6th Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation

Report of the Technical Committee

AWARD
Guangzhou

UCLG
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GUANGZHOU

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Guangzhou, 10-14 September 2023

I. Introduction

The Technical Committee (TC) met in Guangzhou 10 to 14 September 2023 to select and shortlist outstanding initiatives with a view to recognize and reward the local implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). It took into consideration the goal of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Guangzhou Award) to:

* Highlight exemplary models of innovative policies and practices in implementing the urban dimension of the SDGs and the NUA by cities and regions[1];

* Motivate cities and regions to further invest in and upscale innovation and to learn from each other;

* Improve urban governance through demonstrating how innovation can provide a better urban future for all.

The Technical Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the City of Guangzhou, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis) for their vision in establishing the Guangzhou Award.

The Technical Committee commends the Secretariat for the Guangzhou Award in the way it handled the call for submissions as well as the transparency in its guidelines and processes. It further commends the City of Guangzhou for its intention to invite all 15 shortlisted cities and regions to present their initiatives at the forthcoming International Seminar on Learning from Urban Innovation and to the Global Mayors' Forum. It also

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1: "Cities and regions" refer to all tiers of subnational government
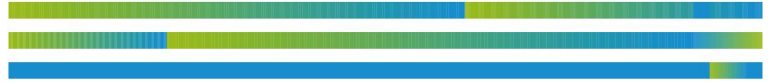
wishes to express its appreciation to the Guangzhou Library for providing the Technical Committee with the facilities to conduct a successful meeting.

332 initiatives from 226 cities and regions representing 61 countries and territories have registered for the 2023 Guangzhou Award, among which 274 initiatives from 193 cities and regions from 54 countries and territories made successful submissions. The TC would like to recognize all submissions for their commendable efforts in making their respective communities more sustainable. Of these 274 initiatives, 45 were identified as exemplary initiatives. Of these 45 initiatives, the TC further shortlisted 15 outstanding initiatives. The key highlights and TC's assessment for the 15 initiatives are presented in Annex.

II. Evaluation Process

The TC assessed each submission using the main criteria established by the Guangzhou Award namely:

- Innovative: the extent to which the use of knowledge and information has been generated, configured and applied in developing new policies, practices and/or business models to address major urban issues and challenges;

- Effectiveness: the extent to which the initiative has achieved or is well on its way to achieve its stated objective(s) and effective social impact;

- Context: innovation was also considered within the social, economic, environmental, and political context of each initiative;

- Replicability/scalability: the positive demonstration effect and scalability of the initiative in inspiring others to adopt new ideas, policies or practices, including replication in other locations of the city, region or country for greater impact and sustainability;

- Significance: strategic importance and cross-cutting nature of the initiative; the importance of the initiative in addressing the problems of public concern.
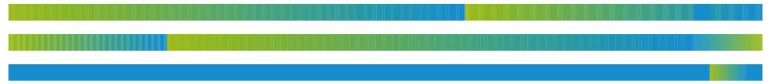
III. Selection Procedure for the Shortlisted Initiatives

The TC adopted a three-step assessment process.

In its first step, the TC reviewed the initiatives of each geographic region by the respective regional experts. This resulted in a first list of 70 initiatives.

In its second step, the members of the TC re-organized into two groups with the purpose of identifying 45 exemplary initiatives. Each group came up with its own list. The two lists were compared in plenary. Those common to both lists were unanimously admitted to exemplary initiatives list. Those remaining were discussed in plenary until consensus on the final list of 45 exemplary initiatives was reached.

In its third step, the members of the TC were re-organized into two new groups with the purpose of identifying 15 shortlisted initiatives. The same methodology was applied and resulted in the shortlist.
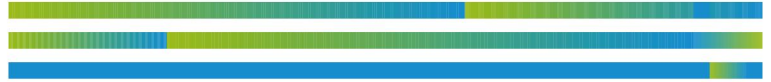
The TC prepared a brief for each shortlisted initiative to inform the Jury of the rationale of its selection. These briefs are contained in Annex III.

At its conclusion, the TC finalized the current report. It also presented the results of its deliberations to a special event hosted by the City of Guangzhou, United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and the World Assembly of Major Metropolises (Metropolis).

IV. Recommendations of the TC to the Secretariat

Recommendation regarding quality of submissions

In order to continuously improve the quality of the submissions we strongly suggest that an online tutorial be offered to submitters well before the submission deadline. This tutorial should include examples of good submissions, a video along the lines of the UCLG story-telling video, as well as the opportunity to attend a coaching webinar. The submission form should include a checklist to help submitters ensure that their submission is complete.

Recommendation regarding the UCLG innovation community

UCLG, Metropolis and Guangzhou should invite shortlisted cities and regions to participate in a community of practice platform to help mainstream lessons learned and provide inspiration for other cities and regions.

