

# WORLD CITIES SUMMIT

## YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM

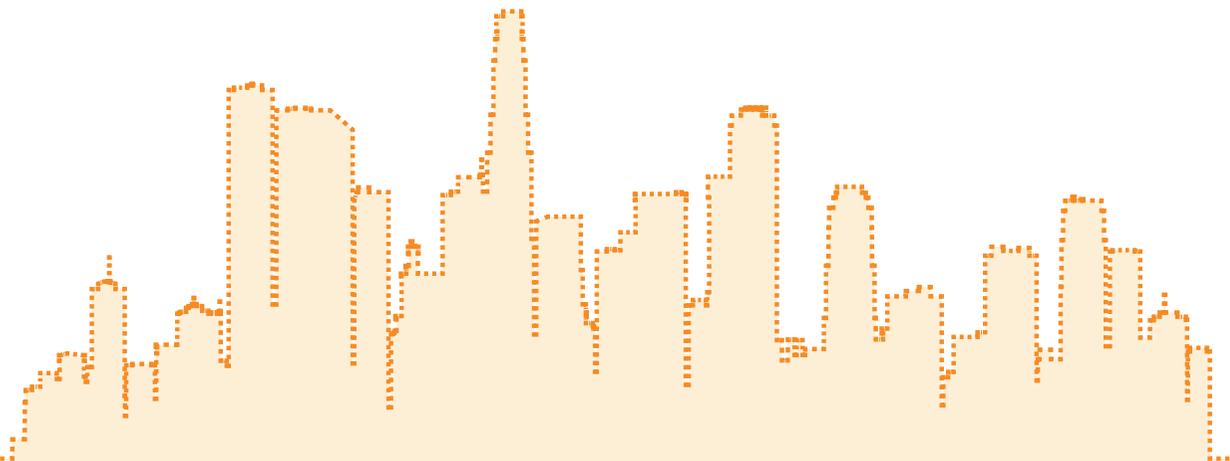
2014

REPORT



WORLD  
CITIES  
SUMMIT

YOUNG  
LEADERS



# WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM: SEEDING CHANGES IN MY CITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The inaugural World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium 2014 in Singapore added a new and important dimension to the World Cities Summit – a new community of voices advocating for more liveable cities. 57 leaders from 28 countries gathered to discuss common challenges in their cities, and to share solutions for tackling them. Typically aged between 30 and 45, the young leaders comprised elected representatives, senior government officials, urban planners, industry experts, architects, economists and researchers. Their voices spoke with realism to meet the new challenges of globalisation, and with optimism for the long-term future of liveable cities.

Themed “Seeding Change in my City”, the Symposium focused on identifying the structural changes needed, as well as the initiatives that have catalysed change in cities.

Technology was seen as a key driver of liveability, for example, using big data to improve aspects such as traffic and waste management, and so, to enhance the quality of life with more holistic planning. Being more connected would also empower people for greater participation in city government, and allow their real needs to be better grasped and met. This is how a “collaborative city”, for instance, is being built up in Bandung, Indonesia, where Mayor Ridwan Kamil uses social media to gather public policy input from his residents.

The digital divide is a reminder that fostering an inclusive society is a key responsibility

of cities, and catering to potentially marginalised segments of the community remains vital. Wherever there is disparity in society, in areas including access to information and services, whether in Bilbao, Spain, or Cape Town, South Africa, “high-tech” must be balanced with “high-touch”.

Only then can cities build trust, which is the fourth “T” of vibrant cities, to add to the “three Ts” of technology, talent and tolerance. In what Lord Mayor Stephen Yarwood of Adelaide, Australia, called “an age of information ecology”, it would always be not the hardware but the software – of involved residents and good governance – that truly makes for better cities.

For the future, participants at the Symposium also surfaced suggestions for the Young Leaders network to create even more impactful and inclusive opportunities to share about projects, seek assistance and collaborate. It could also serve as a repository of expertise and thought leadership for others to draw from, in seeding change in their own cities.

