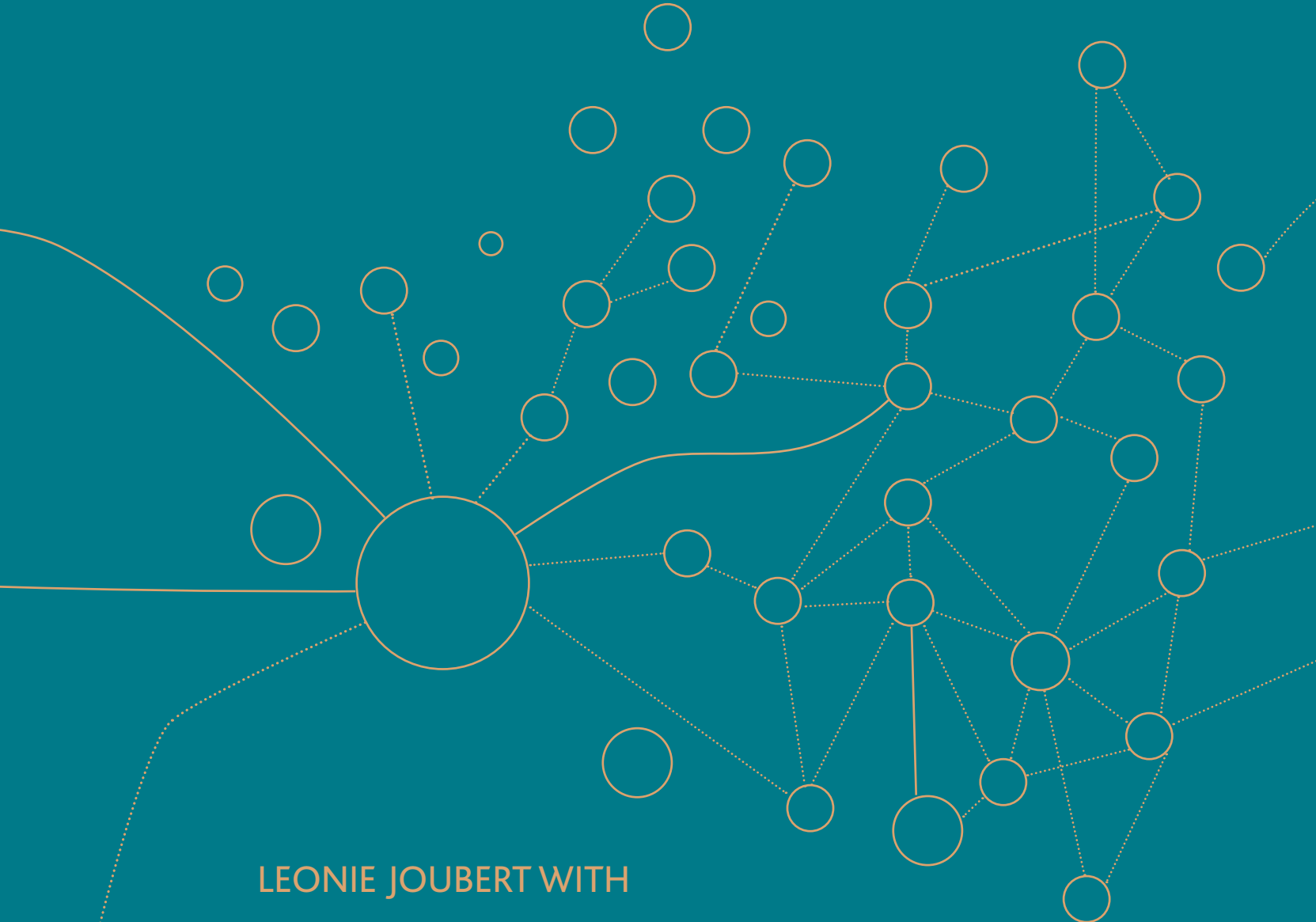


REALISING JUST CITIES



LEONIE JOUBERT WITH
THE MISTRA URBAN FUTURES
REALISING JUST CITIES TEAM

The left side of the page features a teal background with white line art. On the left, there is a network diagram consisting of several circles of varying sizes connected by thin lines. To the right of this network, there are several concentric, irregular shapes that resemble a map or a series of overlapping regions. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

REALISING JUST CITIES

BY LEONIE JOUBERT WITH
THE MISTRA URBAN FUTURES
REALISING JUST CITIES TEAM



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Previous page: Outdoor communal toilets in Cape Town are a reminder of the service delivery challenges that still bedevil some lower income neighbourhoods in the city.

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FOREWORD

by Professor Edgar Pieterse,
Director of the African Centre for Cities



RODGER BOSCH

The world has only ten years in which to take the necessary political and economic actions to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals. In the wake of 2019, which ended with a profoundly disappointing UN climate negotiation process in Spain, escalation of US military aggression, the coming to pass of Brexit, and the rise of rightwing authoritarianism in almost all world regions, it is difficult to be hopeful about the success of the SDGs. This is especially true with regard to reducing inequality, dramatically cutting back on carbon emissions, and environmental sustainability.

This situation could easily produce despondency and abdication. However, maybe the problem is our optics? What if we stop obsessing with national governments and international relations, and rather privilege the millions of intention-driven actions across cities and towns in both the global South and North? Let's pause, and pay attention to the inordinate diversity of actions and institutional forms that citizens are inventing or retooling in order to take control of their trajectories, and in the process, enlarge the possibility of more just and convivial futures.

This volume uses the portal of 'just cities' to exhibit the value and importance of such a change in perspective. It demonstrates that the challenges are indeed daunting, but also knowable and certainly malleable to purposive action.

However, it does demand an epistemic revolution because just cities are unattainable without the confluence of multiple knowledge systems – some scientifically codified, and many tacit, lived, intuited, and profoundly embodied. Our modern governance and policy institutions remain trapped in sectoral silos, though, which stems from disciplinary specialisations, hierarchical mindsets, and opacity. Our universities are equally plagued by knowledge silos and fragmentation, and despite three decades of discourse on inter- and trans-disciplinarity, are still essentially blinkered and apart from society. At the same time, scientific method and truth have come under attack from regressive political forces undermining the very possibility of knowledge as freedom.

It is against this backdrop that the Mistra Urban Futures programme was established a decade ago. Its mission was to demonstrate that it is possible to create deliberate and inclusive processes that can allow for different kinds of data and knowledge to confront shared urban challenges. Its aim is to generate new and useful insights about novel ways of framing issues and generating actionable decisions that revel in openness and transparency, which is the lifeblood of self-generating knowledge ecologies that pursue justice and authenticity.

Due to the larger relevance of the Mistra Urban Futures experiment, this book has been assembled so that our often tough learnings can be deployed by others who share our desire for urban futures teeming with life, solidarity and invention.

Leave no-one behind: cities need a range of actions and institutions in order to achieve the goals of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda.

INTRODUCTION

Cities have an almost irresistible pulling power. For many people, they are the doorway to a better life. As economic hubs, they promise a greater chance of finding a job. They may offer better schooling for children and healthcare options. Cities' food systems seem to overflow with abundance, with any manner of tastes and food styles on every other corner. The glitz of skyscraper-lined city centres and the modern finishes in sprawling shopping malls epitomise all that is aspirational and progressive in an ever more globalised world.

Today, over half of the world's population lives within these city-scapes, either enjoying the abundance of the elite classes, or trying to reach a more plentiful life from the margins of lower-income neighbourhoods and the mushrooming unplanned and unserviced informal communities on the edges of these economic engine rooms.



Two worlds: Sodra Hamn Canal in Gothenburg, and Kisumu, Kenya.



BOTH IMAGES: WARREN SMIT

Most cities are growing fast, as people are drawn there from the countryside, and as existing city populations generate their own growth. Three to four decades from now, the world's urban population is likely to double, with another 3.5 billion people expected to be living in cities around the world¹.

According to the United Nations' *The World's Cities in 2018* report, 'an estimated 55.3 per cent of the world's population lived in urban settlements by 2018. By 2030, urban areas are projected to house 60 per cent of people globally and one in every three people will live in cities with at least half a million inhabitants'².

Not all cities are growing in population size, though. Some may be stable, but others are stagnant or declining. What is often more common across the evolving contemporary city is that, within their boundaries, there are changes in the spread of population, the distribution of wealth, and the ability of local governments to keep apace with the change. The new face of contemporary cities may also defy the traditional and largely artificial characterising of a city, where they are often reduced to simply being one typical of so-called 'developed' and 'developing' countries – the 'global North' or 'global South' – which is how the United Nations has defined cities since the 1950s.

These processes make urban communities a focal point for many of today's development challenges. It also makes them hubs for opportunities to address contemporary urban settlement issues.

The geography of poverty is changing, writes Mikael Cullberg, from Mistra Urban Futures. In the future, most of the world's poor, even though they will maintain links with their families in the countryside, will no longer live there, but will be in mostly under-serviced, informal

neighbourhoods within cities. Urbanisation is intensifying and the number of people living in inadequate housing in many cities is growing, too. Uneven development creates new social tensions between different communities and authorities, according to Cullberg.

The growth in globalisation, migration, and urbanisation is changing societies, and cities become places where global development challenges and patterns of conflict express themselves at a local scale. This means that cities are becoming complex spaces to arrange and manage, and finding solutions to transform them into healthier, happier, and fairer places needs new ways of thinking.

Dealing with questions of poverty, social segregation, unsustainable lifestyles, and urban sprawl in cities will also collide with the growing challenges of a changing climate, which has the potential to split open existing fault lines. Tackling this complexity calls for many different actors, decision makers, disciplines, and sectors to work hand in hand. The solutions and responses need these different parties to work co-operatively and collaboratively.

How do we work together to create fair, green, accessible cities?

Mistra Urban Futures is an international centre, started in 2010 by the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (the Stiftelsen för Miljöstrategisk Forskning), Mistra. The centre is geared towards a central, present-day concern: how can we create sustainable cities around the world, by bringing together researchers, city-level politicians and officials, civil society organisations, and the residents of cities themselves, to

Cities are becoming complex spaces to arrange and manage, and finding solutions to transform them into healthier, happier, and fairer places needs new ways of thinking

create knowledge together? How can we do this so that we can better design, build, and manage cities that are fair, healthy, and accessible to all?

Mistra Urban Futures started with the formation of a network of researchers and practitioners from different urban disciplines, initially based in four cities on two continents, in both the global South and North. This grew to eight cities on four continents, where they came together in local collectives at a city level, and organised themselves through bottom-up initiatives through five Local Interaction Platforms (LIPs) in Gothenburg and Skåne, Sweden, Greater Manchester-Sheffield in the United Kingdom, Cape Town in South Africa, and Kisumu in Kenya, with a coordinating centre based in Gothenburg. Over the course of nearly a decade, the LIPs used a variety of processes to work with local city officials, citizens and civil society organisations to co-produce knowledge and find solutions to various city-scale development challenges. A key part of this work was to compare their local contexts, lessons, and challenges as the programme unfolded.

Under the banner of the *Realising Just Cities* initiative, Mistra Urban Futures' work acknowledges that there are many different institutions and individuals who can play a part in shaping our cities and how well these spaces serve all their residents. There are the city-level politicians who largely deal with policy-making and overseeing the constitutional mandate of local-

scale government, and work with other spheres of government. There are the city officials, the bureaucrats and technocrats tasked with handling the day-to-day operations of keeping a city ticking over: delivering services like electricity, water, sanitation, and waste removal. Communities themselves are part of the active citizenry that should hold these officers of the state to account. Civil society organisations and researchers also have a role to play in helping steer city-level thinking and planning with evidence-based research.

From its inception, Mistra Urban Futures had two clear tasks. It wanted to understand the character of different cities in the global South and North, and see how multi-stakeholder scientific research can guide the process of making cities more fair, green and accessible to all. Equally importantly, though, it recognised that all these different communities have their own role to play in realising just, fair and accessible cities. It understood that no single group or institution held all the knowledge or the solutions to the hurdles that keep cities from being the shared spaces they should be. The Mistra Urban Futures teams were concerned with how these groups come together to understand the overlapping areas of responsibility, and their shared knowledge and experience, so that they could pool their ideas and resources in order to run cities more effectively.

'The world faces many challenges,' writes the

¹ Cullberg, M. 2016. *Mistra Urban Futures: A new space for knowledge production*. In H. Palmer & H. Walasek (Eds.), *Co-production in Action: Towards Realising Just Cities*. Gothenburg: Mistra Urban Futures.

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2018. *The World's Cities in 2018*. https://www.un.org/en/events/citiesday/assets/pdf/the_worlds_cities_in_2018_data_booklet.pdf

former Mistra Urban Futures' board chair Emeritus Professor Thomas Rosswall, '... challenges which become opportunities if we base decisions on the best available knowledge. The knowledge-gathering process must include dialogues involving all sectors of society. Political processes are important, but not sufficient, to address major issues such as urbanisation and the development of fair, green and accessible cities.'

This book – also called *Realising Just Cities* – paints a picture of the shape and nature of our cities. It captures the processes that the Mistra Urban Futures researchers used in order to bring together the knowledge, skill, and experience of the many different role players in order to see how to find better ways to make real and tangible the notion of a just city.

The book draws on the experience of nearly a decade of Mistra Urban Futures work, as the project wraps up towards the end of 2020. The stories feature some of the highlights of a few projects across the network, looking at the research and its outputs, as well as the processes used in order to co-produce knowledge.

The stories in this book zoom in on some of the on-the-ground projects in these cities, to show the nature of the research and the solutions they have found to city-scale challenges in their individual contexts. They reflect how the Mistra Urban Futures work contributes towards supporting cities around the world to realise the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the book shows how these different cities are making efforts, both directly and indirectly, to realise SDG 11, which focuses on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Importantly, these stories also capture the processes involved in bringing the different stakeholders together in order to reach these conclusions.

The lessons learned through the Mistra Urban Futures programme apply to virtually all cities in this fast-growing globalising, urbanising world.

GROUNDING IN THE 'LOCAL', WORKING ACROSS THE 'GLOBAL' THE SHAPE OF THE NETWORK

Mistra Urban Futures' coordinating centre was based at Gothenburg, Sweden, from which a secretariat helped coordinate five Local Interaction Platforms (LIPs) in Gothenburg and Skåne, Sweden, Greater Manchester-Sheffield in the United Kingdom, Cape Town in South Africa, and Kisumu in Kenya, with a smaller additional node in Stockholm. Across the platform, the participating researchers and practitioners worked within these cities and regions, as well as in establishing project-based collaborations in Dehradun and Shimla in India, and Buenos Aires in Argentina.

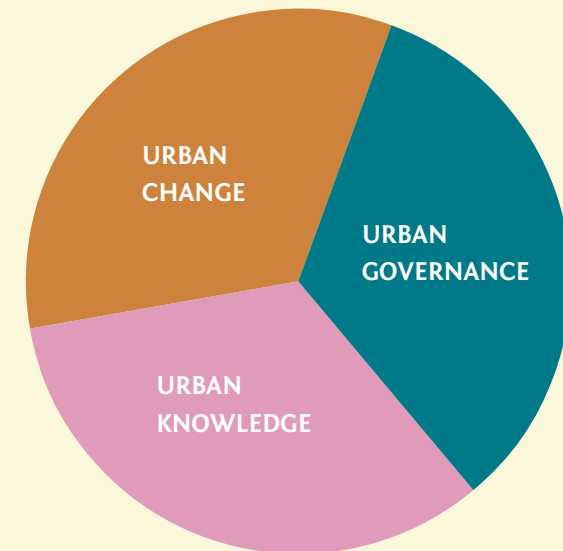
This allowed for a bottom-up approach, where the network could test their novel methodologies in research and knowledge co-production at a local level, while sharing and comparing their experiences across the different global contexts.

How it's done:

Three core approaches through which to co-generate new ideas.

URBAN CHANGE

Understanding the dynamics, drivers, constraints, and potential in different urban contexts for promoting sustainability transitions.



URBAN GOVERNANCE

Rethinking power and the roles of different sectors, organisations, and communities in creating and managing more just and sustainable cities.

URBAN KNOWLEDGE

Learning from and valuing different expertise and practices, and organising knowledge appropriately to realise just cities.

In the spotlight: three areas of transformation

● SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS:

Focusing on the interaction between cities and their social and bio-physical environments, with an eye on issues of urban ecological sustainability.

● SOCIO-SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS:

Focusing on the built environment, and the spatial form of cities.

● SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS:

Focusing on exploring the role of culture in urban sustainability and justice.



IN PRACTICE: TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND CO-PRODUCTION

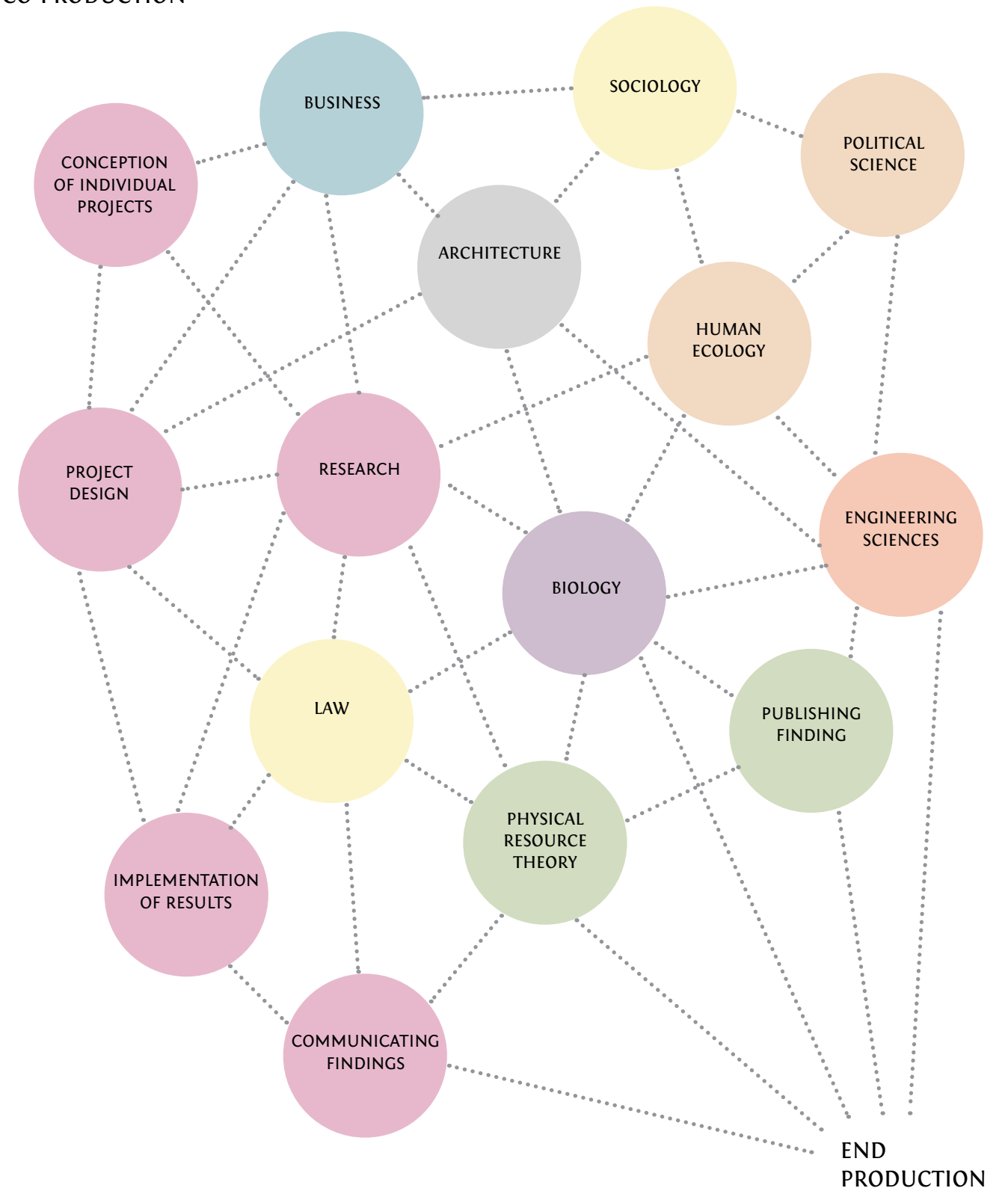
Addressing the challenges of creating fair and just cities, the Mistra Urban Futures approach recognised that no single actor has all the answers or knowledge. Central to the work was creating a process of bringing together people with a range of skills and experience, from different disciplines within both research and practice, and from society and citizens, in order to co-create knowledge and understanding in the field of sustainable urban futures.


People from a range of research fields and expertise became part of the collaboration: from business, sociology, political science, architecture, biology, physical resource theory, law, human ecology, and engineering sciences.

Co-production is a holistic approach, starting from the very conception of individual projects, project design and research, to implementation of results, and communicating and publishing those findings. Co-production is about learning. It is not a single method, rather a methodological ethos that can be implemented in different ways. It is a means to an end, in order to tackle complex challenges.