 Recommendation regarding the "value package" of the Award

The Award should consider offering a range of value-added services in addition to its current monetary prize. These service could include: (i) an innovation assessment to mainstream innovation in the selected city's ecosystem; (ii) visibility through the assistance of a media house or professional; (iii) travel grant to attend a leadership development workshop; (iv) participating in a community of practice with curated access to private sector innovation leaders in innovative solutions and technologies.

Recommendation regarding the Global Mayors' Forum

Redesign the Global Mayors' Forum as a space for dialogue between cities, regions and industry and the physical meeting space for the community of practice and a "business lounge" where city leaders and industry leaders in innovation meet to explore new frontiers for innovation.

Recommendation regarding enlarging platforms

Build bridges and present the Award to platforms such as OECD, BRICS, WEF to further disseminate and promote the lessons learned from the initiatives of Award.

Recommendations regarding official sponsors of the Award

Invite other city associations to join as co-sponsors of the Award such as ICLEI, C40 and other global networks.

Recommendation regarding promoters of the Award

Acknowledge the support provided by the UCLG regional sections (MEWA, ASPAC, FLACMA and Mercociudades).

Recommendations regarding reporting format

Replace SDG checklist with key words checklist; clarify the concept of effectiveness and stress the importance the Award accords to context and geographical inclusion.

V. TC Members

1. Ms. Kobie Brand, Deputy Secretary General of ICLEI, Chief Executive Officer and Regional Director of ICLEI Africa

2. Ms. Dyan Currie, Chief Planner, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane 2032 Summer Olympics Host City Office Lead

3. Ms. Sara Hoeflich, Urban Planner, Architect, Facilitator & UCLG Learning Director

4. Dr. Bin JIANG, Professor of Urban Informatics in Urban Governance and Design Thrust at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou)

5. Dr. Robin King, Director of Knowledge Capture & Collaboration, World Resources Institute Ross Center for Sustainable Cities

6. Ms. Lara Kinneir, Associate Professor, London Interdisciplinary School, Urban Governance hub coordinator, UN Habitat Partner University Initiative

7. Ms. Cecilia Martínez, Consultant, President of the WRI Mexico Advisory Council; Former Director of UN-Habitat Office in New York & Former Director of UN-Habitat Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

8. Mr. Lookman Oshodi, Project Director, Arctic Infrastructure, Nigeria

9. Ms. Azza Sirry, Professor of Urban Planning, Housing and Building National Research Center, Cairo, Egypt; Director of Regional Branch for Africa and the Middle East, Metropolis International Training Institute (MITI), Cairo
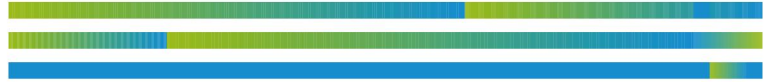
10. Mr. Ajay Suri, Urbanist, Freelance Consultant, Former Senior Adviser of National Institute of Urban Affairs of India & Former Regional Manager of Asia, Cities Alliances

11. Mr. Xiaofeng YI, Professorate Senior Planner and Executive Deputy Director, Centre for High-quality Development in Northwestern China, China Academy of Urban Planning and Design

VI. Members of the Secretariat

1. Mr. Nicholas You, Executive Director, Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation;

2. Mr. YUAN Ding, Director General, Guangzhou Award Secretariat;

3. Mr. ZHOU Yongjin, Deputy Director General, Guangzhou Award Secretariat;

4. Ms. LI Xiaoye, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff;

5. Ms. LI Caiying, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff;

6. Ms. LI Yuan, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff;

7. Ms. ZHOU Huijun, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff;

8. Ms. XIA Geer, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff;

9. Mr. WEN Zian, Guangzhou Award Secretariat Staff.

ANNEX I

List of 15 Shortlisted Cities

No.	City/ Local Government	Initiative
1	Antalya, Türkiye	Eco-Friendly Farmer Card: Protect Your Environment, Collect Points, Win Prizes
2	Bogotá, Colombia	Bogotá Care Blocks: How a city is reorganizing itself for women and achieving the SDGs
3	Cape Town, South Africa	Building Resilient Food Systems in Cape Town
4	Gwangju, Republic of Korea	The Last Bastion for Protecting Human Dignity "GwangJuness Community Care"
5	Halandri, Greece	"Cultural H.ID.RA.N.T. - Cultural Hidden IDentities ReAppear through Networks of Water." Ancient engineering (of sustainable water management) meets urban innovation through citizens' participation
6	Iztapalapa, Mexico	UTOPIAS - Units of Transformation and Organization for Social Inclusion and Harmony
7	Jakarta, Indonesia	Reclaiming Spaces for Children in Public Transportation Through @Navi_Station Initiatives
8	Kazan, Russia	Rehabilitation of the City Park "Chaikovoye Lake" in Kazan