Information on the WCS Young Leaders initiative can be found on:  
<http://www.worldcityssummit.com.sg/about-young-leaders>



# 10 KEY TAKEAWAYS AND INITIATIVES FROM THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM 2014:

1

## People – the heart of cities.

- People are the ultimate beneficiaries of liveability. Hence, human relationships should be at the core of cities – from neighbourly relations to support for the political leadership. From there, cities gain strength in aggregate – very large cities are really clusters of strong neighbourhoods.
- People can be creators of cities, not just consumers. Cities can do what Cape Town Partnership, a non-profit organisation created in 1999 in South Africa, did to address urban decay of the downtown. Originally, this work was done mainly for the benefit of business, but later, the focus transitioned into developing a city for people, and for participation and place-making.

**“Every citizen deserves to be happy.”**

His Excellency Kinlay Dorjee, Mayor,  
Thimphu, Bhutan

2

## Technology enables participation.

- Technology is a tool to enhance people’s lives and welfare, and has a part to play in reducing social inequality. The government must take responsibility to drive the information agenda, to help cities in the transition into a post-industrial knowledge and information economy, to harness the potential of technology to improve lives and create jobs.
- Cities can do what Chicago, USA, does – have a Chief Technology Officer who reports to the Mayor, managing the hardware and software of technology for better governance.
- Governments can do more to protect marginalised communities – by gender, race, etc – and technology can help make their lives better e.g. in the Philippines, technology such as GIS (geographic information system) is used to map where wheelchairs are needed, to match supply to demand.
- Cities can also create innovative ‘cool’ infrastructure and places to entice smart and intelligent people to gather and stay.

**“What do we mean by creating smart and intelligent cities? I think it’s about developing cities with smart and intelligent people.”**

Andrei Sharonov, Dean, Moscow School of  
Management SKOLKOVO, Russia

3

## Trust empowers.

- Trust is the fourth “T” of vibrant cities, along with the accepted “three Ts”: technology, talent, tolerance. Trust has to exist between people and people, and between people and government, for true empowerment of people.
- Social resilience is enhanced when citizens participate to ensure neighbourhood security and recovery in times of emergency or natural disasters.
- City governments should employ simpler communication tools to engage the people, and not just speak through experts. They can do what the Philippines and Indonesia do, by having citizens act as “mayoral ambassadors” to promote community ownership and continuity of city initiatives.

**“Governments that let go actually find the trust in them increasing.”**

Dr Karen Bakker, University of British  
Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

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## There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

- Each city has different strengths and weaknesses, and different priorities. Because of the rapid pace of change and development, cities must ensure they can adapt to change. This requires understanding of their own special characteristics.
- Being aware of weaknesses means combining “high-tech” with “high-touch” approaches to governance when needed, so as to reach people cut off from technology such as the elderly. Cities can do what Bilbao, Spain, one of the “oldest cities” with 35 per cent elderly people, does – use traditional media alongside social media to overcome the limitations of relying too much on technology to facilitate citizen participation.

**“We need to combine high-tech with a high-touch approach for people cut off from technology”**

Jon Andoni Aldekoa de la Torre,  
Mayor’s Office Delegate Director,  
Bilbao City Council, Spain

## 5

### Successful cities are liveable.

- The key ingredients of a successful economy include not only strong growth and job opportunities, but also a highly liveable environment that is attractive.
- Cities need to optimise the development and use of all forms of “capital”, including environmental and human capital.
- There is a need to overcome threats such as “hollow urbanisation” – urbanisation without vibrancy, caused by large, dense single-use developments being segregated from other parts of the city.
- Cities ought to create places to entice people to gather and stay and these do not necessarily need to be complicated e.g. in the Philippines, bringing people together around simple shared interests such as food and music.