ANDI MKOSI

CO-PRODUCTION





Chapter 1 **KEYS TO THE CITY**

What is a healthy, happy, fair city? The notion of a person having the symbolic keys to the city has its roots in the medieval idea of freedom, where everyone living within a city can move through it freely, may own property, can trade or have some kind of livelihood, and be safe and protected. In a modern city, this should translate into the experience of all its residents, where everyone has equal opportunity to live and thrive, where there's a fair distribution of wealth, and where no one is held back by obstacles such as prejudice or lack of privilege.

The work of creating a just city in today's world is about redressing the economic, social, political, or physical barriers that might come between people and their ability to truly hold the keys to a city.

Previous spread: 'Defensive' architecture may be a way to passively police public spaces, in order to keep them clean. But their design can also exclude people from spaces, cementing social or economic hierarchies in a community.

It's a foul winter's afternoon in Cape Town. A storm blown in by a north-western front is pummeling South Africa's 'Mother City', grinding the early homeward-bound traffic to a near standstill under an overpass close to the harbour. A huddle of men perches beneath the concrete shelter of the flyover, squatting on a thin seam of paving along the road edge, sheltering from the elements.

Through the volleys of rain and the slow-moving traffic, it's hard to tell if these men are everyday commuters waiting out the storm, or if they're hawkers drifting through a part of the city that forbids curbside trading. They're crowded together in a space that is clearly designed and built to keep foot traffic and 'loiterers' away.

Behind them, the traffic island that separates the city-bound road from the out-bound car lanes bristles with shards of rock that have been planted into the concrete surface, cemented in place like miniature mountain peaks. Their jagged profile is only ankle-height, but they make the surface awkward to walk over, uncomfortable to sit on, and impossible to sleep on.

The 'No Pedestrians' traffic sign and the absence of pedestrian crossings here sends a clear signal: this intersection is designed for cars, not for people moving through the city on foot.

This spiky geography has been put here with clear intention, much the way someone might bolt metal spikes or string wire along the win-

Keep moving: Hostile architecture and defensive design are used to make spaces unwelcoming and impossible to occupy.

dow ledge on a high-rise building to keep birds from roosting or nesting or fouling the building with their droppings.

'Hostile architecture' or 'defensive design' like this, in the specific context of Cape Town's foreshore, could be a way to protect pedestrians from the hazards of crossing a dangerous road in a high traffic zone. Or it could be a way of passively policing the space to stop unwanted 'elements'. Either way, this part of the city is designed to be welcoming to some – mostly wealthier car owners – and not to others. It's a small expression of how the way cities are designed and engineered can cement the social and economic divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

Cape Town is the second-largest city in South Africa, a middle-income country where, according to Oxfam estimates³, the top 10 per cent of the population earns seven times more than the bottom 40 per cent. In the 'Mother City' – so-named because it was the first settling point for early European migrants and colonists in the region from the mid-1600s – extreme poverty exists alongside incredible opulence. Many parts of the city allow some of its residents to hold the proverbial keys to the city, while in others, residents are excluded from the city's economy, or geography, or its political and social platforms.

These kinds of divides aren't limited to this global South city.

Sweden has long been one of the most equal



countries in the world, and yet even here there is inequality. Oxfam calculates that the combined earnings of the top 10 per cent of Swedes is the same as the bottom 40 per cent.

A 2017 report⁴ by the City of Gothenburg on the differences in living conditions in the city shows that not only do income levels differ dramatically, but factors such as life expectancy, trust of other people, and young people's qualification for upper secondary school, also differ greatly between different parts of the city.

These cities – Cape Town, and Gothenburg –

stand side by side in the Mistra Urban Futures research because they pull into focus the similar challenges of inequality in the unique and local-scale contexts of these global South and North city contexts. The same can be said for the other cities in the network, which share factors of social and spatial inequality.

City-scale injustices, linked with urbanisation and industrialisation, run deep into the early 19th Century, when social critics like the German philosopher, social scientist and journalist Friedrich Engels first documented the appalling liv-

³ Development Finance International and Oxfam. 2017. *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index*. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620316/jrr-commitment-reduce-inequality-index-170717-en.pdf;jsessionid=BBF503EB321E468BEF5423B0C5F2101B?sequence=31>

⁴ City of Gothenburg. 2017. *Equality Report 2017, Differences in Life Conditions in Gothenburg*. Gothenburg: City of Gothenburg.



ZACHARIA MASHELE / NDIFUNA UKWAZI

In an unequal city like Cape Town, golf courses become fiercely contested political spaces. Reclaim the City activists contest the use of public land for elite sports activities when it could be used for affordable housing.

ing conditions of the working class in Manchester in his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, write Mistra Urban Futures researchers Dr Rike Sitas and Dr Warren Smit.

The British philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill argued that social justice is 'defined as being about a fair and just relationship between individuals and society more broadly'. Meanwhile, distributive justice, he wrote, relates to 'a specific aspect of social justice – what is distributed, between whom is it distributed, and what is the ideal distribution?' Society should treat all equally well, said Mill succinctly.

Cities became the epicentre for the struggle against social injustice in the 1960s, from

which the notion of territorial and spatial justice then emerged.

Territorial justice refers to the spatial and geographical dimensions of justice, while the idea of spatial justice concerns itself specifically with whether resources are spread and shared fairly and equitably, and what opportunities people have to use these resources.

Having the right to the city also means having the right to participate in decision-making, and the right to make something one's own, be it physical access to a space, or the ability to occupy and use urban spaces, according to French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre. This implies that the social value of urban space is given priority over its economic and financial value.

A few days after that winter storm drove the men to seek shelter under the Cape Town foreshore flyover, local civil society organisation Communicare, a social housing initiative in Cape Town, ran an opinion piece in the online newspaper *Daily Maverick*, questioning the city's decision to keep supporting rarified spaces like golf courses and bowling greens, when there is such a huge backlog in affordable housing for the city's poor⁵.

How is it that large tracts of land, like golf courses, continue to be set aside for the leisure needs of the city's wealthy, particularly as membership to golf clubs and bowling greens drops, rather than converting these spaces to housing for those living in poor conditions, the article asks.

Cape Town is still 'stubbornly untransformed despite 25 years of democratic rule', argues Communicare's Anthea Houston. Scars blister the landscape of a city regarded as one of the most beautiful in the world, she writes, still showing evidence of forced removals, segregation along racial lines, and land dispossession.

The article highlights how these privileged sporting facilities are public land, something that should be used for the common good, but the city's decisions on how to use this land continue to feed privilege and protect minority interests. This land should rather be used to address the city's housing challenges, where about 650 000 households live in inadequate housing conditions, she argues.

Like many cities in the world, Cape Town still has plenty of vacant and under-used land which could be better used to address housing shortages and spatial inequality. In Cape Town's existing built-up environment, there are about 570 hectares of land that are suitable for housing. Some 41 per cent of this is zoned as public open space, a quarter of it is regarded as under-utilised, and 20 per cent is vacant land. Most of this land – some 56 per cent – is owned by local government.

If it is time to revisit the way that municipalities like Cape Town manage areas suitable for housing, like contentious green sporting spaces, and bring their leasing decisions in line with their densification policies and constitutional mandates to meet housing backlogs, how should

⁵ Houston, A. 2019. Cape Town, let me in: Time to build houses on golf courses and other open spaces. *Daily Maverick*, 30 July. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-07-30-cape-town-let-me-in-time-to-build-houses-on-golf-courses-and-other-open-spaces/>

this be done? This is precisely the kind of local-level conundrum that the Mistra Urban Futures thinking and co-production processes tried to address. Decisions about who should have access to this kind of public land within a city need to include all the stakeholders who have an interest in the space. This process should not just include the municipal office handling sporting facilities. Neither should it be limited to members of the private clubs that have enjoyed privileged access to these sporting facilities and have special access to the authorities who oversee these spaces.

A fair negotiation should also include people from civil society, such as non-governmental organisations, community associations, social movements, and trade unions. It should work with local government such as mayors, councillors, elected politicians, and officials. It should draw in those from the private sector, such as chambers of commerce, business improvement district initiatives, large corporations, property owners, and organisations representing informal businesses. And there is also a role for researchers and academics to play in this delicate and often politically sensitive decision-making.

Mistra Urban Futures Cape Town platform has worked extensively with the municipal and provincial governments to design a policy framework for human settlements development, resulting in the Living Cape Framework (see **Chapter 5 Govern**).

The framework brings a new focus to decision making and planning for Cape Town: it calls for housing to be developed on vacant and under-used land within the urban edge by putting up housing in already developed areas, as opposed to building on undeveloped 'greenfield'

sites on the edge of the city. It recommends using 'well-located land strategically for the social good'. While some housing development should be commercial in nature, projects ought to focus on the needs of low-income and middle-income communities, allowing for ownership and rental opportunities for those who can't get into the private market in areas of 'high opportunity and amenity'.

Decisions about how land should be sold, developed, or held, should not be made on an ad hoc basis, but must 'balance development goals, with priority for social and ecological value creation'. One of the practical outcomes of the Living Cape Framework, according to the Mistra Urban Futures Cape Town platform, is a pilot project to develop housing and facilities on under-utilised public facility sites.

This kind of framework may help better inform land use and lease decisions around contentious spaces like golf courses and bowling greens within this intensely unequal city.

Mistra Urban Futures' Realising Just Cities initiatives show, though, that in the process of working with cities in this way, the outcome, like the Living Cape Framework, isn't the only important thing. The process of reaching that outcome is equally important in the lofty objective of creating a happier, healthier, more equitable city. Who is allowed to sit at the table and have their voices heard? Whose needs are represented in the outcome? What efforts are made to redress the power imbalances between different parties in the negotiation?

Every effort must be made to tackle the historical legacies of unequal cities that have denied the keys of the city to so many of those living within them.

While some housing development (in Cape Town) should be commercial in nature, projects ought to focus on the needs of low-income and middle-income communities, allowing for ownership and rental opportunities for those who can't get into the private market in areas of 'high opportunity and amenity'.

MISTRA URBAN FUTURES LOCAL INTERACTION PLATFORMS

SHEFFIELD
United Kingdom

Fourth largest city by population.
POPULATION: 575,400
FOOTPRINT: 1,550 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 371 people per km²

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Sheffield City Council is responsible for delivering services to its citizens, which sit within four portfolios: people; place; resources; and policy, performance and communications.

GREATER MANCHESTER
United Kingdom

POPULATION: 2.78 million
AREA: 1,277 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 2,204 people per km² in the Greater Manchester region, 4,716 per km² in the City of Manchester

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: The Greater Manchester Strategy focuses on eight themes of health, well-being, work and jobs, housing, transport, skills, training and economic growth.

MALMÖ
Sweden

Third largest city.
POPULATION: 334,000
AREA: 157 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 2,130 people per km²

PERCENTAGE OF CONSTRUCTED SPACE OF TOTAL AREA: 41%
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Equality, gender equality, anti-discrimination, the environment, and public participation.

GOTHENBURG
Sweden

POPULATION: 556,640
AREA: 447.76 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 1 242.8 people per km²
BUILT-UP AREA AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AREA: 29.52%

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Reducing inequality. Gothenburg has a well-developed welfare system and a high standard of living, but relative poverty, rather than absolute poverty, poses a challenge. Income inequality and relative poverty have increased between different groups and areas in the city, reinforcing existing segregation.

SHIMLA
India

POPULATION: 169,578
AREA: 35.34 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 4,798 people per km²

BUILT-UP AREA AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AREA: Limited data, but municipal estimates are that 75% is built-up, and 25% is green belt or forests

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Five priorities include transport, urban solid waste, safe and green spaces, city planning, and health and wellbeing.

BUENOS AIRES
Argentina

POPULATION: 3,059,122
AREA: 203 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 14,994 people per km²
PERCENTAGE OF CONSTRUCTED SPACE OF TOTAL AREA: 91.1% built-up; 8.9% green and open public spaces

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Upgrade slum areas to achievement of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable city and human settlements within it.

CAPE TOWN
South Africa

Second-largest economic centre and second most populous city.


POPULATION: 4,014,765
AREA: 2 456 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 1 637 people per km²
BUILT-UP AREA AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AREA: 40.3%

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Overcoming the city's apartheid legacy of spatial and socio-economic inequality through basic service delivery and transit-oriented development. Challenges include resource constraints, the environment, and climate change.

KISUMU
Kenya

Third largest city
POPULATION: 404,160
AREA: 289.9 km²
AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY: 1,394 people per km²
URBAN LAND USE: Informal settlements 38.61%; tenement housing 2.46%; other residential 11.68%; government 4.25%; industrial 12.6%; commercial 2.15%; green space 0.9%; other 27.35%

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: Land management, planning and use, housing, improvement of road network and transportation system, provision of basic services; water and sewerage, health and electricity connections, and environmental management. Solid waste management is also a growing concern.



Chapter 2 SPACE AND PLACE

It is reasonable for anyone to hope for a solid, well-built home, with running water, sturdy plumbing and a flushing toilet. It's fair to want to live in a neighbourhood close to where someone can find suitable work or some kind of livelihood. People want to feel safe in their neighbourhood, and to be close to shops, schools, libraries, and businesses. The reality is that many cities don't allow this kind of access for everyone. In many cities, the stark contrast between their elite suburbs and their ghettos is where the idea of spatial injustice is most visible. Once the concrete-and-brick part of an urban landscape is built – the homes, the street blocks, the business clusters, the transport routes, and even the bylaws that govern them – it locks neighbourhoods into a space and place that may not allow fair access to the city.

Housing and mobility are important windows into how we think about creating spatially just cities.



Left: Adiel Bassier's family moved to Kensington, Cape Town, in 1977, after the apartheid state declared District Six in the city centre 'Whites only'. Today, the 60 year old lives in a wooden 'Wendy house' in a backyard, without running water or toilet facilities.



Left: A man drinks from a communal water tap in an informal neighbourhood in Die Gat, a community which locals call a 'ghetto'.

Previous spread: A path snakes across the veld between two disparate worlds in Cape Town: the sprawling luxury of the Canal Walk shopping complex (on the right, across the N1 freeway), and Factreton, a patchwork of formal and informal housing, with high joblessness, gangsterism, and substance misuse.



BARRY CHRISTIANSON

Above: Formal and informal houses stand side by side in low-income neighbourhoods like Factreton, Cape Town. Many people living in council houses here earn extra income by renting out backyard shacks or 'Wendy houses' to tenants.

They call it *Die Gat*. The Hole. To the residents of the blue-collar neighbourhood of Factreton, this once industrial hub on the outskirts of Cape Town is a ghetto. Row upon row of ageing houses, mostly built by the council back in the 1960s, run a few blocks deep until they hit a dead end on the edge of a piece of open, unused state land that's overgrown with bush and strewn with uncollected rubbish.

'There,' says Adiel Bassier, pointing to the cluttered, sandy yards, and commenting on how much they differ from the neatly curated lawns of Kensington, the middle-class neighbourhood a kilometre or so away. 'Now you start seeing the difference.'

Just about every bricks-and-mortar council house here has informal homes crammed into whatever yard space people can find: pre-fabricated wooden Wendy houses, or one-bedroom houses hammered together from corrugated zinc sheets and plywood boards. They press up against the concrete perimeter walls, the metal sheets often weeping rusty stains after years of wear.

‘See those Wendy houses at the front? We’re not just talking about “back-yarders” here. There are side-yarders, and front yarders.’

His voice trails off.

His companion, Boeta (‘Brother’) Abdul Ohlsson, chatters from the back seat of the car.

‘See, the people standing on the corner there?’

He’s drawing attention to the number of people hanging around on street corners, mid-morning, a testimony to the high levels of joblessness in the neighbourhood. But the conversation swings quickly towards the turf war that’s flared up again between the two local gang factions operating in the area. The Americans are more ‘respectable’, as far as gangs go, he says, and mostly control the Kensington neighbourhood. Here in Factreton, it’s the Wonder Boys. It’s poorer here, so the gang is poorer. There’s more infighting. The turf is smaller, and the war is mostly over drugs and the poached *perlemoen* (abalone) trade.

‘Ja, I don’t feel comfortable walking here, there have been a lot of shootings in the area.’

Boeta Adiel makes a passing reference to being caught in crossfire recently, and tells how he negotiated with the gangsters as he tried to cross the street during the scuffle. Don’t worry about me, he’d said to them, it’s the children you need to worry about. They’re the ones who might get hurt.

Boeta Adiel doesn’t live in Factreton, but he’s still very much part of this community. His life straddles two neighbouring suburbs: he lives in a Wendy house on his family’s property in Kensington, but sometimes has to walk a block or two to collect water from a communal standpipe near a cluster of informal homes in

Side-by-side: Many neighbourhoods in Cape Town have formal and informal approaches to housing juxtaposed in close proximity.

Factreton. Like many poorer neighbourhoods in Cape Town, where the municipality has installed water shut-off devices to manage people’s daily water use, if his family’s 350 litres of allocated water gets used up early in the day and the device cuts off their water supply for the following 24-hour cycle, he has to walk a distance to collect water from the communal standpipe. He’s also a member of the Factreton mosque, so he regularly walks into the area to pray. But Boeta Adiel and Boeta Ohlsson both say they wouldn’t let their kids walk to school alone in either neighbourhood. It’s just not safe.

The view from the top of the nearby Century City train station gives a better vantage of the surrounds. To the north-west, the view is of the sprawling expanse of the polished Canal Walk shopping mall, tucked within easy reach of the N1 highway and just 15 minutes’ drive from the heart of Cape Town. To the south, Factreton, and its slightly more prim neighbour, Kensington.

The disparity between these two views is a sharp reminder that Cape Town is one of the most unequal cities in the world.

Canal Walk is one of the glitziest shopping complexes in the country. But just across the railway line lies a neighbourhood where gang wars play out in firefights in the streets. It’s an area where many people still have to empty their toilet waste down storm water drains because they don’t have flushing toilets in their makeshift backyard homes. And unemployment rates are sky-high. Where many parents’ greatest wish is simply that their children can have more to aspire to than anaesthetising themselves against hopelessness with alcohol or some other cheap drug, or be free from the temptation of gang life.



Factreton – ‘Factory Town’ – gets its name from the bustling industrial area it once was, packed mostly with clothing factories until about the 1960s. The state rezoned part of the area for housing in the 1940s, and the working class suburb grew out of it. This later became one of the ‘dumping grounds’ for people of colour under the South African apartheid state’s forced removals programme and Group Areas Act. For decades, only ‘Coloured’ people were legally allowed to live here. Most of the homes are council-owned, and falling into disrepair, with cash-strapped families often building illegal dwellings in their front and back yards, which they rent out as a way to boost their income.

Boeta Adiel’s wooden Wendy house doesn’t have running water, a flushing toilet, or electricity, and he shares the dwelling with four others. An electrical cable runs through a window in his

house, across the yard, and into the main house a few meters away, which powers his electrical appliances and lights. He collects water in containers from the main house. He has to use a bucket as a toilet, and throws the waste down one of the main house’s outdoor drains.

The 60-year-old man is a screen printer by trade. He grew up in District Six before the apartheid state declared this city-centre neighbourhood a ‘Whites only’ enclave and began forcibly removing all people of colour from the area in 1968. Boeta Adiel’s family moved to Kensington when he was in his late teens in 1977, after his parents bought a small property with two homes on the single plot. But Boeta Adiel’s career in screen printing came to an early end when a car accident and the onset of rheumatoid arthritis a few years later meant he could no longer work in the industry.

TRANSPORT HUBS CONNECT THE CITY: A STORY FROM GOTHENBURG

Borås Central Station is about an hour's train trip east of Gothenburg, Sweden, and an important junction on a spider web of railway tracks that were first laid down in the 1870s. This is a world apart from the unkept dirt road that leads from Boeta Adiel's Kensington community to his nearest train station at Century City in Cape Town, South Africa, where the road is so dented with potholes that a car can only pick its way over it at crawling speed.

The Borås station looks like the ideal modern urban connection. The old station's historic red brick building is neat and cared for. Its roof is the colour of weather-greened copper. Twin lines of young trees give the promise of decades of shady canopy for future commuters moving in and out of the station. The cobbled pavings are swept and litter-free.

But even this manicured historic site, in the heart of a wealthy society, is the focus of similar questions about the importance of mobility hubs in creating cities that are connected and accessible for everyone.

The Borås municipality is one of 12 city administrations in Sweden that are grappling with these questions in their local context as

a part of the Mistra Urban Futures knowledge process, the Urban Station Communities initiative. Realising that these areas are likely to become ever more dense, the municipalities see the need to plan for integrated, connected, human-friendly neighbourhoods in the vicinity of these stations.

How can city administrations create transport hubs that are more appealing and accessible, and that allow cities and their residents to become more interconnected within the urban landscape? How should they rework their central stations to be less noisy, more visually beautiful and welcoming, and easier to reach for foot traffic and people commuting by bicycle and local buses? Can creating places and nodes that encourage non-motorised transport and discourage cars help to lower travellers' carbon footprint?

Borås municipality teamed up with other partner organisations in 2014, through Mistra Urban Futures Urban Station Communities knowledge process, to embark on a five-year process of examining its central station. They wanted to see how this could be part of a corridor system that is inviting to travellers, allows access to the wider city, and cuts back on fossil fuel

travel. The goal was to produce an implementable and practical plan to achieve this.