9	Kampala, Uganda	An Innovation Towards Pit Emptying Services Through a GIS-enabled App (Weyonje) of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)
10	Mannheim, Germany	Local SDG implementation: An annual report on the achievement of the SDGs as a management tool and the large area-transformation into a SDG-park
11	Pimpri Chinchwad, India	Navi Disha: Community Toilet Model
12	Ramallah, Palestine	Forum Of Expertise - Active Aging for a vibrant future - Empowering seniors to thrive through voluntarism, lifelong learning, wellbeing, and community led initiatives
13	São Paulo, Brazil	Programa Tô Legal
14	Tehran, Iran	Substitution of chemical poisons by using pruning waste in the production of herbal formulations
15	Xianning, China	Enhancing Traffic Safety near Schools through Child-Friendly Collaborative Construction and Sharing Approach

ANNEX II

List of Deserving Initiatives

No.	City/ Local Government	Initiative
1	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Localization and SDG Voluntary Local Reviews of the City Of Buenos Aires
2	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Ciudad 3D: a tool to promote urban development in the City of Buenos Aires
3	Berlin, Germany	Give Administration a Human Face
4	Bontang, Indonesia	Geospatial Based Persons with Disabilities Card and Services
5	Baia Mare, Romania	Baia Mare from a mining and polluted city towards a green, innovative and participatory city: SPIRE - Smart Post-Industrial Regenerative Ecosystem
6	Barcelona, Spain	Climate Shelters in Schools: Adapting schools to climate change through green, blue and grey solutions
7	Daggar, Pakistan	"Building Bridges: Connecting Communities for a Better Tomorrow"
8	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	Smart System for Infrastructure & Utilities Lands Services
9	eThekwini, South Africa	eThekwini Strat Hub

10	Guangzhou, China	Integrated and Smart Neonatal Health Management System-empowering Mothers, the Family and the Community
11	Gimhae, Republic of Korea	Good-bye to Plastic Flowers and Disposable Dishes! – Carbon Neutral and Happy Green City, Gimhae
12	Gwanak-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea	Korean Youth Capital, Gwanak-gu
13	Istanbul, Türkiye	Mucilage-Free Marmara
14	Istanbul, Türkiye	Istanbul Play Master Plan
15	Krasnoyarsk, Russia	Svetly Park as a supportive space for open communication between every social category of residents
16	Konya, Türkiye	Building Resilient Cities with a Human-Centered Approach: Konya Model
17	Medellín, Colombia	Promoting food sovereignty by strengthening food marketing through Short Marketing Circuits
18	Moscow, Russia	Leaders of Digital Transformation
19	Nilüfer, Türkiye	1. Nilufer Food Living Lab(NFLL) 2. Nilüfer Social Entrepreneurship Center
20	Palmira, Colombia	PAZOS: Peace and Opportunities for Palmira
21	Quezon City, Philippines	Quezon City's Community-based Urban Farming Program
22	Recife, Brazil	Compaz Recife - Community Peace Centers

23	Rotterdam, Netherlands	Growing up healthy in Rotterdam Beverwaard - a multiannual action-research to improve the lifestyle of children and their families
24	Ramallah, Palestine	1. Ramallah City stepping toward a greener Future 2. Revolutionizing Municipal Services through GIS
25	São Paulo, Brazil	URANO Predictive Rapid Response System for Urban Maintenance
26	Salvador, Brazil	Saúde nos Bairros (Health in the Neighbourhoods)
27	Shanghai, China	Century-old Zhangyuan and its Journey of Renewal
28	Thane, India	Cluster Based Redevelopment of Thane Through Urban Renewal Programme
29	Tharaka Nithi, Kenya	Enhancing Women's Livelihoods Labor Force Participation Through the Crèche Program
30	Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico	Renta tu Casa (Rent Your Home)

Annex III

Summary of the 15 Short-listed Initiatives[2]

1. Antalya, Türkiye: Eco-friendly Farmer Card – Protect your environment, collect points, win prizes

This initiative by Antalya Metropolitan Municipality is designed to reduce hazardous agricultural packaging waste, which has significant negative environmental and health consequences, particularly in intensive farming areas. The project reduces plastic pollution from pesticide-laden packaging that is harmful to soil, that causes pollution and that indirectly contaminates 98% of Antalya's drinking water.

Solar, fire-resistant vending machines receive deposits of agricultural waste packaging via personalized key fobs. The farmers depositing the waste are rewarded with farming sensors, greenhouse materials and tools. Farmers are also trained to identify and dispose the hazardous waste. This is significant in a community that currently consumes 10% of Türkiye's pesticides.

The waste collection and storage initiative involves public-public and public-citizen cooperation between metropolitan and district municipalities. Additionally, there is public-private collaboration with a local company that manufactures innovative waste-vending machines that utilize solar panels for energy and can operate for up to 60 days. They feature impact sensors, cameras, GPS tracking, and other mechanisms. The partnerships, involving municipalities, citizens, the private sector, and academia, address agricultural packaging waste and the prevention of leachate through innovative coating techniques.

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[2] The initiative entitled: "Integrated and smart neo-natal health management system - empowering mothers, the family and community" from Guangzhou, China was initially selected by the Technical Committee for the shortlist. Guangzhou withdrew its submission so as not to diminish the opportunity for another city or region from becoming a potential winner.

