimately bring the global community closer to achieving the SDGs.