But the process of how this plan was drawn up is as important as the plan itself. Through the Urban Station Communities knowledge process, researchers were able to work with the municipality and other important stakeholders to widen theoretical and conceptual thinking, and also draw in transdisciplinary collaborations from people in different organisations and professions concerned with urban planning and mobility. This process included the Borås municipality doing an in-depth corridors analysis, and a research project supported by the Swedish Energy Agency.

'It is important to have integrated urban and transportation planning, and also to address social, economic and ecological goals in a cocreative working process, like we did in Borås,' says architect and urban planner, Professor Emeritus Ulf Ranhagen with Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg. He and regional planner Anna Gustafsson both worked as process leaders on the Urban Station Communities project.

The societies and communities that these municipalities foster in



the vicinity of important station hubs call for transport-friendly social planning, sustainable economic development and creating attractive regions, explains the Mistra Urban Futures team in Gothenburg. The aim is to create 'efficient chains for everyday travel, reduce the number of parking spaces, and eventually create completely fossil-free traffic'.

'Urban planning is a long chain from idea to implementation, but the clear visions for sustainable urban development and mobility is now decided politically and

expressed in the comprehensive plan for Borås which will help realise this. Within three to five years the first phases of the vision will be visible on the ground,' says Ranhagen.

Borås will soon begin rolling out its plan to create more attractive corridors between the station and surrounds, so that they 'feel bigger and more uniform', making travel points more beautiful, with lower noise pollution, and with streets and walking routes made just for pedestrians and cyclists.

Creative flow: an ideas development group uses a 'design dialogue' approach to come up with innovative solutions for climate smart and attractive transportation nodes in Gothenburg.



RETHA FERGUSON

Brakes and barbers: Voortrekker Road has a wide variety of businesses and services. Here a woman walks in front of burning rubble outside a vacated shop.



RETHA FERGUSON

Voortrekker Road is one of the oldest roads in Cape Town, and is an important transport route linking the inner city with Belville. Local government has earmarked a stretch of this road as a corridor for development that it hopes will make the area more inclusive and integrated through social and spatial transformation.

Boeta Adiel has lived in Kensington ever since. For the past almost two decades he has only been able to afford to rent rooms in backyard Wendy houses. Today, he's back on the family property in the back-yard dwelling, while his brothers' families now live in the two main houses. This frustrating history of his own housing needs might explain why he's become active in community-led efforts to raise the profile of an issue that's central to his community: the shortage of affordable housing.

His home is set a few blocks back from Voortrekker Road, one of the oldest thoroughfares linking Cape Town to the rest of the country. The road gets its name from a 1938 re-enactment

of the white settler migration that headed off into the hinterland of the country in 1835, known as the 'Great Trek'. A railway line into the interior was built alongside this road in the 1860s. Nearly a century later, the building of the N1 freeway in the 1950s formalised the area as a transport corridor running from the city centre through to what are now the newer suburbs and industrial hubs that have mushroomed around the city since then.

Today, this asphalt artery has a gritty industrial feel. It is edged on one side by the sprawling Maitland Cemetery; on the other, it is dotted with second-hand car dealerships and small businesses.

This road has become part of the Voortrekker Road Corridor Integration Zone (VRCIZ), an initiative by Cape Town's municipality to develop the area in the hope of making it more inclusive and integrated through social and spatial transformation.

Cape Town is still bedevilled by its colonial and apartheid history, which forced communities of colour into neighbourhoods on the fringe of the city and the economy, where services to many households remains below-par and typical of much of the service delivery backlog across lower-income communities.

According to census data⁶, by 2015 about 30 000 households across the city didn't have running water within 200m of their yard; 74 800 households only had a bucket toilet in their

home or no sanitation at all; 22 000 households had to use their own refuse dump or had no refuse disposal; and nearly 36 000 households didn't have basic electricity.

Today, 90 per cent of Cape Town is still locked into this divide through spatial planning and social engineering, writes researcher Mercy Brown-Luthango⁷ from the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Understanding this inequality in the spatial arrangement of Cape Town has been central to the Mistra Urban Futures work, both here and in other cities falling in the scope of their studies.

Spatial inequality continues to limit the integration of people of different ethnicities and social classes here. Poor families from historically marginalised communities, like the one Boeta Adiel grew up in, are on the receiving end of the worst of this spatial fragmentation. People living in Kensington and Factreton aren't only hit in terms of being excluded from the city's mainstream economy, says Brown-Luthango, but also bear the cost of social exclusion, too.

The VRCIZ initiative is an attempt by the Cape Town municipality to address this inequality, expressed through the structural inequalities that linger long after the laws changed, to include all South Africans in the democratic project. The idea of the VRCIZ is to create a more 'inclusive, integrated and vibrant' city. Central to this, as laid out in the city's Spatial Development Framework, is to find better ways to drive urban

development and improved mobility. This means creating a densified city, where more people live together on a smaller residential footprint, but with planning that's conducive to their well-being. It is also about better quality public transport linking communities to the rest of the city. If this is done well, it should restructure the city to be more spatially and socially fair.

The African Centre for Cities has been tracking the VRCIZ initiative, and working in Kensington and Factreton on the western edge of the VRCIZ, to understand the everyday experience of the people living here. Will the economic and social benefits of the VRCIZ reach deeper into the community, beyond just a few blocks on either side of Voortrekker Road?

Boeta Adiel has been working with the ACC researchers to do this work, as part of a team that did door-to-door interviews in the neighbourhood in 2016. He is getting involved with the ongoing awareness-raising of the wider needs of his community.

Affordable housing is central to this work, he says, not just because everyone should have the dignity of living in a safe, warm, well-serviced home, but because a city should include all of its residents in its day-to-day functioning. Where someone lives, and how well that community is run, determines whether a person can find work, or run a business, explore their spiritual and cultural pursuits, be safe, and be part of the governing of their community.

What is 'spatial justice'?

Does someone like Boeta Adiel have the keys to the city of Cape Town?

In principle, he does. The laws of the country now grant everyone equal standing and rights, regardless of the colour of their skin. But does this mean everyone has an equal chance to move through the city, to have fair and equitable access to its amenities, its governance, and its economy?

Does someone like Boeta Adiel enjoy the three dimensions of a just city, as defined by political theorist and scholar Professor Susan Fainstein from the Harvard Graduate School of Design: equity, diversity, and democracy?

Equity refers to the distribution of material and non-material benefits that come from public policy in ways that do not favour those who are already better off, write ACC researchers and Mistra Urban Futures team members Dr Rike Sitas and Dr Warren Smit. This comes from efforts to have more inclusive housing and regulations that slow gentrification, and through providing affordable public transport⁸.

A diverse city-space is the end result of processes that allow for the integration of races and classes within the physical space. This is reached through zoning schemes, for instance, that permit a range of uses, allowing access to public spaces. It calls for targeted assistance to groups historically discriminated against when it comes to housing, education, and employment.

6 City of Cape Town. 2014. *City of Cape Town Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP) 2014/15*. Cape Town: City of Cape Town.

7 Brown-Luthango, M. 2018. *The Prospect for Socio-Spatial Transformation in the Voortrekker Road Corridor Integration Zone*. Cape Town: African Centre for Cities.

8 Palmer, H. & Walasek, H. (Eds.). 2016. *Co-production in Action: Towards Realising Just Cities*. Gothenburg: Mistra Urban Futures.

Democracy is more than just having the right to vote. Having the proverbial keys to the city means that everyone's interests are represented in decision-making and governance at a city level. This can be achieved through participatory planning and budgeting processes, both at a local and a city-wide scale, that include everyone in a community, so that their needs and voices are represented fairly.

In her book *The Just City*⁹, Fainstein says that injustice on a city-scale includes actions 'that disadvantage those who already have less or are excluded from entitlements enjoyed by others who are no more deserving'.

A just city, she writes, is one in which 'public investment and regulation... produce equitable outcomes rather than support those already well off'. Equal access to opportunities in a city is meaningless without developing the ability of people to be able to make use of these opportunities. Democratic participation is meaningless if a person can't easily get to a voting station, or to any public participation process. Supporting housing development is meaningless if people like Boeta Adiel can't afford to rent or buy in his neighbourhood, or if he doesn't have a political platform to have his voice heard on matters relating to housing.

Spatial justice, a term coined by former ACC deputy director Professor Gordon Pirie in 1983, has to do with how notions of democracy, fairness, dignity, and human rights express themselves in the spaces in which we live. The physical dimensions of the fixed form of the city, the space in which we inhabit, becomes the stage upon which people's everyday behaviour plays out. This focus on urban space is about re-looking at the effects of city living 'not just on everyday behaviour but on such processes as technological innovation, artistic creativity,

economic development, social change as well as environmental degradation, social polarization, widening income gaps, international politics, and, more specifically, the production of justice and injustice,' writes the internationally renowned urbanist and political geographer Professor Edward Soja¹⁰.

'Spatial justice is not a substitute or alternative to social, economic, or other forms of justice, but rather a way of looking at justice from a critical spatial perspective.'

City geography or distribution patterns may impose 'location discrimination' on certain communities because of where they live, says Soja. This can amplify spatial injustice, entrenching lasting spatial structures of privilege and advantage. This is seen most commonly in the ongoing privileging of some classes, races and gender groups over others.

The concept of justice and its relation to notions of democracy, equality, citizenship, and civil rights takes on a new meaning in the current context. The search for justice in this new form calls for pulling together 'new social movements and coalition-building spanning the political spectrum', writes Soja, 'extending the concept of justice beyond the social and the economic to new forms of struggle and activism.'

Through the Voortrekker Road Corridor research initiative, the collaboration between the Mistra Urban Futures' Cape Town team, the city administration, and the people living in Factretton and Kensington, is a way of building novel partnerships for democratic decision-making. It's a way of including the voices of people living in areas that have been marginalised by years of historic segregation policies, which have pushed them to the edge of the economy and locked them into the structural inequalities visible in the city.



Cape Town's colonial and apartheid history is cemented into its modern city layout. Freeways and green belts were important strategies for dividing the city, showing that notions of fairness or injustice also express themselves in spatial form.

9 Fainstein, S. 2010. *The Just City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

10 Soja, E. 2008. *The City and Spatial Justice*. Spatial Justice International Conference, University of Paris X, Nanterre. Available: <https://www.jssj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/JSSJ1-1en4.pdf>.

COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING: A MODERN REVOLUTION FOR MANCHESTER?

Greater Manchester in the UK is far from the neglected streets of Facticeon in Cape Town. And yet, this northern city-region also has its roots in the textile industry. Greater Manchester was at the heart of the Industrial Revolution, giving birth to trade unionism and the co-operative movement. Even here, though, the dynamics of social and spatial inequality are at work, creating pockets of deprivation, communities that have been left behind, and a housing and homelessness crisis.

Greater Manchester Housing Action (GMHA) was formed in 2015, with the aim of securing a fairer and more affordable housing system, particularly for the most vulnerable¹¹. This was a response to the worsening housing crisis in the UK where exploitative private landlords are common, and where a shrinking social housing sector struggles against a ruthlessly competitive private market. A growing number of people are forced to live homeless on the streets, which may have links to the austerity policies of the UK central government since 2010.

According to Dr Sophie King, research fellow at Sheffield University's Urban Institute and member of the Mistra Urban Futures initiative,

GMHA was also a response to the political opportunity of city-regional devolution of certain national-level government roles and responsibilities within the UK.

'GMHA is focused on redressing the displacement and marginalisation of such communities in the face of gentrification pressures, speculative land and property investments, discriminatory welfare and housing policies, and poor local enforcement of affordable housing requirements on large private developers,' she says.

The struggle against daily injustices such as homelessness and eviction can lead activists to be reactive. But from the start, GMHA's approach was to contribute to a movement that could take a proactive approach to shaping political discourse through promoting solutions and alternatives, while also supporting priority campaigns. Early mobilisers recognised the importance of exploring alternatives to current service provision. They established a working group to think through the potential of community-led approaches, both locally and internationally, to contribute to greater social and spatial justice in the UK.

'Community-led housing is about more than just looking at the physical infrastructure of safe and af-

fordable bricks-and-mortar homes for people to live in. It's about re-making the local political landscape and having conversations about the right to the city,' says King.

In 2017, the Mistra Urban Futures Sheffield-Manchester team began working with the GMHA to think about ways in which academic partnership could add value to the potential for community-led housing to contribute to social and spatial justice in the Greater Manchester city-region. Housing Futures is the partnership that emerged from this. It focused on bringing key stakeholders together to jointly pool and build their knowledge and experience, and become better informed about the different ways in which co-operative and community-led models for housing provision could address deficits in housing, regeneration and local democracy.

The initiative focused in particular on understanding the ways in which community-led housing could benefit communities in the city who have experienced long-term deprivation following years of economic restructuring in the post-industrial era.

Since Housing Futures began in 2017, GMHA has become a key part of the community-led housing movement within Greater Manches-

ter. It has created a new network of activists, academics, and community members who are interested in exploring alternative accommodation models, such as community land trusts. They have also helped set up different networking platforms, raise awareness about these issues, stimulate public debate, and bring proposals on community-led housing into the new city-regional official housing strategy.

They are now involved in planning a partnership hub with the city-regional government, local housing associations who help provide state-subsidised housing, and other key stakeholders. The hub will give advice and help with fundraising and capacity building with new groups wanting to develop community-led housing projects. Manchester City Council has pledged to make three sites of council land available for pilot community-led initiatives within the city itself.

'Back in the 1970s, in the middle of social and economic crisis in the UK, there was new energy behind ideas of how people could establish their own forms of socially and ecologically just housing,' says Housing Futures steering group member Dr Richard Goulding¹².

Following this, co-operative housing became popular for a time, but

fizzled out as the movement lost financial and political support during the 1980s.

'More recently, the perception of co-operative forms of housing has been that it is seen as a marginal tenure for activists and environmentalists interested in demonstrating the potential for more ecologically sustainable housing solutions. It has also been criticised for failing to provide affordable housing at scale', says Goulding.

Although the community land trust movement is a relatively new phenomenon in the UK, Housing Futures refer to existing experiments like Granby 4 Streets in the City of Liverpool as examples of how community land trusts can create the potential for imaginative and sustained neighbourhood revival. Examples from the United States, like the Champlain Housing Trust in Vermont, are provided as evidence that community land trusts can provide affordable housing at scale.


'In the midst of a crisis in housing and local democratic control, people want to know about how different models of community-led housing can create new opportunities for areas struggling after years of neglect', explains Housing Futures chair and GMHA co-ordinator Hannah Berry.



Manchester groups visit Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust.

SOPHIE KING

- 11 Greater Manchester Housing Action. <http://www.gmhousingaction.com/about/>
- 12 Housing Futures: Community-led Alternatives for Greater Manchester. <http://www.gmhousingaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Housing-futures-MAIN-REPORT-Final.pdf>



Chapter 3
**LEAVE
NO ONE
BEHIND**

The idea of ecological justice has its roots in efforts to protect wilderness and conservation spaces in rural hinterlands. Now that half our population is settled in cities, being able to live in a healthy environment takes on new dimensions: do we have access to affordable, wholesome food? Is the air healthy to breathe? Is our neighbourhood safe from the hazards of solid waste pollution or failed sanitation?

The slogan for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda is that we should 'leave no one behind'. What does this mean at a city level, in the context of creating a healthy living environment for all?

Previous spread: 'Leave no-one behind' is a foundational principle of the UN's 2030 Agenda - even in the toughest city ghettos like Villa 31 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The ghettos of Buenos Aires

are known as the *villas miseria*, the 'villages of misery'. Villa 31 is perhaps the most infamous of the Argentinian capital's informally-built inner-city neighbourhoods. The 2km-long strip of two-, three-, and four-storey apartment blocks, with tiny flats stacked on top of one another like a Tetris puzzle, is sandwiched between the industrial face of the harbour and the glamorous city centre. A no-man's-land of train tracks cuts between these two disparate neighbourhoods.

The residents of Villa 31 face the usual hardships that come when people are crammed into over-crowded, poorly serviced living conditions.

'Like most villas, 31 isn't connected to an official power grid,' writes Luisa Rollenhagen, in *The Guardian* newspaper¹³. 'Cables hang across the settlement, illegally tapping electricity from nearby power lines, there are almost no paved roads, and no official sewage system or running water. When it rains heavily, the labyrinthine alleys turn into muddy, smelly canals. Emergency vehicles can't squeeze through the narrow streets.'

The neighbourhood is rife with gang violence and crime, and it has the second-highest murder rate in the city, she says.

If the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to ensure that no one is left behind, then cities need to make significant changes in neighbourhoods where people are living in conditions similar to those in the *villas miseria*.

The city's housing challenges are central to

Buenos Aires's efforts to weave the principles of the SDGs into its city management and planning. The Argentinian capital is at the forefront of trying to bring these lofty international goals to reality on its streets, says Dr Sandra Cristina Valencia, lead researcher with the Mistra Urban Futures project on 'Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at the City Level'. Valencia is based at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden, and has been considering how municipalities in seven of the Mistra Urban Futures cities on four continents can implement the SDGs on the ground in their cities. She has been working with a Buenos Aires-based team of researchers and the Buenos Aires administration on a two-year research project aimed at grappling with local-level SDG implementation.

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, which evolved out of the Millennium Development Goals signed in 2000, are a global effort to get all participating countries to make a national commitment to 'end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity'. The SDGs were launched in 2016, with the United Nations Development Programme spearheading the process in 170 countries and territories to realise 17 different goals.

SDG 11 is geared specifically towards making 'cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

How does the UN define what a healthy city should look like?

According to the UN, a billion people around the world still live in urban slums or informal

settlements. Many still don't have 'convenient access to public transport... defined as living within 500m walking distance of a bus stop or within 1000m of a railway or ferry terminal'. The lowest access rates are in developing countries. Some two billion people around the world don't enjoy the benefits of waste collection services, and three billion don't have access to controlled waste disposal facilities. Air pollution remains a significant problem, with UN figures showing that in 2016, nine out of 10 people living in cities still 'breathed air that did not meet the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines for particulate matter'. Most city-living people don't have 'convenient access to open public spaces... defined as spaces within 400m walking distance of their residence'¹⁴.

By 2019, 150 countries around the world were specifically working on policies to address these issues in their local contexts. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) is another initiative contributing to achieve these development goals in cities. The NUA was adopted by participating countries at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016, organised by UN-Habitat, and outlines the principles, policies and standards needed to achieve sustainable urban development. It has three guid-

ing principles: leave no one behind, ensuring urban equality and eradicating poverty; achieve sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all; and foster ecological and resilient cities and human settlements¹⁵.

But while signatory countries to the SDGs and the NUA show willingness to reach these goals, municipalities are still battling to bridge the gap between these in-principle commitments by their national governments, and the reality of implementing the SDGs on the streets, according to Valencia.

Valencia has been co-ordinating a comparative project in seven cities where teams are trying to better understand the implications of implementing these goals on a city scale, and how they need to be adapted to local circumstances. The city teams are based in Cape Town in South Africa, Kisumu in Kenya, Sheffield in the UK, the Swedish cities of Gothenburg and Malmö, Buenos Aires in Argentina, and the Indian city of Shimla.

'By comparing these different cities, we found five areas where we thought it necessary to think about tailoring these goals to the unique situations in each one,' explains Valencia¹⁶. 'Local governments need to consider the questions of what the boundaries of the city are, including the jurisdictional limits of the municipi-

13 Rollenhagen, L. 2014. Should a notorious Buenos Aires slum become an official neighbourhood? *The Guardian*, 7 August. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/aug/07/should-a-notorious-buenos-aires-slum-become-an-official-neighbourhood>

14 Sustainable Development Goal 11. 2019. Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>.

15 World Economic Forum. 2016. The New Urban Agenda Has Been Formally Adopted. So What Happens Next? <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/11/last-month-a-new-global-agreement-to-drive-sustainable-urban-development-was-reached-so-what-is-it-and-happens-next/>.

16 Valencia, S.C., Simon, D., Croese, S., Nordqvist, J., Oloko, M., Sharma, T., Taylor Buck, N. & Versace, I. 2019. Adapting the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda to the City Level: Initial reflections from a comparative research project. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 11(1): 4-23. DOI: 10.1080/19463138.2019.1573172

Right: Environmental justice is about more than just pollution within a cityscape. It speaks to the structural reasons underlying why poorer communities often find

themselves living in parts of the city where they are disproportionately exposed to the damaging health and environmental impacts of pollution.

pality, how they coordinate with different levels of government at regional and national levels, and other non-government actors, who these actors are, what synergies and trade-offs are between different initiatives aimed at achieving particular SDGs, and how we measure whether they've been achieved or not, according to specific indicators.'

Comparing these cities and their opportunities for localising the SDGs is challenging, though, because each context is so different.

Defining the 'edge' of the city varies from country to country. India, for instance, counts a city as a settlement with a minimum of 5 000 people, whereas the population of a Kenyan city starts at 250 000 people.