The initiative applies circular economy principles that prioritize sustainable resource use and waste reduction. This initiative promotes material recycling, energy generation, reuse, alternative materials development, sustainable production, innovation, and employment opportunities. The model seeks to shift citizens' perception from the "Polluter Pays" concept to "Protector Wins" within the circular economy framework, challenging long-held misconceptions about waste and responsibility.
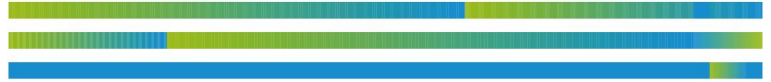
This initiative was selected as it was considered to make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability, the circular economy, local economic development and sustainable communities whilst reducing carbon emissions.

The technology it uses has the potential to benefit countries with similar agricultural patterns. The Eco-Friendly Farmer Card initiative in Antalya showcases an innovative comprehensive approach to tackling agricultural packaging waste and its associated environmental and health issues. It combines technology, incentives, and environmental stewardship to create a more sustainable and responsible agricultural sector.

2. Bogotá, Colombia: Bogotá Care Blocks – How a city is reorganizing itself for women and achieving the SDGs

It has long been recognized that women's "time poverty" is a structural cause of gender inequality. The unpaid burden of care falls disproportionately on women, which translates into women lacking economic autonomy. Women who are primary caregivers also tend to abandon higher education. They are prone to suffer from chronic mental and physical illnesses and have higher chances of experiencing gender-based violence. 30% of Bogotá's female population does unpaid caregiving full-time; 91% of this population is low-income; and 33% is deprived of free time for self-care.

In 2020, the city of Bogotá, Colombia's capital, launched its Care System to recognize, reduce and redistribute care. This initiative operates mainly through Care Blocks with an

"ease-of-access" modality that provides educational, leisure and income-generation services to caregivers, while simultaneously offering professional assistance to those being taken care of – children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The initiative also includes a cultural change strategy, a "Care School for Men", so that men can learn to recognize care, and distribute care more equitably within the household. As a result of this initiative, which provides childcare and a laundry service, caregivers have gained a total of 4 hours daily to study, generate income, or rest.

This initiative was selected because it enhances gender equality, promotes environmental sustainability, and provides a replicable model that (i) recognizes the role of care and the contribution of caregivers to society; (ii) redistributes the unevenly shared responsibility of care more equitably between members of society; and (iii) reduces women' s unpaid care work to give women time to engage in education, formal jobs, well-being, and social and political activities. In addition, civil society participation was key in the design and implementation of Care Blocks.

The initiative contributes to the global agenda through supporting SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 3 (well-being), SDG11 (sustainable cities), SDG 16 (strong institutions), and SDG17 (partnerships).

3. Cape Town, South Africa: Building resilient food systems

Food systems in Cape Town are complex and loosely governed. Recent shocks and stresses (drought, COVID-19, load shedding and minibus taxi strike) underscore the need for a food systems approach that recognizes the increasing occurrence of risks that typically impact food access in vulnerable communities. Food insecurity emerged as a key vulnerability during these crises. The Food Systems initiative stems from the Cape Town Resilience Strategy (2019) and is included in Cape Town's five-year development plan.
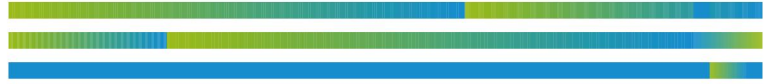
The resilient food systems initiative seeks to address the burden of disease caused by food insecurity that results in child wasting and stunting or obesity, which drive the high incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Much of the food systems' work is advocacy and building knowledge. This is achieved through a Food Systems Working Group that includes internal and external players where knowledge, networks and the city's work are leveraged upon towards food outcomes. The city also convenes a Food Indaba (meeting) internal to the city and Food Systems Community of Practice to coordinate and promote research.

Some of the key reasons for selecting this initiative are: i) it identified risks and vulnerabilities of the city immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic; ii) it kickstarted the resolution of the key risk identified; iii) the program was infused into the city's development plan; iv) it built partnerships towards addressing the long-term impact of reducing incidences of non-communicable diseases.

4. Gwangju, Republic of Korea: GwangJuness Community Care

"No citizen is left out" is not just a slogan for the city of Gwangju, which has been trying to realize it for three years. The previous caregiving system in Korea selected beneficiaries based on age and income, and only supported those who were eligible to make an application. To address this gap, Gwangju has created an innovative care model, Gwangjuness Community Care, for anyone who needs care.

Dong-office (smallest administrative division) care managers visit individuals in their homes, check their situation, and apply for needed services. Gwangju has launched 16 new care services and plans to inject US$7.74 million annually to encourage citizens facing economic hardship to take advantage of these care services. "Care Call" has been launched as a single application channel to increase convenience. To ensure implementation, Gwangju has reorganized the City-Gu (district) office governance structure, established a
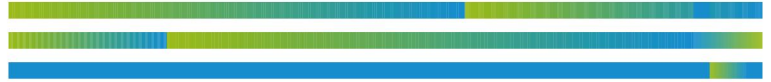
"dedicated division," designated 320 care managers, and selected 38 private sector care service providers.

