INCLUSIVE & SHARING CITIES

Bridging the Gap: Ensuring Digital, Social and Gender Inclusion

In today's cities, social inclusion is not only the right thing to do but also the smart framework to foster. More inclusive societies are more likely to attract talent and tourists, while making the most of their human capital. Moreover, UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 calls for "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" cities.

However, rapid urbanization points to a steadily rising awareness that there are various challenges that cities still need to address. Particularly, in terms of exclusion, segregation and, more generally speaking, socio-economic inequalities, which impact access to social protection and connectivity. Women, people with disabilities and poor workers often face hostile situations preventing them from feeling part of their city's story and benefitting from economic growth.

Turning the tides on inequality trends requires policymakers to think outside the box to ensure equal rights and participation for all, affordable necessities (housing, water and sanitation) and access to jobs. But what are the catalysts in making "cities for all" a reality? Some experts point at developing participatory platforms so that all the voices can be heard, and ensuring working poor are included in municipal budgets. Some others focus more specifically on the gender gap, the digital gap and the social gap.

All in all, there is some sort of consensus that cities should develop policies to promote education and interculturality, to improve gender equality, to prevent the remaining gaps in internet inclusion, to ensure access to social protection, and also implement universal design approaches and accessibility standards in urban upgrading and disaster risk management.

To reach such goals local and national authorities must work closely together with appropriate decision-making powers and financial resources to place the topic of inclusion front and center. Everyone counts.

Participants will:

- Get insights on the effects of digitalization on cities' economy.

- Get improve knowledge on the impact of rapid urbanization on people's life and social inclusion.

- Learn about good practices of inclusive urban development across the world.

- Get insights on policies to successfully lessen cities' inclusion gap.

Guiding questions

Main questions:
- What is the role of ICTs in promoting social inclusion?
- Are local authorities the only agents able to act on social inclusion?
- How to blend digital inclusion and social inclusion?
- How can local and national authorities empower women in cities and improve gender equality?
- What is the role of social protection systems in addressing the barriers that individuals with disabilities experience within the city services?

Keywords

accessible cities; social inclusion; digital inclusion; gender equity; ageing population; kids-friendly cities; inclusive social policies; equity