The different institutional responsibilities for each city also make comparison difficult. Municipalities in Sweden have a mandate over planning and education at primary and secondary school level, while tertiary education is a national government responsibility. Healthcare and public transport, on the other hand, are a regional government responsibility. In Cape Town, the city has to handle planning, housing, transport, economic development and some aspects of safety and security, while education and healthcare are mainly the responsibility of the provincial government. Each city's ability to implement national SDG commitments means working closely with provincial and national government structures. Working towards integrated governance between these spheres of government institutions to roll out the SDGs on a city scale means working together across sectors and breaking institutional silos.

This also calls for the public sector to work with business, civil society, and the city's resi-

dents, and the process has to be participatory.

'There are always going to be trade-offs and synergies in implementing the SDGs on a city scale,' says Valencia. 'For instance, if a city wants to increase its housing, this could come at the cost of farmland or forest on the urban edge. This will impact on ecosystem services and local food production. And yet if urban areas are densified, this can affect urban green areas, air quality, and health.'

Cities need to consider the potential conflicts between the individual SDG targets, and what intended or unintended consequences may come from these conflicts.

The SDGs have 169 different targets. Measuring their reach is done according to the UN's specific 244 indicators. This may be difficult, however, where the availability of data across the globe is uneven, or where the targets may be unclear or there may be confusion as to how these targets should be monitored.

'Many targets cut across complex issues as well as across jurisdictions within a city,' explains Valencia. 'In India, for instance, many different agencies are responsible for water and sanitation, so monitoring progress towards the clean water and sanitation goal is divided across institutions.'

The SDGs targets and indicators aren't enough to monitor progress, she says, and cities need to develop their own complementary measures, which should also include some qualitative methods.



BARRY CHRISTIANSON

Bringing ecological justice to the streets through the SDGs

The notion of ecological or environmental justice in the city is closely tied to the idea of spatial justice.

'The urban environmental justice movement began in the 1970s in the United States,' write Mistra Urban Futures' Dr Rike Sitas and Dr Warren Smit¹⁷. In the city context, there was a growing awareness that the negative impacts of environmental degradation, such as toxic waste, solid waste and air pollution, were meted out unevenly, and that marginalised communities

and people of colour were disproportionately exposed to the worst of those impacts.

Professor Susan Cutter from the Department of Geography at the University of South Carolina writes, 'We know that environmental risks are unevenly distributed within and between societies¹⁸ and the notion of environmental equity draws attention to why this might be.

There are three main roots for it, argues Cutter: social, generational, and procedural.

Social equity suggests the social and econom-

¹⁷ Palmer, H. & Walasek, H. (Eds.). 2016. *Co-production in Action: Towards Realising Just Cities*. Gothenburg: Mistra Urban Futures.

¹⁸ Cutter, S.L. 1995. *Race, Class and Environmental Justice*. *Progress in Human Geography*, 19(1): 111-122.

ic reasons that drive behaviour that damages the environment, such as class, race, gender, ethnicity, and political power. The location of economic activities, factors such as property values or access to transport, and the social geography of places can create ‘the landscape of risk’, argues Cutter.

Generational equity is expressed through the laws which bring justice to future generations from past and present practices. Today’s public policies need to bring justice to our children and grandchildren, writes Cutter, we can’t mortgage tomorrow’s environment for our short-term gain.

Procedural equity has to do with how laws and regulations might be applied fairly.

When we talk of environmental justice, then, Cutter said this suggests there needs to be a ‘remedial action’ in order to address some form of injustice relating to the environment or how a degraded environment might impact on people.

Communities should be protected from a degraded environment and the negative health impacts that might come from that. Environmental justice also suggests that there should be mechanisms to assign responsibility for causing damage to the environment and ways to take remedial action when damage is done to the environment.

The emergent environmental justice movement from the 1970s has shifted the focus from being an elite movement steeped largely in ‘white upper-class environmental rhetoric’ focused on the need to preserve distant pristine habitats. Now, writes Cutter, the movement is about a ‘more localized strategy on environmental improvement in the quality of life closer to the homes of affected residents.’

This notion of a healthy environment also translates into the city context, and poorer communities often end up living in or close to environmentally degraded spaces, such as sources of pollution.

‘Even in a city like Gothenburg, where there are still high levels of segregation, this can contribute towards environmental injustice,’ explains Valencia. ‘Good housing, so that people don’t live in overcrowded conditions, is a part of that. It also translates into people being able to live in a city where they aren’t exposed to high levels of air pollution, or waste, or other dangerous forms of pollution.’

Back to the streets of Buenos Aires

The UN’s Rio Declaration from 1992 recognises that a healthy environment is a basic right for everyone on the planet. And yet, when it comes to rolling out the SDGs at a city level, this is made difficult by the fact that environmental justice isn’t explicit in any one of the SDGs. They might allude to the need for a healthy environment, but don’t target issues of environmental justice.

As much as a project aimed at improving the living conditions of those in the *villas miserias* in Buenos Aires is about redressing environmental injustice, it is also about improving housing conditions in these unplanned informal settlements.

With all the participating cities in the Mistra Urban Futures SDGs project, collaboration amongst different actors was central to the city-to-city comparison process. In Buenos Aires,

this meant pulling together three groups to get a transdisciplinary team collaborating on the process of knowledge building: academics from Mistra Urban Futures based at the University of Buenos Aires, as well as the Buenos Aires office of the Observatory on Latin America (which is part of The New School in New York); civil society, specifically the Centre for Legal and Social Studies in Buenos Aires; and the Buenos Aires government’s General and International Affairs Secretariat, which is in charge of localising the SDGs at the city level.

The group agreed on a shared research focus and work plan, with clear objectives for each contributing partner.

‘Initially, the local team focused on a government priority; namely habitat issues, which meant looking into SDG 11, since it deals with housing, transportation, and public and green spaces, as well as targets in other goals. This also addresses habitat-related aspects such as access to water and sanitation in SDG 6, and electricity in SDG 7. The local transdisciplinary team considered the UN-recommended indicators for the relevant targets and how to adapt them to the Buenos Aires context,’ explains Valencia.

After that, they held workshops and virtual exchanges with Mistra Urban Futures teams in Cape Town and Gothenburg, to share information and experiences about localising the SDGs, with a particular focus on housing, gender, migration, and awareness raising. They also had virtual conversations with the Greater London Authority to share their experiences of adapting the SDG goals to their local metropolitan context, while teams from all seven cities worked intensively at successive Mistra Urban

Futures annual conferences, building mutual understanding and undertaking peer-to-peer learning and evaluation.

The seven-city comparison of how SDG implementation should take place is part of a wider effort to achieve more socially inclusive, economically viable and ecologically sound cities, argues the Mistra Urban Futures team. Central to this programme has been the process of working together across sectors in order to jointly plan the processes that can realise SDGs on the streets of the respective cities, and draw up monitoring frameworks to measure progress towards the objectives, particularly those embedded in the urban SDG 11.

While the work has gained good traction over the two-year process, as the Mistra Urban Futures SDG project team wrapped up and reviewed the success of the programme in the seven cities, they agreed that the main limitation was that the bulk of the work and collaboration in most cities took place within the local governments. These city administrations need to foster wider collaboration with the private sector and civil society organisations, so that they can gear up their planning to be more inclusive and allow for better participation.

‘Buenos Aires was the exception in this regard, though,’ says Valencia. ‘Even before the SDGs research project began, the city was already engaging with different partners outside of the municipality, and took it further in 2019 by drawing up a report with collaborators outside of the government on how the different actors are using the 2030 Agenda. The project, in turn, facilitated several conversations between sectors, particularly relating to how they’re tackling the housing situation.’

FOOD 'SWAMPS' AND THE UNHEALTHY CITY ENVIRONMENT

The idea of a food 'swamp' hints at an environment that is flooded and unhealthy. It's a term that's being used more and more to refer to the unhealthy food environment in some parts of contemporary cities. There may not be a shortage of actual calories in these 'swampy' areas, but rather it alludes to areas in a city that are inundated with cheap, packaged, ultra-processed, and ultimately nutritionally 'dead' foods. These unhealthy foods are also forced onto consumers by aggressive advertising.

The presence of these food swamps is why many cities can be deceptive: they appear to be awash with calories of every kind, and yet city food systems still leave many residents hungry, heavy, and sick. People in poorer communities are more likely to find themselves in food swamps, compared with those in wealthier neighbourhoods in the same city. 'Food deserts' is another term used to describe parts of a city where there is a prevalence of cheap, highly processed food with little nutritional value, and a shortage of wholesome, affordable food.

Research by the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN), whose work overlaps with some of the Mistra Urban Futures work, maps the extent of food insecurity

in many southern African cities. This work has helped measure the prevalence of food swamps, particularly in lower-income communities, and how these lead to a lack of access to affordable, healthy food. In turn, this impacts on people's lives and health. The consequence of living in communities where there's food poverty is often the physical discomfort of daily hunger because there isn't adequate food in the home. But it is also evident in signs of longer-term nutritional deprivation, such as childhood stunting or high adult obesity rates, which are two sides of the same malnutrition coin. People may be eating plenty of cheap, starchy, highly processed calories each day, but not getting the good nutrition they need to be healthy in the long term.

All four Mistra Urban Futures teams – Cape Town, Gothenburg, Sheffield-Greater Manchester, and Kisumu – used the food system as a lens through which to consider what a healthy city environment should look like. This work used collaborative processes to ask questions relating to city-scale food systems, food security issues, and the value chains that are unique to each city or city-region.¹⁹

The Kisumu team took a special interest in the role of the informal

market system, and found that it is critical in allowing people stable and reliable access to affordable and essential foods. Their findings also showed that the formal and informal food systems are entwined, operating as one. The residents of Kisumu use this complex network of formal and informal food value chains and outlets strategically, depending on their needs or resources at different times.

The challenge for cities like Kisumu, where it is key for governments to be proactively involved in food-sensitive design and planning, is that food security issues are largely the responsibility of national or regional governments. Local government has little food system authority, according to Mistra Urban Futures researchers.

As a result of this research, the Kisumu food team was able to work with a range of government officials, market operators, civil society organisations, and academics, to draw up policy recommendations tailored to address specific issues for food system decision makers.²⁰

While many lower-income city communities have no easy access to a healthy diet including fresh produce, this community garden at Heeley City Farm in Sheffield provides an opportunity to grow.



RIKE SITAS

19 Haysom, G., Olsson, E.G.A., Dymitrow, M., Opiyo, P., Taylor Buck, N., Oloko, M., Spring, C., Fermskog, K., Ingelhart, K., Kotze, S. & Gaya Agong, S.G. 2019. Food Systems Sustainability: An Examination of Different Viewpoints on Food System Change. *Sustainability*, 11: 3337. doi:10.3390/su11123337.

20 For further reading, see the Consuming Urban Poverty Food Systems Planning and Governance in Africa's Secondary Cities policy briefs: <https://consumingurbanpoverty.wordpress.com/policy-briefs-and-public-statements/>

ONLINE PLATFORM CONNECTS DIVERSE PLAYERS IN SHEFFIELD FOODSCAPE

A city like Sheffield in the UK might have many individuals or organisations working towards creating a healthier and more sustainable food system, but if they can't talk to each other, they might not be as effective as they could be. One community might be growing organic vegetables in an allotment on one side of town, while a new café or boutique restaurant might be looking to buy fresh local produce on the other, but these two parts of the food system might not know that the other exists.

Global North cities like Sheffield and Manchester have many challenges that intersect with food issues or different parts of the food system. These include questions relating to poor diets, particularly in lower-income communities, and the resulting obesity and other diet-related health problems. Other questions may include food poverty and waste, climate change, biodiversity loss, declining prosperity, and even social dislocation.

The Mistra Urban Futures UK team has glimpsed opportunities for how changes in the food system can help meet economic, health and environmental urban policy targets in these cities. But have wanted to see what bottlenecks there might be in making this a reality.²¹

Through the SAFE project – the Self-Organising Action for Food Equity initiative – the team set up a two-year research process in keeping with Mistra Urban Futures' core ethos, to engage in thinking and policy-making that draws in many different stakeholders in a system. Starting in December 2017, the team brought together a cross-section of players from within the food systems to get the lie of the land: local government officials, especially those working in the area of public health, academics, civil society organisations, food industry actors, and consultants.

The idea was to explore how to increase participation in initiatives that enhance food quality, affordability, and access in low-income communities, through supporting self-organising social networks, explains Dr Nick Taylor Buck. At the time, he was a research fellow with the Urban Institute at Sheffield University and ran the SAFE project.

An 'action research team' emerged out of this collaboration, which found that poor communication and an overall lack of co-ordination across the food system in both cities were two key areas where they could intervene.

The first initiative to develop out of this was ShefFood, the Sheffield Food Partnership, along with a website that allows members to sign up, coordinate across the food system, and speak more effectively with one another. A similar network and digital platform is being pulled together for Manchester.

'The name of the project speaks for itself; it's about allowing the community to organise itself,' says Taylor Buck. 'We wanted to create some kind of digital infrastructure that could be owned collectively and evolve as required by the needs of the network.'

As the SAFE team anticipated, various champions have stepped forward, which is allowing the network to gain momentum.

The idea for the ShefFood partnership, and the similar body developing in Manchester, is to get wider conversations going about sustainability and society.

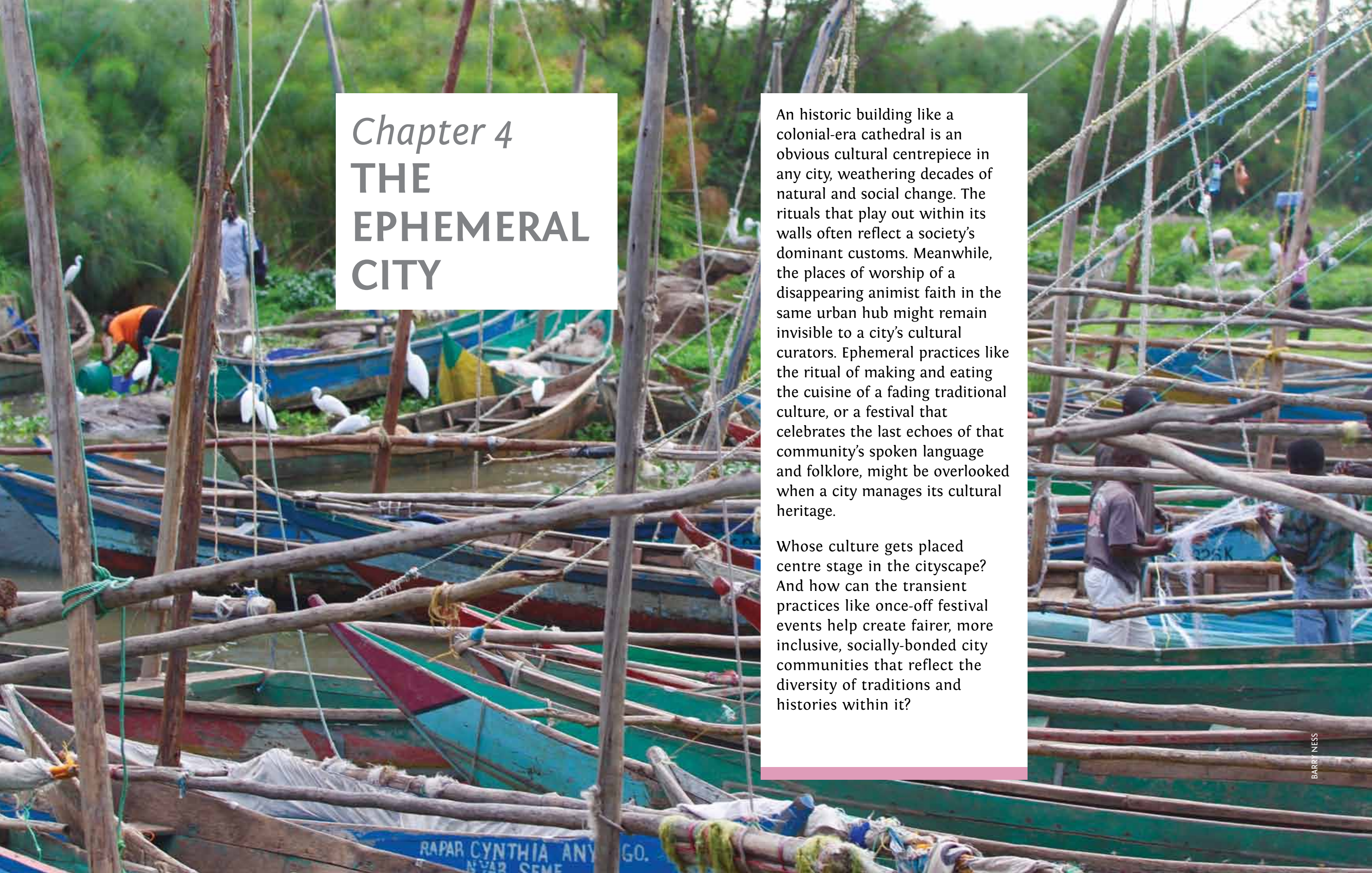
'We wanted to get people to be aware of what's available to them, and what resources are around them if they want to get involved in growing or preparing or cooking food. Food is a social glue, it's at the heart of some of our greatest problems,' says Taylor Buck, 'but is also a vital part of the solution.'

Meeting face-to-face is also important, though, and the Heeley City Farm near central Sheffield gives an ideal space to do just that. Heeley is a place to experiment with urban agriculture. It has gardens under various food crops, greenhouse tunnels, livestock, and a petting zoo. But the objective of this 'farm' isn't to push an urban agriculture agenda, or feed calories into the local food system. The idea is to create an education hub, and start important conversations around the complexity of the food system. It is a space where people interested with tackling food system problems can meet and share ideas. The Mistra Urban Futures Sheffield food team uses this space to draw the wider SAFE network together for these kinds of discussions.



21 Haysom, G. et al. 2019. Food Systems Sustainability: An Examination of Different Viewpoints on Food System Change. *Sustainability*, 11: 3337.

The Heeley City Farm near central Sheffield in the UK is an education hub centred around urban agriculture, intended to start a conversation relating to the complexity of the food system.



Chapter 4
**THE
EPHEMERAL
CITY**

An historic building like a colonial-era cathedral is an obvious cultural centerpiece in any city, weathering decades of natural and social change. The rituals that play out within its walls often reflect a society's dominant customs. Meanwhile, the places of worship of a disappearing animist faith in the same urban hub might remain invisible to a city's cultural curators. Ephemeral practices like the ritual of making and eating the cuisine of a fading traditional culture, or a festival that celebrates the last echoes of that community's spoken language and folklore, might be overlooked when a city manages its cultural heritage.

Whose culture gets placed centre stage in the cityscape? And how can the transient practices like once-off festival events help create fairer, more inclusive, socially-bonded city communities that reflect the diversity of traditions and histories within it?

Dunga Beach is a horseshoe-shaped cove on the banks of north-east Lake Victoria in East Africa. It is little more than a kilometre in length, with a wooden jetty jutting out into the murky gulf at the end of an unpaved road about 10 kilometres south of the Kenyan city of Kisumu. Artisanal fishermen have been hauling their catch out of the lake here for generations. Their trawl nets, drawn behind wooden boats not much longer than a family car, bring in tilapia, Nile perch, barbel and catfish²².

Fresh fish from the lake has long been a favourite source of protein for people living close to its waters. Here on the Kenyan shores of Lake Victoria, the local Luo community traditionally boils the fresh fish into an aromatic stew, until the flesh becomes sweet, and serves it with *ugali*, made from maize meal and water that's stiff enough to eat with one's fingers. They might also eat it with a porridge made of another staple, like the more traditional millet, sorghum, or cassava.

The meal usually comes with a handsome serving of *sukuma wiki*, a dish made of leafy greens cooked up with sour milk or ghee, much like creamed spinach. It may be rare these days to find some of the traditional vegetables on the plate, but *mito*, *apoth*, *osuga*, *boo* and *dek* are still regarded as delicacies within Luo culture²³.

Fish might also be grilled over open coals, fried in oil, or dried in the sun for later use.

Dunga Beach is the last haul-out point along

Previous spread: Fishing is an important economic and cultural practice in Kisumu. Dunga Beach is a significant fishing site that the Dunga Fish Festival seeks to celebrate and preserve.

this stretch of shoreline before the papyrus beds of the famous Dunga Beach swamp begin. This wetland is one of Kenya's most famous bird-watching sites, its endemic warblers and canary species attracting birding enthusiasts from around the world.

This beach is now the site of an annual festival that is rekindling an interest in local Kenyan cuisine, and merging the experience with nature-based tourism.

The first Dunga Fish Night festival took place in 2013, starting with just a few stalls selling traditional Luo food. But since then it has become an annual event, usually on a Friday evening, and has grown to include traditional dancers, performers who narrate folk tales from the region, pottery, grass baskets made from the papyrus reeds growing along the lake shore, pageants celebrating traditional displays of beauty, and even a wrestling contest.

Dunga Beach, both the lake front and the sandy beach itself, is the physical space where cultural heritage expresses itself tangibly, explains Professor Patrick Hayombe, Dean of the School of Spatial Planning and Natural Resources Management at the nearby Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, and a member of the Mistra Urban Futures team. The festival itself – the cooking, the dining, the storytelling, the tourists passing through to see the fishing boats – is an expression of the intangible aspects of culture.