This initiative has been recommended for consideration for the Guangzhou Award because of its care coverage for all ages and income levels, which makes diverse types of care more accessible to all. The project responds to SDG 11(make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and SDG 3 (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages).

5. Halandri, Greece: Cultural H.ID.RA.N.T. (Cultural Hidden IDentities ReAppear through Networks of Water) -- Ancient engineering of sustainable water management meets urban innovation through citizens' participation

This initiative in Greece aims to activate local hidden heritage and resources in order to enhance citizens' well-being. It focuses on the re-introduction of the Hadrians aqueduct, a subterranean Roman-times infrastructure, into city life beyond the usual "sightseeing" offer to demonstrate and communicate its cultural heritage and ancient technical approaches alongside its role as a historic monument, contemporary landmark, unexploited water resource and piece of urban infrastructure.

Along with the repositioning of the aqueduct, the initiative promotes green urban policies and sustainable water management. It creates new quality green public spaces by regenerating four Halandri neighborhoods, while the aqueduct, which is still operational, is re-utilized for irrigation purposes, thus replacing the use of potable water that was used before. Through participatory and inclusive processes, Halandri communities are revitalized by becoming active around heritage and shared water, and the local economy is strengthened via endogenous and resilient development rather than relying on tourism, which puts pressure on the city's resources and jeopardizes a sense of community and belonging.
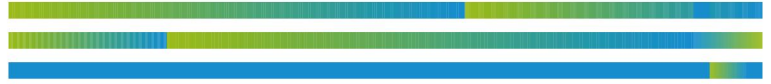
Its innovation is demonstrated through its unique combination of solutions to various problems.   The initiative has improved the quality of public green spaces, highlighted the city's cultural heritage and sense of belonging, developed a citizen-focused sustainable water infrastructure based on a circular economic model, and established participatory processes and institutions to manage urban resources.

It has been shortlisted due to this original approach to create a better environment for residential communities, and to promote local agriculture and tourism using currently underutilized assets. It employs a cross-sectoral approach, integrating cultural, social, environmental, and economic sectors. It demonstrates a circular economy model, using participatory planning and governance. Most importantly, it empowers communities to take ownership of public assets to deliver creative heritage regeneration.

The project is being implemented over a four-year period. The participatory urban planning HIDRANT festival and digital local history platform are already complete and running. The Halandri Adrian Community Network will be established by December 2023, while the regeneration works and the non-potable water network will be ready by April 2024, when water delivery will commence.

6. Alcaldia Iztapalapa, Mexico City, Mexico: UTOPIAS – Urban transformation and organization for social inclusion and harmony

Iztapalapa is one of the largest municipalities in Mexico City. 43% of its population lives in poverty, 33% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 34, and 23% works in the informal economy. Socio-economic and territorial inequalities are key challenges among the local population.

The UTOPIAS initiative is a strategy to deepen social and urban transformation that addresses the structural socio-territorial inequality of the municipality of Iztapalapa   via the regeneration of deteriorating public spaces and the construction of a system of large,
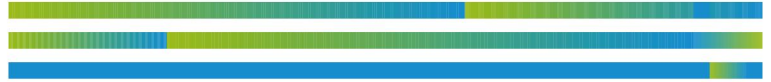
comprehensive, high-impact public facilities that promote human rights and well-being of communities, with a focus on the equitable distribution of public spaces and facilities. These public facilities provide free social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and services that are open to people of all ages.

The initiative was selected because of its innovative approach to urban management that adopts an integrated, trans-disciplinary, and trans-sectorial vision that has recovered and transformed more than 500,000 square meters of public space. In addition, it provides alternative activities for at-risk youth in an environment prone to violence.

UTOPIAS has become an emblematic project of this municipal government that seeks to reduce socio-urban inequalities within a rights perspective, focusing on youth, and within the framework of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The project strengthens social protection through a safety net combining cultural and sports activities for at-risk youth.

7. DKI Jakarta Government, Indonesia: Reclaiming spaces for children using public transportation through the Navi Station initiative

This initiative in Jakarta aims to prepare the next generation to make safe use of rail-based public transportation. It has created a toolkit for children aged between 5 and 7 years that focuses on train station literacy. The toolkit uses toys like Lego, activity books, playmats and papercraft using rail transport logos and mascots. The content and approach of the toolkit are validated by pre-school teachers and comprehensive evaluation is through pre-tests, post-tests and edu-visits (observation). There is the multi-stakeholder engagement between the Bandung Institute of Technology, the Jakarta Transportation Authority and rail operators.   The Ministry of Education is also involved in the adoption of the initiative. The initiative is a good example of promoting universal accessibility to public facilities, including transportation, by empowering children to navigate train stations.
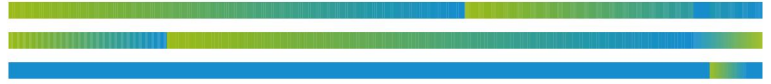
8. Kazan, Russian Federation: Park to rest and recuperate

During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical staff and patients at a hospital near Chaikovoye Lake in the city of Kazan became acutely aware of the lack of open-air public spaces around the hospital that could enable patients to recuperate and allow medical staff and hospital employees to relax. The area around the hospital was neglected and the lake was polluted.

