

BRIDGING THE URBAN DIVIDE: INCLUSIVE CITIES

In analyzing the urban divide, UN-HABITAT finds that some cities worldwide are more inclusive than others and better provide residents with near equal access to adequate housing and affordable basic services.

A review of income-based coefficients in the UN-HABITAT report *State of the World Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide* shows Beijing is the “most equal” city in the world, with a Gini value as low as 0.22 in 2003. It is followed by Benxi, (0.29) and several other Chinese cities including Shanghai, Baoji and Xian, which all boast Gini coefficients below 0.37. Several cities in Jordan also have very low income Gini coefficients (between 0.31 and 0.35), including Amman, Jerash, Ajloun, Irbid, Zarqa, Mafrq, Balga, and Madaba. Hanoi in Vietnam and Caracas in Venezuela also feature relatively low income inequality, with Gini coefficients below 0.39.

Additionally, cities like Jakarta (Indonesia), Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna (Bangladesh), Lome (Togo), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) and Dakar (Senegal) are the most egalitarian cities in the developing world, as measured by consumption-based Gini coefficients (with a range of 0.27 to 0.37), where zero represents perfect equality and 1 absolute inequality.

But the report warns that in many developing world cities “most equal” cities can often mean “equally poor” cities, displaying poor social indicators. In Chittagong and Dhaka — with consumption-based Gini coefficients of 0.29 and 0.31, respectively — under-5 mortality is 97 deaths per 1,000 children at urban-level nationwide and up to 130 in the most deprived slum settlements. In Dakar, a city with relatively low consumption inequality (0.37), the literacy rate among women was 63% in 2000, compared with 90% for men; this combined into a female-to-male literacy ratio of 0.7, reflecting a marked gender disparity. Likewise, in Jakarta and Dar-es-Salaam, overall literacy rates for women stand around 94%, but in slums and the most deprived areas they drop to 63% and 50%, respectively.

“Equally poor” cities in the UN-HABITAT sample show that economic growth proceeds at different paces. Some are growing fast; others slowly. As they grow, though, cities must ensure that any progress toward more equal distribution of consumption is sustained. They must also increase economic and social opportunities for the poor, women and other vulnerable groups, in the process reducing the systemic social deprivations that prevent certain segments of society from achieving the benefits of an egalitarian city.

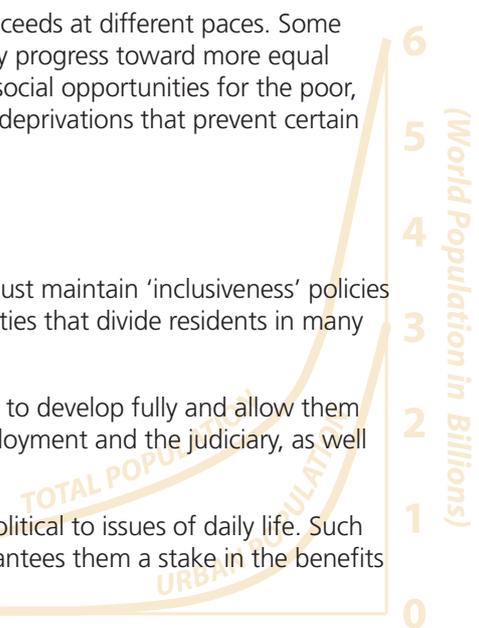
ACTION NEEDED TO INCREASE EQUALITY

Based on such data, the authors of the report argue that municipal authorities must maintain ‘inclusiveness’ policies if they are to narrow the gross **social, economic, political** and **cultural** inequalities that divide residents in many cities of developing nations.

An inclusive city provides the opportunities and support that enables all residents to develop fully and allow them access to decent housing, transport, education, recreation, communication, employment and the judiciary, as well as cultural and religious expression.

In an inclusive city, residents take part in decision-making that ranges from the political to issues of daily life. Such participation injects a sense of belonging, identity, place into residents, and guarantees them a stake in the benefits of urban development.

Cities wanting to design and implement plans for inclusiveness can only succeed if they fully understand how the **social, economic, political** and **cultural** can, together, best be integrated into the daily lives of the public. Indeed, viewing economic opportunities in conjunction with other forms of political, social and cultural rights in societies is what builds capable social capital in developing countries. Therefore, to achieve these aims inclusive cities need to conduct in-depth reviews of their systems, structures and institutions in the bid to improve procedures that would lead to real institutional change.



INCLUSIVE POLICIES

One form of genuine change is for local governments to coordinate effectively with central and state or provincial-level authorities. Inclusive policies for cities should focus more on aspects that could be integrated into formal municipal practices; such as the informal economy, social capital and informal institutional arrangements, including affordable land delivery and housing systems. If social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of equality are to be made real, they must be accepted as people's rights. This requires cities to develop a vision that integrates everyone, to forward plans and implement mechanisms that are adequately monitored and that can be revised when necessary and to set up new institutions, or improve and strengthen existing ones, in order to ensure that they are inclusive, accountable and efficient. If met, these requirements would guarantee that a city provides the framework that integrates the visions, freedoms and rights of its residents.

The "right to the city" captures the four dimensions of equality which, when combined, guarantees inclusiveness. The right means that to make the greatest progress in bridging the urban divide, city governments must ensure equal priority to governance, planning, management and implementation of the four dimensions of equality.

Implementation of the right must be grounded in the basic, universally recognized human rights principles of non-discrimination, indivisibility, gender equality, gradual realization, non-retrogression, subsidiarity, solidarity and cooperation.

FROM PLAN TO REALITY

Local experts who participated in the 2009 UN-HABITAT Policy Analysis on the Inclusive City agreed that if municipal authorities were to foster inclusiveness in their cities, they must also spell out conditions that would make all declared rights effective.

UN-HABITAT policy analysis identifies five major steps to an inclusive city:

- assess the past and measure progress
- establish new, more effective institutions, or strengthen existing ones as needed
- build new linkages and alliances across tiers of government
- develop a sustained, comprehensive vision to promote inclusiveness
- ensure an equitable redistribution of opportunities

Closing the urban divide is an ongoing commitment among successive leaders of cities, social movements, organized labour, businesses and the general public to implement practical steps so that the city becomes more inclusive over time.

DEFINING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

- **Social Inclusion:** A socially inclusive city provides all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic status, adequate housing, decent basic services, and equal access to social amenities, opportunities and other public goods essential to everyone's general and environmental well-being
- **Economic Inclusion:** An economically inclusive city provides residents equal opportunities for business and access to employment and promotes pro-poor economic policies
- **Political Inclusion:** A politically inclusive city upholds citizens' rights and liberties, encourages social and political participation so that city officials will make better informed decisions and in a democratic manner
- **Cultural Inclusion:** A culturally inclusive city furthers social integration and celebrates diversity. It values cultural rights of all segments of society and encourages the arts and heritage.

FACTORS HINDERING INCLUSION POLICIES, 27 CITIES (percentage of respondents agreeing with each option)*

REGION	Lack of Policy Focus	Lack of Political Will	Lack of Human Resources	Inadequate Community Participation	Lack of Funding
LAC	42	48	23	38	26
Asia	44	36	25	23	17
Africa	41	46	13	33	21

Monitoring Branch, Policy analysis 2009

*Multiple responses not adding up to 100 per cent.