BARRY NESS

UNESCO, the cultural arm of the United Nations, describes cultural heritage as the tangible objects – physical places, buildings or human-made objects – that speak the cultural language of a community's heritage. The intangible – the festival activities themselves – is the expression of the regional cultural heritage. The latter is a passing event, ephemeral in nature, lasting a few moments and then is gone, but which nevertheless broadcasts the culture of an individual or community as much as the physical place might. The two are inextricably entwined, and together make what the UN and the Mistra Urban Futures Cultural Heritage and Just Cities team project call the 'fourth pillar of sustainable development, alongside social, environmental and economic sustainability'.

Dunga Beach market building. Festivals like the Dunga Fish Festival in Kisumu, Kenya, are ephemeral events, but they are as important to a city's cultural heritage as permanent fixtures such as museums or statues.

'Cultural heritage... testifies to human creativity, and forms the bedrock underlying the identity of peoples,' says United Cities and Local Governments, a global network of city-level government bodies. According to its Agenda 21 for Culture statement, 'cultural life contains both the wealth of being able to appreciate and treasure traditions of all peoples, and an opportunity to enable the creation and innovation of cultural forms (that originate from within a community).'²⁴

The role and value of culture in society have

²² *Dunga Swamp Important Bird Area Conservation Management Plan* https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/documents/EIDPO029/21537/EIDPO029%20ARI%20Ann20-%20Draft%20Dunga%20Swamp%20IBA%20Management%20plan%20_v1_.pdf

²³ Odede, F.Z.A., Hayombe, P.O. & Agong, S.G. 2017. *Exploration of Food Culture in Kisumu: A Socio-cultural Perspective. Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 6(7): 74-86.

largely been underplayed or marginalised, according to the Mistra Urban Futures team, whose work on the Cultural Heritage and Just Cities project reviewed 18 festivals around the world as part of an exploration into the role of cultural heritage in creating fair, inclusive, accessible cities.²⁵ The intangible aspect of cultural heritage has been mostly ignored in urban policy-making.

Taking care of the intangible is about preserving things like languages, and social relationships surrounding food culture. It is about conserving oral histories or traditions that may be lost because they have not been captured in written form. These exist ephemerally in the city-space, and a city's cultural curators need to draw them in to their efforts to nurture all aspects of urban culture because, as the Mistra Urban Futures team argues, these intangible forms of expression, cultural practices and processes allow people to create meaning in their everyday lives. To nurture this cultural heritage in the city, there need to be fundamentally different approaches.

Things are changing, though. In 2016, the UN's New Urban Agenda attempted to redress the 'cultural blindness' in sustainable development policies and practices. The NUA speaks specifically about the importance of cultural diversity in creating 'progressive urban transitions' and how important culture is in creating cities that are equitable, inclusive, and participatory. SDG 11 also has a target and indicator on preserving cultural heritage.

Right: These photographic panels by Dan Dubowitz at Cutting Room Square in Manchester show the industrial heritage of the old cotton mills in the area.

Hayombe and his Kenyan-based Mistra Urban Futures team worked with the Dunga community and Kenya's Ministry of Tourism and Social Services to get the Dunga Fish Night festival off the ground. This was one of the 18 festivals reviewed by the Mistra Urban Futures Cultural Heritage and Just Cities project in order to understand how such transient events can be more inclusive of the intangible aspects of heritage and cultures that aren't considered mainstream.

Dunga Fish Night was described by the team as 'grounded in a celebration of fishing as a way of life' and ecotourism, but it has become more than that. Today it is about developing and promoting local crafts; it's about being socially inclusive, empowering the community, and nurturing cultural activities.

Whose culture matters? Cities as 'common good' spaces

A few kilometres from Dunga Beach, towards central Kisumu, there is the imposing red-brick facade of St Theresa's Cathedral. The colonial-era church was built by Catholic Dutch missionaries in the early 1900s. Today, the wire crucifix atop its steeple and the muted rose window both tower over what has become the bustling Jomo Kenyatta Highway, its pavements dotted with informal traders' stores selling sandals and clothing.



RIKE SITAS

This cathedral is the kind of cultural precinct that may get more attention and support from a city and its tourists. Meanwhile, the ephemeral nature of Luo cuisine could get lost in the noise of a city whose palate is growing ever more attuned to the tastes and textures of a more globalised range of food.

The Dunga Fish Night festival offers a new way of thinking about how to draw marginalised cultural practices into the shared space in cities, and it draws on the 300-year-old concept of the 'commons'.

The notion of the 'commons' has its roots in the old British countryside, when, in the eyes of social thinkers like Karl Marx, the peasant class had free access to shared spaces like forests and pastures where they could gather wild food and graze their herds. These natural commons were shared and managed for the good of the community whose livelihoods and wellbeing was dependent on these free natural resources and ecosystems that provide them. The 'capturing'

of these commons happened as politically and economically more powerful classes in British society were able to fence in these public spaces, privatising them and cutting off access for entire communities.

This idea of a rural natural commons translates into today's built-up city-space too. What parts of the city – either the brick-and-mortar face of it, or the local trade, its cultural and recreational spaces, the spaces in which people must move and live – are part of the modern-day 'commons', places that should be fairly accessible to everyone, and shared and managed for the collective good?

The social form of the 'commons' predates Capitalism, write Michel Bauwens and Vasilis Niaros in *Changing Societies through Urban Commons Transitions*²⁶, and as much as it applies to how people use, manage and share natural spaces, it also applies to things like the folk knowledge that permeates a festival like the Dunga Fish Night festival.

24 UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments). 2008. *Agenda 21 for Culture*. Barcelona: United Cities and Local Governments. http://www.lacult.unesco.org/docc/AG21_en.pdf

25 Perry, B., Ager, L., & Sitas, R. (2020). *Cultural Heritage Entanglements: Festivals as Integrative Sites for Sustainable Urban Development*. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 26(6): 603-618. doi:10.1080/13527258.2019.1578987

26 Bauwens, M. & Niaros, V. 2017. *Changing Societies through Urban Commons Transitions*. P2P Foundation with the Heinrich Boll Foundation. https://pl.boell.org/sites/default/files/changing_societies_through_urban_commons_transitions.pdf

Commons-based social systems were ones that didn't 'systematically separate people from their means of livelihood'. In more recent times, Capitalism and the modern market system have made workers' lives precarious, divorcing them from the means of livelihood. In this context, Bauwens and Niaros argue, 'a new form of commons becomes important', the social commons which strengthens the collective power of workers. This includes the 'knowledge commons', boosted most obviously by the internet, which allows for open source, shared, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and new ways of organising.

The renewal of a 'commoning' movement is part of what David Bollier and Silke Helfrich say, in the book *Patterns of Commoning*,²⁷ is an attempt by commoners to take charge of their lives through networking, knowledge exchange, and finding new ways to self-organise so that they can help create a fair, humane, and Earth-respecting social order.

In the contemporary city, these older notions of the commons move beyond environmental necessities like clean air and water, or grazing lands on a hillside, and extend to social and cultural commons, too, write Mistra Urban Futures Dr Rike Sitas and Dr Warren Smit in their essay *Reframing Sustainability: Realising Just Cities*²⁸.

'The city itself is the ultimate commons,' they say, where the 'overarching idea is that there are certain things and thoughts that should be collective or common to everyone'. This has become a rallying point for many social and spatial justice activists, and celebrating a diversity of cultural practices is part of that.

In its focus on culture and heritage in cities, Mistra Urban Futures maintains that these cultural practices give meaning and identity,

belonging and care, and that they are central pillars of social interaction and stability.

Conserving this culture through maintaining the material heritage, such as a city hall, or cathedral, an historic monument, or archaeological site, is important. It is equally important to preserve ephemeral activities that are acted out within those cultural precincts. Both of these practices need institutions, rules and procedures that are designed specifically to manage the urban cultural heritage.

This kind of cultural curation should allow 'a just process of participation, production and preservation of culture and cultural heritage, which includes the many stakeholders and actors who can be part of identifying the roles of culture and cultural heritage in sustainable cities without discrimination and excluding effects'.²⁹

By working with the Luo community in Kisumu and with Kenyan authorities to create the annual Dunga Fish Night, Mistra Urban Futures hopes to set a festival in motion which the local community will organise themselves in future, and where the government will create the right institutions to support the community to make it happen.

Festivals as a way to challenge the status quo

The kind of sustainable city that the UN's Sustainable Development Goals hopes to create, including through the New Urban Agenda, is one that redresses inequality, exclusion, and marginalisation. Deliberately driving a transition to a just city calls for distributing 'material and



SAMANTHA REINDERS

Fish from Lake Victoria, such as tilapia, are an important part of the cultural and economic life of Kisumu.

27 Bollier, D. & Helfrich, S. (Eds.). 2015. *Patterns of Commoning*. Amherst, MA: The Commons Strategies Group.

28 Palmer, H. & Walasek, H. (Eds.). 2016. *Co-production in Action: Towards Realising Just Cities*. Gothenburg: Mistra Urban Futures.

29 Mistra Urban Futures. 2017. *Culture and Heritage in Sustainable Urban Development*. Available: <https://www.mistraurbanfutures.org/en/project/culture-and-heritage>

non-material benefits to disadvantaged groups', writes the Mistra Urban Futures team. Inclusive preservation of culture is part of that.

Urban development is not just about economic development. It also needs to be understood through the lens of culture. To leverage cultural heritage in the interests of justice, culture and heritage need to be seen for more than just their economic potential³⁰.

This Mistra Urban Futures work in the area of festivals tries to recast cultural heritage in the context of urban development.

Some of the take-home messages from their Cultural Heritage and Just Cities festival review is that organising these sorts of festival events needs to be an inclusive effort, not just a top-down process imposed by city authorities or more powerful decision-making institutions. In the process of developing festivals, which voices are heard, and which are ignored? By addressing power imbalances in a city, festivals become a creative practice that should aim to 'trouble, tease or tamper with, rather than perpetuate the status quo'.

How a city defines cultural heritage in this context is important: it shouldn't reinforce unhelpful or divisive stereotypes about certain heritage practices, or allow marginalised people to feel as though they don't belong. It should strike a balance between conserving older practices, while still being flexible enough to allow for the fact that cultures evolve and change over time. Festivals also need to be managed in such a way that they minimise the impact they may have on the space in which they unfold, such as

offsetting the problems of waste, or the impact of increased pedestrian traffic through a neighbourhood, or taking into account how noise might disrupt wildlife in the area.

Finally, festival organisers should be aware of the difficulties of accessing resources that allow cultural activities to happen, particularly for festivals that aren't mainstream, like the Dunga Fish Night festival. Festival organisation needs 'alternative coalitions and partnerships'.

Dunga Fish Night centres on traditional food culture, and recognises that including culture in urban practice is important for the creation of sustainable cities. The traditions of the Luo people, which the festival celebrates, have their roots in an agrarian lifestyle. After tracking the festival for four years, the Mistra Urban Futures team argues that the Dunga Fish Night festival not only shows how deeply imbued the Luo food culture is with rich cultural practices, rituals and societal norms distinctive of their own cultural identity, but it also enables the Luo to interact with other cultural groups from the nearby city of Kisumu.

The festival has the potential to deliver other benefits, too, because the community needs the state to put in new or improved infrastructure, such as roads, sanitation, and power lines, which will boost ecotourism.

'The festival shows that food culture is vital for sustainable development of urban centres,' says Professor Patrick Hayombe, 'particularly since Kisumu largely evolved as an urban centre for the exchange of goods for food.'

The traditions of the Luo people, which the festival celebrates, have their roots in an agrarian lifestyle. After tracking the festival for four years, the Mistra Urban Futures team argues that the fish festival not only shows how deeply imbued the Luo food culture is with rich cultural practices, rituals and societal norms distinctive of their own cultural identity, but it also enables the Luo to interact with other cultural groups.

³⁰ Perry, B., Ager, L. & Sitas, R. (Eds.). 2018. *Festivals as Integrative Sites: Valuing Tangible and Intangible Heritage for Sustainable Development*. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.11908.22409

PROTECTING THE GRITTY HARBOUR FEEL ALONG GOTHENBURG'S WATERFRONT



Gothenburg's old and new: a film studio in Lindholmen (left) may be lost to gentrification. Although the city has been reminded to protect its 'gritty parts' as it embarks on a riverside development project (right). Meanwhile, the award-winning Kuggen building (centre) has become a modern landmark in central Gothenburg.

Lindholmen is a precinct of modern apartments and university buildings on the northern bank of the Göta älv River which snakes through the Swedish coastal city of Gothenburg. Its waterfront is tidy and cobbled, with neatly spaced buildings and a clean urban feel, although in places it still has a gritty industrial edge. While there isn't much left to remind visitors that this was once a working harbour, there are still remnants along the river's edge, which bristles with giant steel cargo cranes that serviced docking ships.

The area is at the heart of a modernisation drive billed as the largest development push in Scandinavia, the River City Gothenburg project. The Gothenburg municipality claims that the development will connect the city, embrace the water, and reinforce the city centre, 'creating an inclusive, green and dynamic inner city', while building 25 000 apartments and 45 000 new workplaces.

One of the buildings that may become a casualty of this facelift is a film studio in Lindholmen. The red-brick building looks a little weathered. Moss sprouts along one wall where the gutter has broken, and water drips down the brickwork. Evocative graffiti covers the walls, a giant white skull next to the front door and a cartoonish mural in pastel colours. Draughty holes gape in many of the broken windows. This building's future is uncertain as the push to gentrification marches on.

Is gentrification of urban spaces inevitable, and necessarily a good thing? Should the city hold on to aspects of its working harbour aesthetic? Should the cranes, quays and voluminous harbour buildings be cut from the skyline in the drive for a new waterfront? Does gentrification take into account the importance of social perspectives and the role of culture in shaping a city's identity?

These are some of the questions considered by the Mistra Urban Futures Gothenburg team when they piloted a tool they devised to help map the cultural heritage of Gothenburg and inform the municipality's urban development policy in a way that includes culture in its planning and decision-making.

As part of its Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Urban Development project, researchers worked with local architect Mie Svennberg and the City of Gothenburg's Cultural Affairs Administration to devise the Culture Impact Assessment (KKA) tool, which sets up a methodology for compiling a cultural inventory of a city. It is a way to collect and map the 'cultural value' of a city, explains Dr Niklas Sörum, researcher with the Centre for Consumer Science at the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg, and a member of the Mistra Urban Futures group.

'Realising a just city is not necessarily a matter of reaching a goal or a set of aims. It is more a way of introducing change through both practice and theory, and observing how a variety of such introductions can work for the better in terms of a more sustainable city,' says Sörum. 'For those in the field of culture and cultural heritage, trying to realise a just city can be a good trigger for figuring out how culture can become a part of the agenda for building the sustainable city.'

The KKA tool was piloted in Lindholmen and nearby Kortedala to gather an inventory of their cultural value and feed that through to the city's urban planning.

'The work of the local Cultural Impact Assessments relates to the policy level by being associated with, for example, the Jämlik Stad programme, which means "Equal City", and the kind of policy docu-

ments that bring a broader view of the city,' says Sörum.

This ties in with Gothenburg's Culture program, which aims to 'clarify the city's character and history, create good conditions for sustainable development, and increase Gothenburg's ability to influence the physical environment', according to the Mistra Urban Futures team.

While testing the KKA tool in Lindholmen and Kortedala, Svennberg and the Mistra Urban Futures team took note of the cultural environment, the city's aesthetic values, and worked with architectural educators who took school classes onto the streets of the communities they were studying, observed meeting places and hubs, and interviewed people who work in the arts and culture sector. They then drew up a report mapping the 'values of the cultural environments' which the city's Cultural Affairs Administration can use to inform its urban planning.

The report recommends that the city centre maintains features of the working harbour as a part of its identity, as important elements in the urban landscape, and uses 'industrial details and historical artefacts such as bollards, manholes, railroad tracks, and old signs, and is inspired by, for example, carefully crafted street pavements'.

The researchers urge city planners, rolling out initiatives such as the River City Gothenburg development project to consider 'treading carefully to not make the place too fancy or soften the character'. Lindholmen's 'rough parts' should remain intact and other parts be designed around them. It should also allow for self-organised artistic expression.

Lindholmen already has a broad palette of aesthetics colouring its streets: the industrial echoes of the working harbour, the neighbourhood's characterful film studio, the futuristic Dome of Visions near the Chalmers University of Technology campus, and the adjacent award-winning Kuggen building. Carrying out a cultural audit of the city presents an opportunity to think about how to value and maintain these different aesthetics, and to consider how to merge older aesthetics with modern, contemporary designs. Being sensitive to all aesthetics can signal to residents of a city-space that they are welcome there, that their heritage is valued.

Chapter 5 GOVERN

The notion of ‘governance’ is about more than just ‘government’. It speaks to the political, organisational, and administrative processes which allow citizens and interest groups to voice their needs, exercise their legal rights, make decisions, meet obligations, and mediate their differences.³¹

Municipalities don’t carry the burden of governance alone. The political parties, government employees, and communities who need to be involved in city-level governance may have considerably different interests, agendas and needs. Understanding these, and drawing the different stakeholders together, can allow for more collaborative and inclusive governance.

The process can be messy, though. Part of Mistra Urban Futures’ *raison d’être* was to work with cities to find new and innovative ways to think about and implement collaborative approaches to governing cities so that they can be more fair and inclusive. Three case studies show the different ways in which collaborative governance can work.

PART 1

Helping an African city resolve its collapsed solid waste services

Silas Otieno knows a thing or two about the waste business. He grew up in Kisumu, the Kenyan city on the north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria, where the municipality has long struggled to stay on top of waste collection. Around 80 per cent of the rubbish thrown away by homes and businesses isn't collected and taken to a neatly contained landfill. It ends up dumped in open lots in and around the city, piling up in unsightly mounds of rotting garbage in streets and on road curbs. This blocks storm water drains, often causing streets to flood during the rainy season and potentially leading to disease outbreaks. It's particularly bad in the informally-built communities, which are amongst the least served parts of the city.

Otieno first picked up on the environmental problems caused by this uncollected city waste when he was a young activist, and started a youth group to do voluntary refuse collection. But he soon realised there was a business opportunity here. A decade later, Otieno has a registered waste collection and recycling business, does training and education around waste management, has done surveys to understand his customers' needs and waste practices, and is part of a waste services co-operative that helps entrepreneurs like him to access business funding, network, and market their services.

The next step in his endeavours in the business of waste, and as part of a network of waste actors, is working with the City of

Kisumu through public-private partnership to formalise an arrangement that should allow entrepreneurs like him to step into the gap left by the city's struggling waste services.

The Kisumu Solid Waste Management Centre (KIWAC) is a proposed new initiative geared towards creating and incubating technology-based solutions to dealing with the city's solid waste, while also privatising the whole waste management system. The private waste collection and recycling services run by entrepreneurs like Otieno feed directly into the centre, providing it with the kinds of organic waste and recyclable materials that can be composted, turned into biogas, or processed into burnable briquettes, which people can use to cook with and heat their homes.

There is a growing trend in Kenya to privatise some basic municipal services, explains Dr Michael Oloko, researcher on waste management and Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) in Bondo, about 70km west of Kisumu. The proposed KIWAC, which the Mistra Urban Futures Kisumu team has helped conceptualise, will help create alternative ways to deal with the city's failing waste collection services, while also becoming a centre of excellence in sustainable solid waste management in Kenya. Through this, the centre will become a hub to build human resource capacity in the waste management sector, sensitise people about waste issues, and boost livelihoods of the communities involved



BARRY NESS

Small waste-services entrepreneurs could tap into Kisumu's waste stream to divert organic waste and recycling from the landfill, and use it as resources for their businesses.

Previous spread: Cattle dig through the Kachok dumpsite in central Kisumu (located between a school, a shopping mall, a hotel and the sports stadium), where the city is trying to find a new service delivery model to address its failing waste collection operations.

31 Bakker, K., Kooy, M., Shofiani, N.E. & Martijn, E.J. 2008. Governance Failure: Rethinking the Institutional Dimensions of Urban Water Supply to Poor Households. *World Development*, 36(10): 1891-1915.

in waste collection and small businesses like those run by Otieno and others. It will also be involved in research and innovation, while creating commercialised products, services and solutions geared towards using waste as a resource, Oloko says.

Oloko is part of the Kisumu platform of Mistra Urban Futures, and was instrumental in drawing up the business model for the Kisumu waste centre, which could be a pilot for similar projects in other Kenyan cities.

To develop the model for the waste centre, Oloko and his team of researchers drew together other role players in the waste sector, including those from an international non-governmental organisation called Practical Action. They set up a series of fact-finding initiatives over the course of eight months. This allowed city officials from the Kisumu municipality and industry networks representing waste collection and recycling entrepreneurs, like Otieno, to sit together in discussion. They needed to understand the full value chain of waste in Kisumu: where the waste gets generated, where the city is challenged in its waste service delivery and why, which private businesses have emerged to fill these gaps, what opportunities there might be to boost these kinds of initiatives, and how the city's solid waste could be turned into saleable products, all to maintain a clean and healthy environment, with the added incentive of possible economic spin-offs.