This initiative was developed to create a unique multi-purpose public park near the hospital that could be used for recovery, recreation and relaxation. The main aims of the initiative were to create a rehabilitation zone with different functions near the hospital and to preserve the lake's ecosystem. The project was carried out in close cooperation with representatives of relevant ministries and departments, representatives of the health industry, employees and patients at the hospital, as well as local residents, all of whom played an active part in the project's implementation. The park was partially landscaped in 2021 and was fulling operational the following year. Equipment has been installed for people with disabilities or with limited mobility. The park is designated as Kazan municipality's property so is managed and maintained by the Directorate of Parks and Squares in Kazan.

The park and the cleaner lake have reaped significant positive social, health and environmental benefits. Patients can do therapies, such as reflexology, in the park and enjoy the picturesque scenery around the lake, which helps them to recover faster. Hospital staff now have a place where they can relax and play sports. The lake near the hospital has been rehabilitated and aquatic plants have been grown in it to allow it to self-clean.

The park is also the site of social interaction. There is an outdoor cinema where public events and classes are held. Local residents living near the lake now have an eco-friendly
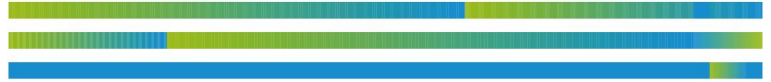
environment which they can also use and enjoy. As a result of the initiative, economic activities in the surrounding areas have increased.

This initiative was selected because it addressed a health concern with a sustainable environmental solution that also enhanced community welfare. It responds to several SDGs, including Goal 3 (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages), Goal 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), Goal 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), Goal 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation), and Goal 11 (make cities and human settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

9. Kampala, Uganda: An innovation for pit-emptying services using a GIS-enabled application

Kampala, Uganda's capital city, has a population of 1,738,000 and an urbanization rate of 5.6% per annum. Over 60% of this population lives in informal housing, while only between 10% and 15% of the city is connected to the formal sewerage system. 90% of the population relies on the on-site sanitation model, making waste-emptying services unavoidable for many residents. Pit latrines and septic tanks are often emptied haphazardly into the environment by vendors providing these services.

It is within this context that the Weyonje App was developed and introduced. Citizens can use the app on their mobile phones to order emptying services that are monitored until the sludge is successfully delivered to the regulated dumpsite. Citizens without smartphones, especially those living in poor informal settlements, have the option to contact the Village Health Team (VHT), which requests the service on their behalf using the Weyonje Village Health Team Application. The App ensures that the faecal sludge is safely transported and managed at the treatment plant. Data from the App feeds digitally into the city's data

management dashboard that enables the city to track progress and gaps in the emptying service.

Positive behavioral change and improved environmental practices, coupled with the prevention of public health crises, are some of the major reasons for selecting this initiative. The initiative was also recommended because it includes the urban poor who do not have mobile phones. It is a revolutionary data management innovation that creates local employment opportunities through the Weyonje Village Health Team.

10. Mannheim, Germany: Annual report on the achievement of the SDGs as a management tool and transformation of vacant land into a park

The City of Mannheim in Germany submitted two inter-related projects that were combined into one submission. The city has been actively monitoring progress towards the SDGs since 2015 but in 2022 it advanced its monitoring process by resolving to present the city's annual Voluntary Local Review report as one of the main municipal instruments, alongside the mission statement, budget plan and major projects. (VLR reports are reports by sub-national governments on their progress on the SDGs.) By establishing an annual report that integrates the VLR into the regular management system of the city, Mannheim has embedded the SDGs in all aspects of the city's management and built on previous reviews.

The integration of the VLR into the official management tool enables the administration, councilors, and the local community to gain better understanding of how the city's actions are responding to the SDGs. The adoption of a binding resolution to publish a document that translates global commitments into local actions assists in promoting transparency and accountability and also allows councilors to focus their budget decisions on gaps and needs. This action also builds upon Mannheim's commitment to global responsibility for advancing city-to-city learning and motivating other cities to localize global goals.
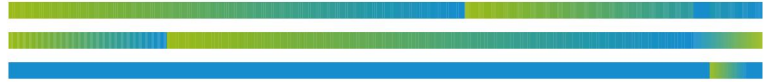
The second project involved the hosting of a major event based around the SDGs as part of the conversion of a large urban space that was left vacant following the departure of a US military base. Citizens were consulted on what to do with the former military base. It was decided that the space be transformed into a community park. Social inclusion and gender were two areas that were given high priority in the design of the park.

The decision to organize a major Gardening Show called BUGA (facilitated by the Federal Government) dedicated specifically to the SDGs was initially made via a citizens' referendum and then confirmed by resolution by the Municipal Council. The strategy was then developed and presented to the council in 2017. The Gardening Show took place in 2023.

There are now plans to transform the 80-hectare site into a landscaped park and recreation area that will be a habitat for many different species, as well as a space for sports and other recreational activities. The BUGA Park will continue to exist as a source of fresh air and is expected to lower the city's temperature by an average of 1.5 degrees. The public park will enhance the quality of life of Mannheim's residents and also that of the inhabitants of the metropolitan region that hosts 2.3 million people. Approximately 2 million visitors are expected to visit the park for the BUGA every two years.

BUGA in Mannheim is highly sustainable as it focuses on environmental and climate protection, resource-saving energy generation and food security. In addition, BUGA holds exhibitions on regional urban food production and clean and climate-friendly energy production in cities. The project features a non-profit limited liability company that is working closely with politicians, the city's urban planners, landscape architects, citizens, other initiatives and many other stakeholders. The exhibition area will serve as a stage for associations, the government and initiatives related to the SDGs, with at least 5,000 events on themes such as "New Mobility for Families," "Climate-Neutral Mobility – Flying with Fuel Cells," and "Insect-friendly Green Care." BUGA 23 Mannheim is the first city in

Germany to obtain a CO2-neutral certification and to address climate issues and environmental and species protection so directly.

The two initiatives by the city of Mannheim are clear examples of a city directly localizing the SDGs into the daily processes of governance, including budgeting and annual reporting. These initiatives were selected because they demonstrated the city's leadership role in improving the urban environment. Other local authorities are also able to learn how a VLR can be incorporated into their decision-making.   The city has systematically embedded the SDGs in the process of running the city and also enhanced transparency and community understanding. The implementation of a physical project shows the commitment of the community and the councillors to achieve the SDGs. This work has practical applications for other municipalities around the world and will hopefully inspire similar action.

11.   Pimpri Chinchwad, India: Navi Disha community toilet model

The access of families living in informal settlements to sanitation facilities is low in the Indian city of Pimpri Chinshwad. The municipality decided to address this problem by constructing 160 community toilets in 71 slums. Efficiency in the operation and maintenance of these community facilities is achieved by making the communities themselves responsible for running these facilities. Under Navi Disha, women from the targeted communities have formed groups that have taken responsibility for operating and maintaining the community toilets.

The initiative was conceived through discussions with the communities. The community members identified operation and maintenance challenges and suggested the assigning of this responsibility to women's groups. The women's groups are trained in community toilet management through the training-of- trainers capacity building approach. The sanitation inspector from the municipality, along with 17 social workers, were trained to operate and maintain the facilities They, in turn, trained members of the women's groups. The
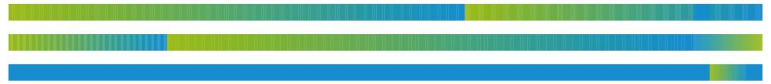
municipality makes a monthly payment to each women's group to cover the cost of sanitation equipment and cleaning materials.　The user-pays principle has been adopted to generate revenue streams for the women's groups.

The initiative is a good example of gender mainstreaming in the sanitation value chain and also of effective public-community partnership. Besides reimbursing costs and providing training, the municipality also provides management support to the women's groups with end-to-end operating manuals, streamlined procedures and effective monitoring systems.

12. Ramallah, Palestine: Forum of Expertise, a community-led active aging initiative that empowers seniors to thrive through voluntarism and life-long learning

This initiative focuses on promoting active aging and well-being within an urban context through the "Forum of Expertise." The Forum is an innovative community center in Ramallah that is dedicated to enriching the lives of older people by providing a space for social activity, engagement and wellness. It provides four core programs: a cross-generational platform for the exchange of knowledge and expertise; a tailored process for voluntary engagement; a targeted capacity-development program; and comprehensive well-being programs that cater for every aspect of older peoples' lives.

Innovation is demonstrated through physical, programmatic and operational aspects. The Forum creates a physical space that is accessible to all. This allows for formal and informal gatherings, thus fostering flexibility and growth, with the overall aim of addressing social isolation among older people. A range of programs are created with the community to ensure authenticity and shared decision-making. The Forum has adopted a decentralized structure that involves the community in decision-making, supervision, and evaluation, alongside regular feedback loops to enable ongoing and continuously evolving processes and sets of strategies.
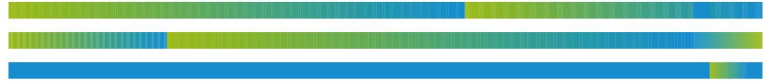
The initiative has been selected for the short list due to its targeting of a problem and its commitment to harnessing the talents and experiences of elderly members of society to drive a diverse range of activities to address social loneliness in innovative ways. The initiative is structured to ensure continual adaptability of its program in response to circumstances, embracing trial-and-error and strong evaluation and feedback from the community. This is demonstrated through its approach during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Forum created online documentaries of musicians and conducted interviews with creative writers. This helped to keep the elderly engaged during the crisis, showcasing the power of creativity and adaptability.