Once they understood the needs and opportunities, they then put together the KIWAC model. But the draft document which lays out this model is more than just a business plan. If it is implemented, it will also put in place the partnership arrangements and governance

structures, outlining steps for decentralisation and privatisation of waste management services, that will allow improved and effective waste management in the city. This collaborative process, explains Oloko, is how the Mistra Urban Futures team is trying to support the municipality to be more effective in its governance responsibilities.

While Kisumu municipality is in the process of reviewing the business model, the Mistra Urban Futures team has another waste intervention project underway that is a key part of the KIWAC business plan – the Kibuye Waste Management Research Demonstration site.

The site is in downtown Kisumu. It's small – the office, store, and exhibition room building isn't much bigger than a lock-up-and-go shipping container – but it's testing three different waste handling technologies. Instead of a linear waste stream, where waste comes to a final stop in a landfill, waste managers in this project apply a circular approach. Nothing is 'waste', everything is a possible resource. The demonstration site takes in organic and recyclable waste and turns it into saleable products.

The biogas demonstration plant consists of three black plastic container bags, big enough to fit on the back of a small truck. Each is filled with organic waste which, as it begins to decompose without oxygen present, releases methane. The swollen bags are topped off with plastic hoses and release valves, which allow the gas to be piped to a demonstration gas cooker on top of an upended pallet next to the bag. Once the contents of the bags are fully broken down, the nutrient-rich sludge can be drained off and sold as fertiliser.

The briquette press is a hand-operated device

that allows the operator to feed in some kind of combustible organic matter – sawdust, for instance – and compact it into biofuel briquettes that are a much safer and more efficient household fuel source than kerosene or coal.

The third technology on demonstration is the good old-fashioned compost heap, where organic waste is mixed with sawdust, and the heap is turned every so often to allow for open-air breakdown of the waste until it is ready to be sold off to consumers wanting compost for their gardens.

The site also has recycling facilities.

Each of the technologies is simple, easy to use, and can be scaled up to process much larger volumes of waste. The idea of the demonstration site is to show how relatively easy it can be to make useful products out of much of Kisumu's organic and recyclable waste, the business opportunities that can blossom along the value chain, and the viable commercial products that it can sell back into the market. Ultimately, this kind of waste management boosts livelihoods, clears the streets of filth, and eases the burden on the city's landfill.

The demonstration site is another of the Mistra Urban Futures team's initiatives and Oloko hopes that this pilot will inspire the city to scale it up from demo site to a large-scale operation, and also, that other regions in Kenya will consider starting up similar sites.

Touring other cities to learn about better governance

One evening in the northern hemisphere spring of 2019, a group of visiting British researchers, city officials and civil society members gathered together with Eritrean migrants and refugees in the kitchen at the Tikitut Community-Based Tourism Centre, about 15km from the heart of Gothenburg, to cook a meal typical of the Horn of Africa.

They made *fatoush*, a baked pita bread and salad dish dressed with lemon, olive oil, sumac spice, and pomegranates, accompanied by *kroppkakor*, balls of potato and wheat flour stuffed with onions, mushrooms, butter, salt, pepper and parsley. They also tried their hand at making a dish using cooking bananas, *plátano* (plantain), which they fried in oil with flour, onion, and fresh tomatoes.

Dessert was *knafeh*, a dish with Middle Eastern roots, usually made from thread-like pastry or semolina dough, baked with mozzarella cheese and butter, and sweetened with a syrup of sugar, water, and lemon juice.

‘The language difference made it a bit difficult for us to understand each other,’ says Professor Beth Perry, from the University of Sheffield’s Urban Institute in the UK. ‘We couldn’t get much beyond the words “football” and “Manchester United”, but it was a great way for the visiting group to bond as a delegation, and also see how a project like this keeps money within a local economy.’

Perry heads the Mistra Urban Futures UK team, focusing on the Sheffield and Greater Manchester region in the north of the country, where they ran a number of projects on citizen partnership under the banner of Participatory Cities.

During the three-day visit, the delegation with Perry’s group heard about the Million

Homes Programme, an initiative to address the housing shortage in Sweden. They did a tour of Gothenburg where delegates shared their experiences and knowledge around spatial planning and urban decision-making, and looked at the kinds of processes they use to build bodies of knowledge. They spent time thinking about what co-production means, and what tools are available to support this. They held workshops in which Swedish and UK participants presented their projects and findings, and discussed how these could support the co-production of knowledge in future policymaking.

Dining with the Eritrean migrants allowed the delegates to see up-close how different local projects in Gothenburg, beyond Mistra Urban Futures, aim to overcome the divides within the city.

‘We live in a time when inequality is becoming increasingly severe on a global scale,’ write Perry and colleague Dr Bertie Russell in a book that captures some of the processes and results of the Participatory Cities Mistra Urban Futures work.³³

‘We are seeing a rise in far-right nationalism and populism. We need to search for solutions that are just, both in the processes and the outcomes.’

This quest for creating a just city ‘means taking seriously urban structural and institutional conditions and governance arrangements’, Perry and Russell argue.

They are using different forms of citizen participation to help support city authorities in being inclusive in their governance, ‘ranging from citizen involvement in urban planning processes through to municipal energy strategies, neighbourhood budgets or citizen juries’.

But in a situation where countries face so many challenges to the idea of the ‘nation-state’, and where governments increasingly decentralise and hand governance down to local-level authorities, the idea of greater citizen engagement has been seen by some as a panacea for addressing issues of poverty and social justice, and as a way to tackle the growing democratic deficit in countries with democracies regarded as both ‘mature’ and ‘emerging’.

‘The aim of Participatory Cities was to enable us as researchers to support city-level policymakers in a comparative learning process, that can help them better understand and reflect on their own policy and practice,’ say Perry and Russell.

The visit to Gothenburg was the last of three city visits included in the Participatory Cities process – the others were to Cape Town, South Africa, and Barcelona, Spain. For this final trip, the UK researchers took a delegation of people to Gothenburg. The group included Greater Manchester and West Midlands government officials, and civil society members representing diverse formal and informal agendas, such as mental health and citizen participation. They spent three days with the Gothenburg Mistra Urban Futures team and visited various sites in the city so that they could compare their own city contexts.

Explaining the importance of a field trip like this, Perry says that while academics regularly travel internationally for their research, local government officials and civil society members often can’t, as they don’t have the resources, travel permissions, or time to visit other cities or locations in this way. By organising and funding these excursions, the UK team provided a unique

opportunity to engage in knowledge exchange, through an alternative way of understanding and informing city governance issues. This can form an important part of efforts to implement and evaluate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at a city scale.

‘Traditional approaches to working with local government, such as participatory budgeting and people’s assemblies, can allow for meaningful engagement. However, from our experience through this city-visit process, by using out-of-context experiences, it allows for more meaningful, reflective learning,’ explain Perry and Russell.

Many development institutions, such as the World Bank, tend to favour ‘off-the-shelf’ techniques for participation to inform policymaking, but Perry and her team argue that these don’t necessarily challenge the governing status quo.

‘Comparative learning, when used with a critical orientation, can give important opportunities for subtle moments of rupture to the dominant governing logics, allowing new ideas and approaches to be aired, discussed and promoted,’ they say.

The kind of co-production the Mistra Urban Futures UK team was able to facilitate through their projects allowed different groups of academics, civil society members, and city officials to be part of the ‘whole knowledge process’, which Perry and Russell argue needs to be prioritised over ‘specialised’ research processes, such as data analysis or academic writing.

Another component of Participatory Cities involved two roundtables on participatory planning. The first took place in Sheffield in September 2018, and brought together stakeholders involved in spatial planning in Gothenburg,

Manchester, and London. The workshop focus was to consider whether it is possible to have true participation between all stakeholders.

The second roundtable was part of the Mistra Urban Futures annual conference in Cape Town, and looked at bottom-up participatory planning with and by communities.

These roundtables were an opportunity to challenge assumptions that Sweden is the best

example of participation, if indeed institutional processes aren't actually changed as a result of participation.

The Participatory Cities site visits, workshops and roundtables showed the value of comparative learning from the 'outside-in', say the researchers, and also highlighted the importance of transdisciplinary co-production as a 'novel mechanism to open up policy imaginations'.

Visual Minutes at the Mistra Urban Futures International Policy Learning Workshop in Manchester, 2019.



NICK HARRISON



MICHAEL HAMMOND



BARRY NESS



BARRY NESS

Site visits and learning tours to different cities are important for shaping comparative research. Researchers explore Kisumu and Cape Town.

Ideas ‘laboratory’ to support inclusive city governing

Tackling issues relating to inclusivity and justice in a city like Cape Town calls for addressing more than just housing shortages – it is about the wider challenge of human settlements. South Africa’s Constitution makes the issue of housing delivery mostly a function of provincial government. This means that when national government allocates money to develop subsidised housing in cities, the provincial tier of government has to manage the funds. In the case of Cape Town, for instance, money for housing is allocated to the Western Cape provincial government. And yet it is the city’s responsibility to handle infrastructure, planning, and other important aspects necessary for developing fully functional, well located, and sustainable human settlements. This goes beyond merely putting up houses. The dividing up of these functions between different levels of government, and even between different municipal departments, has led to the fragmentation of city spaces.

Dr Liza Rose Cirolia and her Mistra Urban Futures team worked with the Western Cape provincial government in South Africa to draw up a framework for creating more sustainable and just human settlements, in Cape Town and also for other cities in the province. This process was built on a ‘city laboratory’, or CityLab, method, developed over ten years by the African Centre for Cities (ACC), where Cirolia is based.

The team agreed that a human settlements agenda for cities in the Western Cape needed to go beyond issues of housing. Working with officials and other key stakeholders, Cirolia and her team identified three key themes: integration, improving the scale and quality of housing delivery, and governance. Underpinning all of this was the importance of new approaches to economic development and the job crisis in the province.

‘Rather than try to address all issues related to housing, the main goal of the framework process was to extract and distill the most important “big ideas” in circulation, which could help us to build more just and sustainable human settlements in Western Cape’s urban areas,’ explains Cirolia.

Cirolia says there is plenty of evidence to show that the current approach, where housing is built on the edges of cities and urban areas, is not building more just human settlements.

However, in order to develop a new approach, the framework needed novel and innovative ideas. To facilitate this, Cirolia says the process needed to get a wide range of competing and dynamic perspectives, including from academics, urban development practitioners, officials, politicians, and civil society organisations. These then needed to be aligned with the skills and responsibilities shared across different spheres of national, provincial, and local government, each of which has a different constitutional mandate that ultimately shapes how cities, their infrastructure, and their economies take shape.

Over the course of six years, Cirolia’s Mistra Urban Futures team ran the Sustainable Human Settlements CityLab research programme, partnering with the Western Cape Provincial Department of Human Settlements, to think about key aspects of housing policy and delivery in the broader context of human settlements in the province’s urban centres. Central to this was a series of six ‘ideas laboratories’ workshop processes that got all the main players into the same room, to exchange ideas, pool knowledge, and think outside of the box.

‘The CityLab process is a methodology that we at the African Centre for Cities have a long histo-

ry of working with,’ explains Cirolia. ‘Within Cape Town, we have worked with the city as a site for co-production of knowledge and policy like this.’

Some of the ACC’s other CityLab co-production processes have been centred around a specific geographical space, such as the Philippi CityLab, which zeroed in on a horticultural hub on the Cape Flats, about 25km from the Cape Town city centre. This area has a dense concentration of informal settlements where government is investing in housing and facilities, and where there is plenty of vacant land. The city argues that this land is suitable for development, but it is a highly contested environment where many key challenges to integrated human settlements converge.

Other ACC CityLab processes were theme-based, such as looking at development challenges through the lens of ecology, climate change, urban health, public culture, or flood management.

For the Human Settlement CityLab process, the Mistra Urban Futures team partnered with provincial government rather than local government, and decided on a set of theme-based approaches, using human settlements as the overarching focus.

‘Each CityLab aims to produce a main output from its co-production process, such as a book or a policy plan. In our case, we drew up the Living Cape Human Settlements Framework,’ explains Cirolia. ‘This is a strategy framework for the entire province. It’s about cities and urbanism broadly, for cities throughout the province, and considers how they fit into the region and how they operate.’

The Living Cape Framework departed from previous policies, which were narrowly focused on improving housing delivery.

The framework now sits with the provincial Department of Human Settlements, and lays out an urban development roadmap using three lenses: how to re-connect fragmented parts of a city through better integration; how to deliver on the housing question, in terms of matching housing supply with demand; and how to deal with the constraints at a governance level, imposed by the complexity of state structures.

According to the Province, the policy document has been adopted by the Provincial Department of Human Settlements. It has been recognised as a ‘transversal’ document that will give a province-wide ‘commitment to the development of human settlements’. Its implementation has been driven by an inter-departmental task team that has singled out a number of ‘test beds’ through which to develop novel approaches to settlement development, in line with the approach suggested by the framework. As these lessons emerge, they will need to be passed down into the everyday business of departments involved in the built environment.

The CityLab process also allowed Cirolia and partners to produce a book, *Upgrading Informal Settlements in South Africa: A Partnership-Based Approach*, which looks at the ‘successes and challenges of informal settlement upgrading initiatives in South Africa and contextualises these experiences within global debates about informal settlement upgrading and urban transformation’.³³

33 Cirolia, L. R., Görgens, T., van Donk, M., Smit, W. & Drimie, S. (Eds.) 2016. *Upgrading Informal Settlements in South Africa: A Partnership-Based Approach*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.



Chapter 6 LEARN

In the world of development, we sometimes think that one enlightened group, such as academics, holds much of the knowledge. If we just pass this on to others who need it, the thinking goes, we'll unravel the tangled knots that keep our cities from becoming the fair and inclusive communities they should be. But does this old model of learning and ideas exchange still hold true?

The Mistra Urban Futures work recognises that knowledge and skills are spread about amongst many different people and institutions. Through co-production projects in and across cities, they have piloted a number of processes that drew together researchers, civil society and development experts, policy-makers, and those on the frontline of city implementation, through a series of ideas 'laboratories' that became places to jointly build and grow knowledge.

Previous spread: Manchester by night. Researchers explore the role of public lighting in shaping the city. We often only notice lights when they are not working, but lighting in the city tells us where we do and do not belong and affect how we behave.

Over 150 years ago, a hem of white sandy beaches and natural rock tidal pools churned with frothy waters where the turbulent Atlantic Ocean swept up against the shoreline around the foot slopes of Lion's Head, one of the iconic small peaks that defines the Table Mountain profile surrounding Cape Town's city centre.

Since then, a hard line of concrete, stone walls, and a brick-cobbled boulevard have drawn a barrier between the surging tidal waters of the chilly ocean and the forest of high-rise buildings that have sprouted around these foothills.

The Sea Point promenade is one of the most recognised sites on Cape Town's Atlantic seaboard today. On fair-weather days it throngs with people strolling through the seaside neighbourhood where the air is often thick with the smell of tidal kelp and sea water.

But if today's city planners were thinking about how to develop this coastline, they'd have to consider a new policy position that urges caution before transforming a natural beachfront into a hard engineered barrier to keep the sea at bay, because of the risk of it being torn apart during a tidal surge.

This boulevard is typical of the kind of built urban landscape that today's city managers have inherited, but which they now have to manage in a future where climate change will bring new threats to these irreversibly changed environments.

Not more than 30km away from here, on the Cape Flats outside the central city, is a community with a completely different set of development challenges which city officials need to plan for as climate conditions change: lower-income communities on the outskirts of the city, whose

Right: The Sea Point promenade is one of Cape Town's most recognisable seaside spaces, but today's urban planners will need to think differently about how they develop coastlines.

informal or subsidised houses are built on or near natural wetlands, and are plagued by seasonal flooding. Rising groundwater levels in the winter rainfall season, which the inadequate or compromised storm water drain infrastructure sometimes can't channel away quickly enough, leave streets, homes and businesses inundated with polluted water.

Linking these two Cape Town communities is a rabbit warren of roads, railway lines, electricity wiring, and harbour facilities. This infrastructure could be at risk of damage caused by temperature peaks during heatwaves, wind and rain damage during severe storms, flooding, or damage caused by wind-blown sand along the coast.

Storm surges, when high tides coincide with an intense storm, will erode coastlines and damage hard urban edges as coastal inundation gets worse over the years. The Cape Town municipality is aware of these risks, as well as the fact that the costs of repairing the damage will drain its already stretched budgets. The city recognises, too, that future infrastructure developments, such as improved storm water drainage in under-serviced communities that are prone to flooding, also need to be planned with climate-related impacts in mind.

Often, the existing knowledge about problems such as these is fragmented and unintegrated. Different types of knowledge need to be brought together and merged in a more policy-relevant and useable format. The City of Cape Town has also realised for a long time that it needs a comprehensive climate vulnerability assessment, and a policy strategy to guide it in being more responsive to the impacts of climate change.

But how to get there?



BARRY CHRISTIANSON

Breaking the mould of knowledge-building to make better policy

The city understood it needed a strong climate change policy, and this motivated it to search beyond the silos of its own bureaucracy, and look to academics for support. The result was to link up with the Mistra Urban Futures Knowledge Transfer Programme (KTP) based at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

According to the Mistra Urban Futures team, the KTP was an initiative aimed at creating knowledge platforms that 'straddle the researcher-practitioner divide and are better positioned to develop nuanced policy responses to complex urban sustainability challenges facing Cape Town'. It is a way to try new, collaborative processes of generating knowledge, which cross institutional divides and allow policymaking to be more integrated and collaborative.

Through the KTP, city officials and academics

at UCT began working together to identify key areas of possible collaboration: questions relating to climate change adaptation at a city level; how to design a green economy; how to reconfigure the spatial distribution of the local economy; governing the urban energy system; how to implement the United Nations New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals; transport and urban development; and how to support cultural mapping, planning, and impact assessment.

One of the KTP's methods was to pilot an innovative approach of embedding local university academics within the city's bureaucracy. Starting in 2012, the collaboration saw a total of seven UCT academics working as 'embedded researchers' through this initiative.

Dr Anna Taylor was one of them. She was already specialising in climate adaptation on a city scale when she became part of the embedded researcher pilot programme. Over the course of the four-year pilot, she was able to push forward the theory of climate adaptation, and her findings contributed towards her doctorate.

Sharing many forms of knowledge

‘This pilot project of the embedded research was an experiment,’ explains Taylor. ‘In the past, the knowledge transfer process has often assumed that one party, for instance academics, has the knowledge, and must hand it on to another party that doesn’t have it, for instance city officials.’

‘This “knowledge deficit model” assumes that if the right people have knowledge, and they share it with others, it will result in the necessary action. But this model is wrong,’ she says. ‘The experimental approach of the embedded researcher challenges the idea that to solve a problem, you just need to move knowledge from one place or party to another.’

Co-production as a process presumes that knowledge is distributed in pockets between various parties, with different experiences and expertise. This needs to be drawn together through a number of processes so that the different groups can jointly share their expertise and build new, more robust ideas, and devise the appropriate responses to whatever development challenges a city might face. This requires bringing together policymakers, people responsible for implementing policies and day-to-day operations within a city, as well as researchers, practitioners, civil society organisations, and development consultants.

‘There are various ways that knowledge co-production can work, and the embedded researcher model is one of these,’ says Taylor.

To be ‘embedded’ within the Cape Town municipality, Taylor and the other researchers were seconded to the city administration to work in a research capacity, rather than as officials.

For her, that meant she had a ‘long leash’, allowing her to explore various questions, speak to different people, review many documents, and cross organisational and disciplinary boundaries in search of how issues relating to climate play into urban government decisions and operations.

This allowed her to move between working at an office in the city administration buildings – initially in the city’s Environmental Resource Management department, and then in the Storm Water and Sustainability branch – and the university campus.

‘At the time, the climate adaptation literature explained poorly how cities might adapt to climate change. The idea for my research was to borrow from organisational theory around public decision-making, and see how this could help inform climate planning.’

This meant ‘going deep’ into what the city was doing, she says.

‘The first step was to understand what local government does, and how it functions. I had to go back to the Constitution to understand that, but working in the municipal offices was important because it allowed me to attend meetings, engage in discussions, and see how officials go about their day-to-day business. I got to immerse myself in the language they use, and see how they frame problems and prioritise interventions,’ Taylor explains.

An outside researcher might only get to study how a city works through a process of doing a few interviews with key personnel, who often have limited time. But embedded within the city bureaucracy, Taylor could work freely within the city structure for a few years.

She got to see, experience and be part of things that she says are almost impossible to access otherwise. She was able to study different iterations of planning documents, track various city processes, and pore over internal documents and old archive files. She could witness first-hand how the city conducts business, what conversations people were having, and what language they use to frame issues relating to climate.

‘It sounds a bit like spying, and people did make jokes about that. And there were many re-

Process, as well as policy

search ethics that I needed to consider. But I was also there to contribute and provide information and perspectives from the research domain. So it was a two-way street.’

During this time, Taylor was able to consolidate, document, and share an understanding of why climate change is a concern for Cape Town in light of the municipality’s jurisdiction and local government mandates. By presenting her research findings to the city, she was able to build a broader awareness of, and perspective on, an integrated climate change policy.

‘The deepest forms of knowledge exchange and co-production came through co-authoring papers and book chapters with city officials, and through informal, impromptu discussions where people could share their work frustrations, challenges, conundrums, and insights,’ she says.

Co-production of knowledge in a way that is this inclusive and bridge-building can be messy, and is often opportunistic, she admits. But the experience showed how working with many different parties within a municipality reveals unexpected factors that might shape the quality and quantity of how people engage, and therefore how best to leverage opportunities and align work efforts for mutual benefit – everything from personality, professional and sometimes personal interests, working practices, and current work focus and work load.

An important lesson from this kind of knowledge exchange was realising the difference in pace and scale at which researchers and officials operate. City officials often have to work quickly towards finding solutions, while academics may be able to work at a slower pace. But through the embedded research programme, the researchers could pull these two groups together. They were also better able to manoeuvre around power dynamics, and not be bound by city hierarchies.

For all of the embedded researchers, the objective wasn’t just to produce better-informed and collaboratively-generated policy. Equally important were the people-focused processes of co-production of knowledge to draw up actionable policy documents.

The relationship-based KTP methods have since been used extensively by other Mistra Urban Futures researchers in similar initiatives that were geared towards bringing together the wider skills and expertise amongst researchers, development and civil society organisations, and local-level governments.

For instance, the embedded researcher method has been duplicated elsewhere in South Africa and Africa through the Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) initiative. FCFA is a cross-disciplinary, multi-country research and development partnership geared towards creating new climate science across regions in sub-Saharan Africa, and ensuring that this science has an impact on human development in the region. Within FCFA, the Future Climate Resilience of African Cities and Lands (FRACTAL) project has used the embedded researcher model to co-create urban climate knowledge, policies and plans with city governments in Cape Town and Durban in South Africa, Lusaka in Zambia, Windhoek in Namibia, Maputo in Mozambique, and Harare in Zimbabwe.

Embedded researchers were also integral to the Economic Areas Management Programme, a Cape Town initiative that helps monitor market performance and growth potential in the city’s business sector. Embedded researchers also helped generate the Gothenburg Cultural Planning Toolkit.

Another component of the Knowledge Transfer Programme was a writing exchange, where city officials collaborated with academics to write academic papers and books. One of these

is the book titled *Mainstreaming Climate Change in Urban Development*³⁴.

These exchanges weren't just one-way. They allowed city officials to work within the academy too. In Skåne, Sweden, a similar knowledge exchange allowed municipal officials to free up half their time so they could do their own research.

Four years after Taylor and the first intake of embedded researchers completed stints within Cape Town's municipality, the legacy of this relationship-building continues. A second round of embedded researchers ran from 2017 to 2019.

'As I was getting ready to leave the city to return to the university full-time, the city recruited someone to work on climate change and the green economy, with a mandate to get a climate change policy in place. The picture I had pieced together showed how climate intersects with the city's work, and what the climate adaptation pathway of cities more generally might look like. This drew on theory and practices from elsewhere in the world, and was able to inform and hopefully enrich that policy development and its links to other decision-making processes within and beyond the city.'

Today the municipality has several policies, strategies, plans and assessments aimed at increasing the climate resilience of the city and reducing the contributions it makes to greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. It has an outline for its Resource Efficiency Criteria for Development in Cape Town. It has an Integrated Coastal Management Policy and Plan, along with clearly demarcated coastal setback

lines, which limit or prevent further development in areas along the coast that will be at risk to storm surges in future. It has a new Resilience and Water Strategy, as well as a detailed spatial and economic analysis of climate risks and vulnerabilities across the city. Taylor's work as an embedded researcher contributed to this body of work that has been growing over the past decade due to the efforts of many people pushing new ways of tackling complex problems.

'Adopting these policies is just the beginning,' says Taylor, 'there still needs to be implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision.'

From her vantage point today, as an expert in city-scale climate adaptation, the policy outcomes are just a part of this work. Knowledge in itself is not enough to guarantee appropriate policy and urban change. The process of building knowledge collaboratively, with an embedded researcher working as a bridge between institutions and individuals, allows academics to step out of their ivory towers. It helps policymakers approach problems from a more holistic perspective and assess possible interventions through a more critical and innovative lens.

'The processes of this co-production, and the policies that result from them, are interlinked and relational. It's an unusual arrangement, but building knowledge in relation to different aspects of a city's development challenges increases the likelihood of that knowledge being better aligned with other things required to bring policy to fruition that addresses the challenges we face with climate change, inequality, and rapid urbanisation.'

Knowledge in itself is not enough to guarantee appropriate policy and urban change. The process of building knowledge collaboratively, with an embedded researcher working as a bridge between institutions and individuals, allows academics to step out of their ivory towers. It helps policymakers approach problems from a more holistic perspective and assess possible interventions through a more critical and innovative lens.

34 Scott, D., Davies, H. & New, M. (Eds.) 2019. *Mainstreaming Climate Change in Urban Development: Lessons from Cape Town*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

ROLLING OVER THE COBBLED STONES OF HISTORIC GOTHENBURG

The Gothenburg City Museum regularly gives visitors a chance to step back in time through guided tours into the older historic parts of the city, which started out as a military and trading hub in the early 1600s, before its rapid industrialisation in the 20th Century. The walks meander across the cobbled streets, alongside canals and waterways, old stone churches and military depots, trading company headquarters that linked Gothenburg with shipping routes to China, and sites of worker mobilisation.

How accessible are these walks, though, for someone moving around with a walking aid or in a wheelchair?

The museum's management wanted to test how inclusive and accessible these walks, and other exhibits inside the museum, are for people whose physical 'functionality' is different to most – people who might be vision-impaired, struggle with mobility in an environment designed for fully able-bodied people, or those with hearing differences. There are many variations to how people are able to function within the world, but these 'functional variations' are often not accommodated in the design of a city environment.

To do this, the museum wanted to learn from those who are best positioned to test the experiences: people with different physical, psychological or cognitive variations, and their personal experience of inaccessible environments.

Gothenburg City Museum teamed up with the Mistra Urban Futures Gothenburg platform, and various other organisations, including the non-profit organisation called Utopia, whose work focuses on creating more inclusive cultural spaces. Together they designed a series of workshops and interactive sessions where visitors with norm-breaking physical or cognitive functional variations were able to engage with the museum's installations and go on the guided city walks, to understand how accessible these are for a more diverse group of people.

These took place in 2014, and the feedback gave some good insights into how these installations and walks need to be redesigned, according to Magnus Eriksson, researcher at RISE Interactive and member of the Mistra Urban Futures Gothenburg team.

The work fell under the umbrella of the Funktek project, an initiative geared towards assisting the museums in Gothenburg to become

more accessible experiences for everyone. This work acknowledged that everyone has a right to be part of, and help create, the city's culture, and aimed to draw their experience into a process that would allow the museums to reshape themselves to be more inclusive.

Participants with mobility challenges, who took part in the very first Funktek guided walk, said that the pace of the tour was too fast, and that they found themselves lagging behind the main group, explains Eriksson.

When these individuals were able to catch up with the group at the various stopping points, they found themselves confronted with a wall of bodies that had closed in around the guide. This meant they couldn't see or hear the guide, and struggled to have their own voices heard if they wanted to ask questions.

To correct this, the Funktek team organised a second walking tour following a new route. This time the guide was deliberate about slowing the pace. Each stop was evaluated from the perspective of those with functional variations.

The participants' main feedback on this second outing was that the route was too long – not because



of the distance, but because of the time taken to navigate the difficult cobblestoned surfaces typical of the older parts of the city. Some also struggled to follow the guide's storytelling as it unfolded across several different stops.

The perspective of those with sight and hearing difficulties was also helpful for the researchers and museum outing organisers. Eriksson says that the day-to-day noise of the urban environment made it challenging to hear the guide's voice, but that the participants recognised that being in this noisy environment was also the only way to really experience the historic city sites, with all its messiness.

They suggested that there might be a way to redesign the tours so that they allow a more experiential way of interacting with the history of the place, rather than merely giving an information-based city tour. What would it be like to actually live in that historical context, they asked, and were there other ways of allowing visitors to access this 'imaginary' world?

The Funktek pilots were a participatory research project aimed at testing this novel method to evaluate and improve the accessibility of cultural practices by Gothenburg City Museum, explains Eriksson. They were able to do this by drawing in experts and participants

Gothenburg City Museum organised a walking tour to see how people who are differently abled are able to access their tours.

from various organisations over a three-year period.

The museum has been offering these city tours for years, and the Funktek research was a chance to allow for a 'user-led' redesign process of the experiences. The participatory process they tested through the pilots is also a method that the Funktek project team hopes to use to inform transformation processes in other contexts.

SKILLING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND THINKERS

What characteristics make for solid leadership qualities in someone working in the field of sustainability?

A leader needs to be able to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds, across many different sectors and disciplines, and from various religions and cultures.

A good leader in this field needs to understand that their knowledge or perspective is just one of many, that they might not have all the answers, and that there are multiple ‘truths’ when trying to understand any complex system.

‘These are exactly the same qualities that people working in transdisciplinary research need,’ says James Ayers, a former journalist who has spent a number of years working in the intersection of education and sustainability, and looking at the role of leadership in complexity.

Ayers, from Melbourne, Australia, is completing his doctoral studies in strategic leadership towards sustainability through the Blekinge Institute of Technology, in Karlskrona, Sweden. His studies include a model in transdisciplinary learning offered by Mistra Urban Futures, through its Open Research School programme in Gothenburg.

The Mistra Urban Futures Open Research School programme was unique, explains Professor Henrietta Palmer from the Gothenburg platform.

‘It brought together doctoral students with practitioners from the public, private and civil sector, all of whom have an interest in urban issues and transdisciplinary co-production, so that they can train in methods for transdisciplinary research,’ she says.

Since its inception, the programme offered courses in methods for transdisciplinary research, open to doctoral students and practitioners alike. Lecturers came from both practice and academia, allowing the programme to consciously build a two-sided perspective on urban critical issues.

‘The programme had a high international profile, attracting both international participants and lecturers from the transdisciplinary research front,’ says Palmer.

Over a two-and-a-half year period, 85 students attended the courses. While Ayers’ primary focus was on leadership, the programme allowed participants to explore a wide scope of interests.

The Open Research School programme was about more than just the skills and tools learned in the process, though; it’s also about how to do knowledge co-production.

When we look at how people acquire and use knowledge, Ayers says it is important to be aware of the context in which this occurs, such as social structures, or the dynamics of class and race.

‘Doing so, as a good leader, means being aware of ourselves and others, and understanding that our assumptions and viewpoints are just that – ours alone.’

Ayers is one of a number of doctoral students investigating the ‘importance of transdisciplinary approaches to learning’ through a module offered by the Mistra Urban Futures Open Research School programme. This programme looked at moving from practice to theory in the process of co-producing knowledge in transdisciplinary research.

The Gothenburg programme allowed the participants to look at the so-called ‘wicked urban problems’ and, through their research, to explore transdisciplinary ways to find solutions. Course organisers designed this school’s research

programme for academics as well as urban development practitioners, and say the aim is to give students insight into ‘urban dilemmas from both practice and academic perspectives’ and provide tools, methods and theory for transdisciplinary research.

This programme ran in parallel with similar postgraduate study opportunities in Kenya, through the Kisumu Mistra Urban Futures group, which runs a similar research school programme. Dr Michael Oloko, Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) in Bondo, about 70km west of Kisumu, says the doctoral students going through this programme have been able to test out transdisciplinary learning and co-production processes through various research projects run by the Mistra Urban Futures team there. These include research on alternative solutions to Kisumu’s solid waste management problems (see Chapter 5: Govern), how to revive traditional culture by linking it with ecotourism (see Chapter 4: Ephemeral City), and understanding the role of formal and informal markets in Kisumu’s food system.

It is important to be aware of the context, such as social structures, or the dynamics of class and race. Doing so, as a good leader, means being aware of ourselves and others, and understanding that our assumptions and viewpoints are just that – ours alone.

Chapter 7 IMAGINE

Doing things as they've always been done may just repeat the status quo. The power of the imagination can change that. Thinking differently and creatively can help dream up solutions that don't yet exist, and can expand the boundaries of what is possible.

This lay at the heart of the Mistra Urban Futures project. Using innovation, speculation and experimentation, the initiative played with fresh ways to tackle old, intractable problems that prevent cities from becoming the just spaces they should be. The emphasis was on trying novel approaches to co-production in research and knowledge generation, using collaboration and out-of-the-box thinking.



Previous spread and right: *The Food for Thought shopping trolley installation was a way for academics and artists to step outside of the usual research paradigm and use the idea of playing games to better understand food security in Cape Town.*

The installation that popped up in the main public square in the centre of Cape Town on a blustery summer's morning in 2014 only stood for a few hours, but in that time it got the hoped-for attention. First, a trail of wire shopping trolleys rattled along the sidewalk, between strolling commuters and pavement-side stalls selling knick-knacks and snacks, pushed by figures dressed in white overalls. Next, across the road from the colonial-era facade of the iconic City Hall, this nameless group stacked their trolleys up into a pyramid-shaped sculpture so tall that the top was beyond easy reach. They tied a series of cards onto the sculpture with pictures of a range of food items, which flapped as the wind tugged through the wire framework.

Each food item represented something that a passerby could 'buy' from the installation: lower down on the sculpture, many day-to-day necessities like a bunch of carrots, cooking oil, a bag of flour, a handful of tomatoes. Higher up, the more costly food items. Higher still, some expensive luxuries like a bottle of wine or chocolate.

The team then recruited volunteers from the passing commuter crowd to take part in the installation, giving them play-money that amounted to a week's budget that reflected the spending power of five different income groups. Then, they invited people to go shopping. People also had the option of hiring a stepladder to reach the more expensive foods on the sculpture.

The team then set up a check-out till, with one of them acting as cashier. While the cashier rang up the shoppers' groceries, he got chatting with the 'customers'. The point of the installation was to find a playful way to drill down into

some very pertinent questions about people's relationship with food and hunger in a typical urban southern African context.

Dr Gareth Haysom – the cashier for the day, and lead researcher on the installation – has spent years looking at the question of city food systems and the hunger-obesity poverty-paradox. How food 'secure' is a city like Cape Town, and many of its sister cities around the sub-continent? Haysom is based at the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town, where the urban food team is concerned with understanding people's relationship with food, and important questions of how their economic situation or location in a city expresses itself through the food they can or can't eat.

The Food for Thought shopping trolley installation was a way for his team of academics to step out-side of the usual research paradigm – surveys, clip boards, linear streams of data gathering – and use the idea of playing games to better understand this question of people's food security status in Cape Town.

Serious Fun: how games expand research

This isn't the only occasion in which the Cape Town Mistra Urban Futures team has used gaming as a way to break out of the conventional research mould. Through a programme called Serious Fun, they used the experimental potential of gaming and play to break out of the strictures of normal academic learning, liberating it through the power of playful learning and spatial engagement as a way to develop 'alter-



DOUNG JAHANGEER

native visions and uses of city spaces'.

The rationale for using games in their research comes from the idea amongst psychological theorists that 'play' is part of the very nature of humans, and performs a critical role in people's lives. The Serious Fun team draws on theorists whose thinking goes back to the 1950s, starting with Dutch historian Johan Huizinga. He argued that a game is a 'free activity standing quite consciously outside ordinary life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly'.

'It is that complete engagement that underlines the power of games and the central role they play in establishing some type of balance in people's lives,' argues Dr Rike Sitas, who worked with Haysom on the Serious Fun project.

'The power of games is that they follow similar principles,' write Haysom and Sitas. 'They are often collective and are based on an agreed set of parameters or rules. They are usually competitive and are played in various configurations of

solitude, participant and observer. As structured play, they have different kinds of outcomes, but are generally understood to be an important suspension from reality.'

Researchers wanting to use game methods can draw on a number of different styles: analogue games such as board games; digital, such as video games; autonomous games such as robots playing chess; non-competitive games; and, increasingly, so-called 'serious games'.

'Serious games' are a way to combine analysis and research relating to a specific scientific viewpoint with the 'intuitive freedom and rewards of imaginative, artistic acts', according to American researcher Clark Abt, who is regarded as the father of this method of combining playfulness with research.

'In short,' he wrote in his book *Serious Games*, published in 1970, '(this approach) offers us a rich field for a risk-free active exploration of serious intellectual and social problems.'

One game that the Serious Fun team devel-

oped is a modified version of the game Monopoly, where they adapted it into something that allows for a critique of the ‘cumulative advantage and disadvantage in the property market in Cape Town’, which the team called Mother City Metropoly.

‘We repurposed the game Monopoly by changing the starting point for the players. We reordered the board, we showed the different densification levels associated with various housing types, and we adapted the chance cards,’ Sitas explains. ‘In contrast to Monopoly, Mother City Metropoly involves players starting with different economic statuses that more realistically reflect South African class dynamics. It places players in more or less advantaged positions.’

They tweaked the board to show the reality of spatial inequality in Cape Town, allowing it to capture the flavour of different neighbourhoods, as well as the assets that are spread unequally through a city, such as taxi routes.

‘Whereas the original game only allows for a single housing type, in Mother City Metropoly, we included a shack, a house, and a shopping mall. We changed the chance and community chest cards so that they stipulate different impacts depending on a player’s starting point. Heavy rains, for example, will have a significantly different impact on a poor neighbourhood than an elite one: the former will flood; but even in the unlikely event of damage to a wealthier one, that’s what insurance is for.’

The objective is to allow participants to experience in a playful way the very serious concept of social or economic privilege, and the challenges that a person might face, depending on where they find themselves within the city system.

The game was piloted with teenagers at high

school level, and now serves as a working game which researchers play with participants as a way to get broader discussions going about spatial design in South Africa. It is played regularly in postgraduate teaching, and has been used by a Cape Town-based social movement, Tshisimani, as an activist learning tool.

Another game – LegoCity – uses Lego to spark new thinking around urban building design and architecture. Researchers ran a workshop with youth, in which they let the participants build their dream home using Lego. Through the course of a day, the teenagers built these homes, sketched architectural drawings of their existing homes, and engaged in facilitated discussions on housing and urban design.

Towards the end of the day, they were invited to bring all of their houses together and build their own city. They could decide for themselves how they wanted to lay the city out, and how to allocate different functions to this imagined city.

Another game demonstrates some of the tricky questions associated with property development decisions around the Cape Town shoreline, as climate change brings greater threat of damage associated with storm surges and sea level rise. This Climate for Change game involved setting up a tug-of-war type game in a public space. The rope was red, and knotted 19 times to represent the number of hotspot areas that are at risk of inundation and erosion damage along the coastline. The centre section of the rope hung over a bucket of water, above a box of sand painted red, yellow and green to show the levels of risk associated with three scenarios of sea level rise. The game organisers then put a wooden house or building on the sand. If the tug-of-war contest resulted in the bucket getting

tipped over, the building either got wet, subsided or fell over altogether.

The game was a playful way to show the difficult tensions between the pressure to allow more urban development and coastal infrastructure construction, and the need to protect or restore natural coastal buffer zones.

Play with your food

Over the years, the ACC’s study of city-scale food systems in southern Africa has shown how misleading cities can be. They appear to be overflowing with food, and yet hunger and malnutrition – including obesity as a form of malnutrition – abound.

Even in Cape Town – a relatively wealthy city compared with many others across the region – in poorer neighbourhoods like Philippi, Khayelitsha and Ocean View, around 80 per cent of families are regarded as food insecure, meaning they don’t have stable and regular access to affordable, healthy, culturally-appropriate food.

Urban living tends to nudge people towards a diet that’s limited in diversity, where people discount on their meals because of tight budgets, forcing them to leave more expensive, healthier food groups out of their diet to cut costs. They often end up living on a diet of food that is high in starch, energy-dense, and often contains lots of sugar. These come with a cascade of poor health effects.

The Food for Thought game was developed to explore creative ways to engage with these questions of urban food and the different faces of hunger, by drawing in people who might rep-

resent a number of communities, using a game that unpacks the food system in Cape Town, explains Haysom.

‘Food security is a serious thing,’ he says, reflecting on years of working at the coalface of this question of city-level food access and hunger in Southern Africa. ‘It’s visceral and deeply personal. With this installation, we wanted to think about how to create fun in this otherwise serious space.’

Drawing on various game-based methodologies, Haysom, in collaboration with artist Doung Jahangeer, came up with the idea of the shopping trolley installation as a way of exploring the sometimes less visible things that shape Capetonians’ food-buying decisions.

The idea of ‘playing with food’ had a serious objective, to bring to the surface some of the often hidden undercurrents in the food system: the question of dietary diversity discounting and cutting corners to make ends meet; the emotional reasons behind food choices; the preference for certain traditional foods; the inequality within the food system; and the fact that people’s relationship with food is a great deal more complex than just the foods on display in shop windows or on someone’s dinner table.

‘The shopping trolley sculpture was both a symbol of and a metaphor for the current modern urban food system,’ says Haysom.