Its impact indicators also demonstrate innovation and a holistic short- and long- term approach. Its applicability to other neighborhoods and cities is clear. It promises to become a transformative model that resonates beyond the community. Neighboring municipalities, including Al Bireh and Selfeet in Palestine, as well as Madaba Municipality in Jordan, have been inspired to establish similar centers and are applying lessons learned from Ramallah to their own initiatives.

13. São Paulo,, Brazil: Programa Tô Legal

Tô Legal's main goal is to ease and expedite the issuance of authorization and permits to those who work and provide services informally in public areas and sidewalks. It has provided an opportunity for those who are unable to enter the formal employment market to work legally, and has fomented entrepreneurship. It has also improved transparency, efficiency, and location monitoring (GIS), and reduced corruption through payment control.

Tô Legal is an electronic system funded by and used in the city of São Paulo in Brazil. This initiative allows citizens who currently work illegally and insecurely on the streets to formalize themselves and their production over time, which, in some cases, could lead them to leave public areas and formalize their activities through registered companies or as microentrepreneurs. Tô Legal provides an expedited Authorization Ordinance for
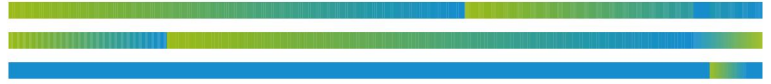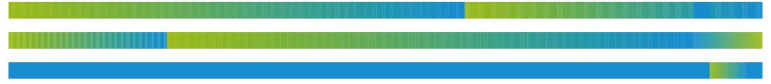
Commerce and Service Provision (PCS) within four days after application via a graphic presentation of locations and automated approvals.   This permit authorizes its holder to engage in economic activities in public areas or sidewalks, thereby fostering entrepreneurship among the unemployed, youngsters and senior workers who lack job opportunities.   The system has improved the lives of entrepreneurs, as they no longer need to travel to a sub-prefecture to apply for documents, to change their registration or to pay municipal fees, since those services are now available online. Civil servants can readily access permit and authorization information, which expedite inspection procedures. Revenue collection is streamlined, with funds going directly to the Municipal Treasury.

This initiative was selected as it represents an innovative governance approach utilizing technology for those working in the informal sector by providing them with pathways towards potential formalization, and by strengthening their agency. Tô Legal contributes to the global urban agenda by providing legal identity and standing to urban residents and strengthening economic and social rights, in line with the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

14. Tehran, Iran: Substituting chemical poisons with pruning waste in the production of herbal formulations

The utilization of pruning plants and Egyptian silk plants represents a transformative leap in replacing chemical pesticides within the herbal formulation production process. This initiative in Tehran serves as a catalyst for transitioning contemporary cities from their industrial past into more eco-friendly urban environments. To achieve this, the project leverages urban green spaces to combat urban pests, effectively replacing the need for harmful chemical pesticides while concurrently reducing expenditure on these costly toxic substances. Central to this endeavor is the utilization of natural resources, specifically pruning plants and Egyptian silk plants, in the production of herbal formulations. Rigorous experimentation has been conducted to ascertain their effectiveness, resulting in the

publication of five scientific papers. This project pioneers a natural, eco-conscious solution for herbal formulation production, contributing significantly to the transformation of modern cities into toxin-free, nature-friendly urban landscapes. The project aligns with ten SDGs, making it a vital contributor to the global effort for a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

15. Xianning, Hubei Province, China: Enhancing traffic safety near schools through a child-friendly collaborative construction and sharing approach

Parents may know how to care for their children at home, but do not have much control over how safe their children will be outside the home, including when going to school.   It is common for parents in Xianning city in Hubei Province in China to drive their children to school. Driving in the city has led to traffic safety problems, congestion, and air pollution. To address these problems, the city of Xianning came up with a project based on an effective and efficient public-private-community partnership.

The city played a leading role with the personal involvement of the mayor and a wide range of departments. The private sector, recognizing the challenge, responded commendably. Private developers not only donated land for safer pathways and bike lanes but also transformed an entire street in a neighborhood into a pedestrian-only zone. Parents organized "walking bus routes". This endeavor significantly increased the number of students walking to school, rising from a mere 30% to an impressive 95%.   As a result, the community around the school has become safer and more active, and a better place for children to grow up.

This project was recommended for consideration for the Guangzhou Award because of its child-centered strategy that takes into account the physical and mental health of students and young children. It is also commended for its more holistic approach that goes beyond mere infrastructure, and the participation and involvement of active stakeholders at the local level. The project responds to SDG 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable education and
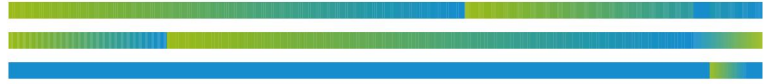
promote life-long learning opportunities) and SDG 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable).

This project sets a good example for the rest of the world and has inspired five other cities in Hubei Province and the city of Guangzhou to implement similar projects.