Once the game participants started queuing at the check-out with their groceries, Haysom was able to have conversations with them that allowed the researchers to better understand why people had made various food and purchasing choices.

‘The usual approach to nutrition issues is to assume that the consumer is ignorant, and that

they just need to be educated if we want to create healthier communities,' explains Haysom.

'This is patronising and condescending. It's sometimes even racist, because it assumes that the "poor", which often reads as referring to people of other races, are ignorant. We were keen to test this relationship between knowledge and decision-making, relating to the foods people bought.'

Haysom says that what emerged from the game was that consumers had considerable knowledge about what was healthy and what food was good for them. However, it was clear that some of the 'shoppers' were thinking strategically too, making multiple decisions that influenced what foods they bought within their budget.

'We found that people's food choices didn't necessarily follow the trends we assumed they would,' he says.

The Serious Fun team was initially concerned that the players might select foods that they thought they should select – a variety of foods with good nutritional value, for instance – but while some players did this, Haysom says that others were 'far more honest'.

People also made quite unexpected decisions with their budgets. Sometimes, these may have seemed like they weren't rational decisions, but once the conversations at the check-out got started, they revealed that many of the choices were, in fact, quite logical. People's choices were often nudged by some emotional undercurrent or sense of responsibility, or the person's role in the family might have influenced the choices they made.

'One player chose only chocolate and wine,' says Haysom. 'This wasn't because it was a di-

etary need, but because he was in love. He told us he wanted to impress his new partner.'

A grandmother chose foods that were best for her grandchildren, even though they weren't necessarily the best for her.

Two university students joined in the game, and the Serious Fun team gave them the budget of a lower-middle income household, to reflect what their real-world income might be. In the game, they used most of their money to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

'But once they got to the checkout, we got to talk about their actual food choices, by looking at what they had in their shopping bags following their actual weekly grocery shopping,' says Haysom. 'This prompted a fascinating conversation about balancing budgets, storage, extending limited food budgets, cooking facilities in student accommodation, and their lived budget constraints as students. They chose food that didn't spoil, and which they could prepare with minimal cooking.'

Reflecting on the outcome of the installation, the researchers found that these choices reflected strategic thinking amongst the participants, and also clear prioritisation, often not driven by nutritional need but 'by emotion and a number of other factors.'

This gave insights into the budget, knowledge, and strategic thinking around food choices that is important to understand but often hard to capture through conventional research surveys.

'In some cases, the food items that we selected to include in the game didn't match the food that the passers-by had in their actual shopping bags. We got talking about this, too, and this is where some of the richest and most energised conversations happened.'

'... once (people) got to the checkout, we got to talk about their actual food choices. This prompted a fascinating conversation about balancing budgets, storage, extending limited food budgets, cooking facilities in student accommodation, and their lived budget constraints as students. They chose food that didn't spoil, and which they could prepare with minimal cooking.'

GETTING ARTY IN GOTHENBURG



The many cultural faces of Gothenburg.

Sweden has a long history of nurturing an arts culture amongst its youth, with state-funded culture schools going back to the 1950s. Initially, these were an extramural facility where school children could go for music lessons, but by the 1990s they'd expanded to offer a range of artistic disciplines, allowing children to learn visual arts, dance, and drama.

However, the youth who tend to get involved in these extramural programmes are mostly female, and from well-educated, professional families where the parents had also attended the schools when they were young. The result is a sort of 'culture circle' that has become quite exclusive and self-reinforcing.

Emma Nyman, a teacher coordinating across seven different culture schools in Gothenburg, says the schools have wanted to break this circle for some time and better reflect contemporary Sweden, whose

population now includes large, diverse immigrant communities. 'For several years we tried different approaches, but we didn't see a big change,' says Nyman. 'These activities are voluntary, so the kids don't have to come. We realised we needed to do more to get them to participate. Every child should have an opportunity to engage in culture activities, and the culture schools are a way to bring children from different communities and classes together, to get to know more about each other's lives.'

In 2016, a number of the culture schools coordinators and principals joined a conference organised by the Mistra Urban Futures Gothenburg team, giving them a taste of an approach that may work for diversifying the schools.

Under the umbrella of the Mistra Urban Futures KAIROS project (Knowledge About and Approaches to Fair and Socially Sustainable Cit-

ies), the transdisciplinary research group focusing on the social dimension of sustainability hosted the conference. This centred on a series of 'mental shifts' geared towards addressing questions of globalisation, migration, and urbanisation.

'The complex societal problems that come with the ongoing societal transformation are embodied and this impacts on a local level. Cities, and their transnational networks, play an increasingly important role in facing demands for sustainable development,' say the Mistra Urban Futures KAIROS team. 'At the same time, the rapid pace of urbanisation and consequential rise in inequalities in income and health, increases the risk for medium-sized cities to develop into arenas of social conflict. Gothenburg is no exception.'

A society's development needs to be informed by people's views of, and need for, security, develop-

ment, and justice. Through the wider KAIROS project, the aim was to find a balance between these values, and they did so through three main focal points.

Firstly, KAIROS mapped and analysed the state of civil society and social movements in Gothenburg to understand what role they play in increasing political participation for those living and working in the city. Secondly, the team looked at the importance of dialogue in expanding democracy and strengthening society's ability to identify and respond to challenges and complex social projects. Thirdly, they explored how to draw young people into co-creation in a city context, seeing how their contribution could be strengthened, and how they could be supported to have more influence in their lives and in society. Children and young adults are the future decision-makers in any society, says the Mistra Urban Futures team.

This focus on the youth is where Nyman and her colleagues saw the opportunity to collaborate with the KAIROS project. She says their vision for the culture schools aligned with the global vision they saw presented at the KAIROS conference, and that in working with KAIROS they could be part of contributing towards creating a better society. 'It was great to connect our culture schools to a bigger picture. We have worked towards creating social change within our communities for many years, and suddenly we saw others talking in the same way,' says Nyman. After the conference, the culture schools staff created their own KAIROS team, and met with the Mistra Urban Futures KAIROS team during the 18-month process. They mapped out a series of 'mind shifts' that schools require to implement the ideas put forward by KAIROS to help create more socially sustainable and representative communities.

'The question remains: how can we reach a broader group of children?' reflects Peter Hogenas, principal of the culture school in Högsbo, Gothenburg. 'We have three target groups. Children with mental or physical disabilities, children from parts of the city that have social or economic challenges, and youth aged 13 to 19.'

The purpose of drawing these young-

sters in, and preventing drop-out, is more than just giving them a chance to learn a dance style, or be part of an orchestra. 'These schools are also a place for them to go after school. They can take part in activities, or just have a cup of tea, play pool, and have the supervision of the grown-ups at the school,' says Hogenas.

The schools are accessible meeting places where the participant's artistic process is the focus. 'We want to be a self-evident part of the societal welfare,' says Nyman. These cultural activities are about more than just culture for culture's sake. The aim was to help the youngsters shift their thinking, by supporting them in learning to think politically.

The next steps are to pull together a coordinated network across all the city's culture schools, so that the youth can interact with each other and see different parts of the city. Nyman says they also hope to expand the forms of cultural and artistic expression in the schools. 'In the beginning of the culture schools, from the early 1950s until the 1980s, music education focused on traditional Western classical music. But in the past 20 years, we've slowly introduced other culture expressions and traditions which aim to create an intercultural arena where young people from different places in Gothenburg are co-creators,' she explains.

LEARNING FROM THE SOUTH

Savings schemes, ‘table-banking’, micro-finance... these are some of the ways lower-income women in the global South support themselves through savings and credit schemes. These models for community saving usually involve informal weekly meetings where members agree to save a set amount of money, and benefit from dividends or rotational pay outs.

Savings-based initiatives are not always purely about finance, however, explains Dr Sophie King from the Urban Institute at the University of Sheffield and part of the Mistra Realising Just Cities UK team.

In India in the 1980s, community organiser Jockin Arputham began working with a non-governmental organisation, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) and a collective of women pavement dwellers called *Mahila Milan* (meaning ‘Women Together’). They developed strategies through which women could not only save money, but also use savings as an organising tool.

By organising around federated savings schemes, women began gathering community data to mobilise against evictions, and to negotiate for permanent shelter and improved basic services. They also

began sharing their experiences with women living in other areas, to demonstrate these approaches to others. International exchanges between women in India and South Africa in the early 1990s led to the founding of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), a grassroots movement that has spread to 32 countries worldwide.

SDI is now known globally for its successful use of savings, exchanges, and community data-gathering for developing innovative slum upgrading solutions.

But what can communities in the post-industrial urban centres of the United Kingdom learn from informal settlement communities in the global South?

This is a central question of a research project called *Seeing the Inner City from the South*, facilitated by King. In partnership with Professor Diana Mitlin at the University of Manchester, King worked with Mums Mart – a women-led community association based in the city of Manchester – to run a series of exchanges with activists from the South African and Kenyan affiliates of SDI.

They wanted to consider how the experiences of savings-based movements in other countries could

offer ways to build knowledge, drive action, and create change for neighbourhood activists in the UK context.

‘We wanted to understand what it means for community action to be resident-led and women-led, and what shapes the ability of neighbourhood activists to come together in inclusive, autonomous, and sustainable associations, capable of effecting real change in the lives of low-income communities in the UK,’ says King.

Through the international visits, Mums Mart, which began experimenting with savings in 2016, developed the confidence to reach out to women organising in other neighbourhoods to discuss the challenges of poverty and inequality facing their communities. King supported Mums Mart to hold exchanges with local community associations across Greater Manchester. Gradually, new savings schemes emerged out of this.

The savings groups are concerned with addressing the poverty and inequality which their members experience daily, explains King. The members come together at savings meetings, which are informal social get-togethers, where they also discuss their common experiences and pool ideas about how to

tackle various issues that come up in their communities.

Over 24 months, women from the three boroughs of Manchester, Stockport, and Salford went on international learning visits to Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa, and Nairobi in Kenya, and also hosted SDI activists in Greater Manchester. Participants developed an understanding of how savings can be used as a tool to network women together, and develop collective priorities and proposals for local development planning.

‘It’s not just about the money. It’s more about action, and bringing people together to fight for what you need, for what you want, to fight wrongs in your community, to fight for rights,’ explains Sharon Davis, treasurer of the Mums Mart savings association.

Since women began networking together across Greater Manchester, and were bolstered by international learning, women leaders are recognising that the power dynamics of poverty and inequality not only operate in similar ways across different areas of their own city-region, but also across cities internationally. This is changing their perspectives on their own local contexts and encouraging more collective thinking.

Mums Mart has worked hard to apply the knowledge that the group has gained from international exchanges through networking women together across the city of Manchester and Greater Manchester more widely. A new quarterly platform called Inner City Exchange brings resident-led groups together across Manchester to share ideas and strategy, and a new network of savings groups now exists called Greater Manchester Savers.

By Leonie Joubert and Sophie King



Manchester mums learning with Muungano Wa Wanavijiji in Nairobi, 2018.

Chapter 8 INVENTING THE NEW

‘Social imagination’ gives us the ability to invent visions of what might be in our deficient society, according to Professor Maxine Greene³⁵. ‘I am reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre’s declaration,’ she wrote, ‘that “it is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles... and we decide that these are unbearable”.’

Mistra Urban Futures experimented with new ways of tackling old, intractable problems that face contemporary cities. What can other researchers, practitioners, and cities take away from the lessons learned from this innovative approach to thinking creatively about these problems, and the process of co-producing knowledge and ideas as a collective?

What the Mistra Urban Futures initiative represents in terms of positive change is something bigger than the sum of its parts; it is an ongoing process that will live beyond the timeline of the programme itself.

³⁵ Greene, M. 2000. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Old Manchester and new, a site where researchers can test new ways to tackle old, intractable problems that face contemporary cities.

Shopping for fish in a small grocery store in Kisumu, Kenya, might reveal an unexpected find: rather than the fridges being stocked with freshwater Nile perch or tilapia fish caught in nearby Lake Victoria, a customer might find frozen tilapia shipped all the way from China, or pilchards from a Namibian harbour on the south-western coast of Africa.

A study of food value chains in Kisumu by the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town, in parallel with the Mistra Urban Futures research, showed that the demand for fresh water fish in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi often drives up the price of Nile perch or tilapia caught in the lake. This means that much of the fish hauled from the lake makes its way into the markets in the capital, leaving the lake-side city of Kisumu with a shortage of this important source of protein. To fill the gap, frozen fish is imported from Namibia and China.

The take-home message: to keep a city like this food secure, policy makers need to move away from outdated assumptions that cities rely on local sources of food. Food value chains in contemporary Africa span different scales – local, regional, and global – and these need to be fostered and enabled through appropriate planning and regulation.

Looking at the food system in a city like Cape Town reveals the importance of informal food markets. They aren't just a source of calories streaming into the system. They also create important job and livelihood opportunities so that people can earn an income, which then allows them to buy the calories circulating in those markets.

People working in the food security sector in a city like Manchester in the UK, or Gothenburg in Sweden, might be more concerned with the environmental impacts of the food system, and focus their research or lobbying towards fostering more ecologically sustainable farming meth-

ods or cut down the distance that food travels from farm to fork.³⁶

They might also put greater emphasis on the need to encourage healthier eating habits in a world where fast food is cheap and readily available.

Food is a universal need. Everyone feels hunger, everyone enjoys food, and everyone living in a city relies on a complex web of food systems to meet their daily needs. Understanding this, the food system became one of the lenses through which the Mistra Urban Futures teams performed a series of city comparisons, to assess how effective their work was, both in terms of research, informing policy, and the processes of co-production of knowledge.

City-by-city collaborations and comparisons

The first phase of Mistra Urban Futures' work was to set various research and co-production processes in motion. This meant building trusting relationships, finding champions within partnering institutions, developing and refining research methods that were tailored to local contexts, and creating safe spaces for the kind of experimentation that the projects use to tackle challenges in new ways.

The second phase of Mistra Urban Futures was to conceptualise, formulate, and roll out a series of collaborative and comparative research projects, to test how effective their different research and knowledge production approaches were in addressing local urban sustainability and equity problems in particular areas. They did this across 12 transdisciplinary comparative projects: Cultural Heritage and Just Cities (see Chapter 4: Ephemeral City); Knowledge Exchange, which

included the embedded researchers (see Chapter 6: Learn); Migration and Urban Development; Participatory Cities (see Chapter 5: Govern); Solid Waste Management (see Chapter 5: Govern); Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at the City Level (see Chapter 3: Leave No One Behind); Transportation and Urban Development (see Chapter 2: Space and Place); Urban Food Value Chain, Socially Sustainable Neighbourhoods; Urban Public Finance; PhD collaborations; and an overarching reflective comparative study, Realising Just Cities. The teams kept their city-to-city collaborations and comparisons within the broader project themes of socio-spatial, socio-ecological, and socio-cultural transformations.

If Mistra Urban Futures' objective was to realise just and sustainable cities, within their different contexts, what could they learn from the positive and negative experiences of other cities, and how could they build links with others?

While it may be too early to get a full measure of the reach and impact of this work, researchers in the five city-level platforms drew up their take-home messages:

It gets messy: Collaborative research and ideas-building, which includes all necessary stakeholders involved in city development issues, is challenging, time consuming, and occasionally unpredictable. It is also very rewarding, enriching and productive, despite the madness and messiness.

There's no 'one size fits all': Initiatives geared towards this kind of research and knowledge generation need to be tailor-made for the local context, and embedded locally. They must be responsive to local conditions, and flexible enough to change as local agendas evolve. This meant finding new ways of collaborating and comparing such as, for example, finding common questions amidst the complexity.

Bridge-builders are key: The Mistra Urban Futures local interaction platforms served as 'active intermediaries' between global agendas and city-level contexts and issues. This allowed those

working at the city-scale to understand and learn from experiences of those in other cities, as well as from global initiatives facing similar problems in urban sustainability.

Champions are crucial: Working across city authorities and civil society needs passionate champions in partnering organisations to build other kinds of bridges within and across cities.

Flexibility and fleet-of-foot: People doing this work need to be reflexive, and open to change and renewal. It can be difficult to keep momentum going in long-term projects like this, particularly where large institutions are involved and where there might be regular turn-over of personnel. Agility is an essential skill to meeting the ever-shifting challenges.

The right person for the job: Transdisciplinary work needs people with the right skills, experience, and personality. They need to have strong facilitation skills so they can help reconcile the perspectives of many different partners. They need to be empathetic and patient, engaging in the everyday inter-personal and ethical dilemmas that are inevitable in this kind of work. Contemporary cities are evolving places, and may not fit neatly into the older categories of 'developed' or 'developing' world contexts the way they once did. Each city has its own unique character, and its own set of barriers that may prevent it from becoming a fair, safe, accessible place for everyone living within it.

Towns and cities are ultimately human places, where real people live, move, and eat. The process of realising these as just and fair spaces for all is not an end point. It's an ongoing journey, calling for collaboration and creative thinking by everyone living in, and grappling with, these complex urban habitats. The networks woven together through an initiative like Mistra Urban Futures, and the unique projects undertaken by each of the partners, amount to more than the sum of the parts, creating impact that continues, stretching well beyond the institutional partners involved in this work.

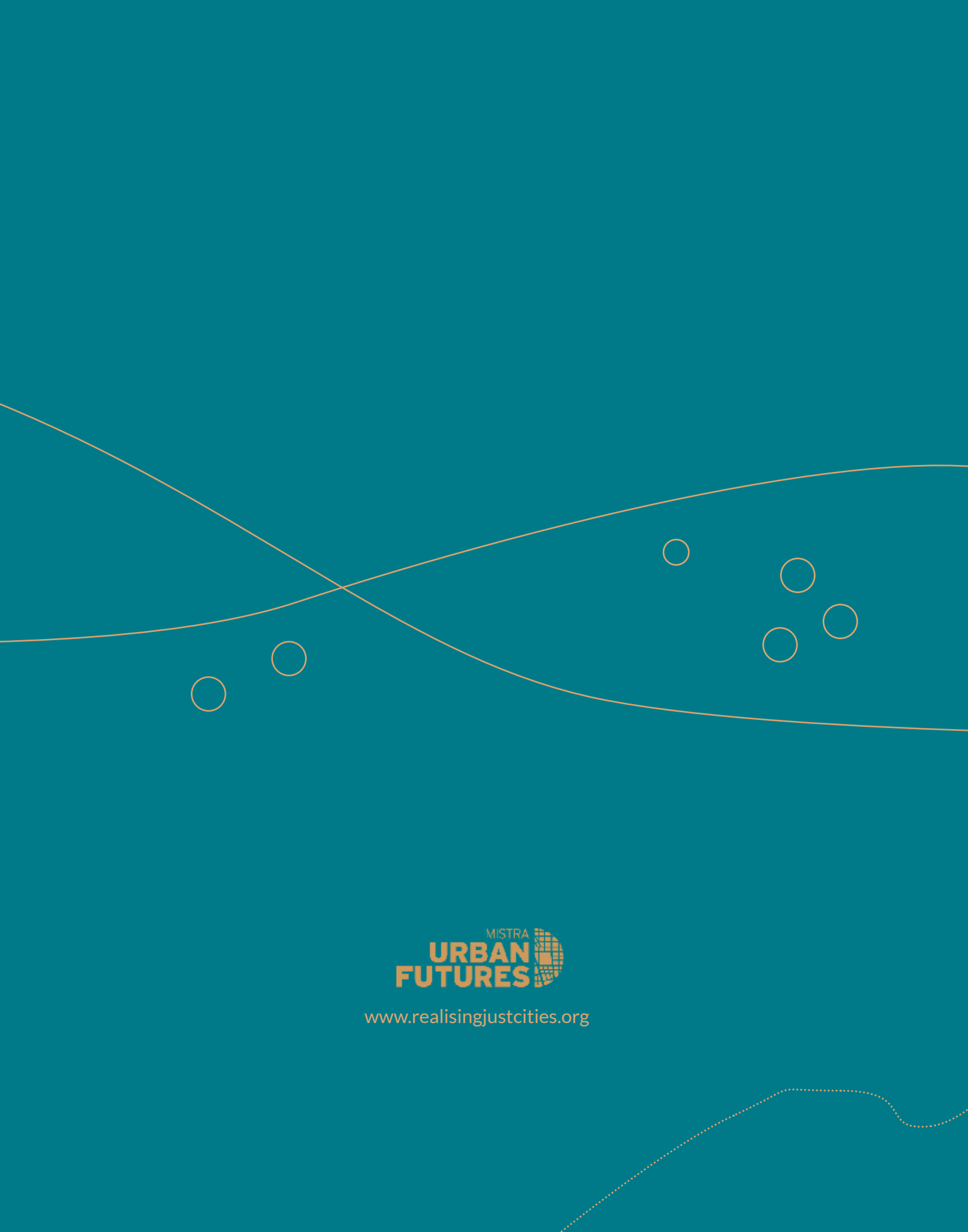
³⁶ Haysom, G. et al. 2019. *Food Systems Sustainability: An Examination of Different Viewpoints on Food System Change. Sustainability*, 11: 3337.



STRAND ST

Previous spread: Just cities are mobile and accessible. Transport interchanges like Cape Town's train station are important places for encounter and exchange.





www.realisingjustcities.org