**“Give people the space and the possibility to come together and create things together.”**

Pablo Viejo, Head of the Asian Centre for Sustainable Cities, EDF Lab Singapore

## 6

### Transparent data is key.

- Availability and transparency of data is important. Lack of data and transparency hurts the legitimacy of governance and the ability to shape holistic plans with community participation.
- Use of data can help break silos and facilitate comprehensive city planning. Cities can do this by gathering data on citizens’ revealed preferences on public transport through using smart transit cards.
- There is a need for governments to provide resources to manage expectations and respond to queries. e.g. in Malaysia, some ethnic groups get more government aid. Government needs to do more to share the rationale behind it, to ensure that citizens can make informed decisions, to avoid misconceptions.

**“We currently need to use data more effectively to tell stories to our population so they can envision alternative futures”**

The Right Honourable Stephen Yarwood, Lord Mayor, Adelaide, Australia

## 7

### Preserve the soul of cities.

- There is a need to focus on nurturing a distinct city identity and character to give a city a competitive edge over others.
- Cultural resilience means not losing culture in the course of urbanisation, growing but still maintaining architectural heritage, to strike a balance between retaining the old and fusing it with the new.
- Building city identity can also paradoxically mean being geared to cater to foreigners as well. Cities can do what Singapore does – it sees itself as “a nation of friends and fans globally”, and the stakeholders in shaping the city’s future include the 20 million annual visitors, in planning projects such as Gardens by the Bay as a public garden for everyone to enjoy.

**“If you lose the soul of a city, you lose it. Political and social leadership are critical to ensure that change maintains the memories of cities.”**

Sanjeev Sanyal, Global Strategist, Deutsche Bank

## 8

### Cities must be a home to be embraced.

- Although making cities liveable, safe, secure and conducive for families, are important endeavours, ultimately, the need is also for people to like and enjoy the city. It is important to educate and change the mindsets of people to embrace their city.
- Residents must be engaged and brought along through effective communication of vision for alternative futures of a city. Some people are impatient and others do not want to think about major changes to a city that they are familiar with, but once people are consulted they understand the need for change.
- Cities can mobilise young people and construct youth-driven projects to help create ownership and drive participation to ensure generational ownership.

**“Human connections are the basic building blocks of society. If these are not strong, it is impossible for a city to flourish.”**

Hamdan Abdul Majeed, Executive Director, ThinkCity, Penang, Malaysia

## 9

### Cities must be actively inclusive.

- Cities need to reach out to minorities and the marginalised, to make sure there are enough spaces for collaboration and new initiatives. Developing economic strengths and inclusiveness should be planned in parallel. Even the best-laid plans on paper can turn out to be missing the human-scale elements.
- In cities, people can easily feel detached, hence cities can create engaging public spaces and activities e.g. with a urban farming (Bandung Berkebun) programme in Bandung, Indonesia.
- Co-location of facilities can help create a vibrant community by weaving different pieces of community together e.g. a childcare centre with elderly living clusters, schools with nursing homes, community centres with police posts.
- Cities can also provide places with meaningful opportunities to interact, care for under-served communities, strive towards inclusive growth, and create opportunities for members to contribute back to society.

**“In our anxiety to embrace technology, we forget that different people adjust differently to technology.”**

Desmond Lee, Minister of State for National Development, Singapore

## 10

### Cities as centres for co-opetition.

- Collaboration and competition are two sides of the same coin. Competition drives change but also creates isolation. It is critical to strike a good balance between competition and collaboration as a more sustainable way of development for cities.
- Cities can gather stakeholders to collaborate in a concerted way, like what Cape Town, South Africa does with its 24-hour “Design Storm” problem-solving sessions for representatives from government, business and the people sectors.

**“In Silicon Valley, they talk about ‘co-opetition’ which I think is a better word than competition.”**

Michael Jansen, Chief Executive Officer Cityzenith, USA



## WE THANK ALL WHO PARTICIPATED & CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM 2014

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The next World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium and Mayors Forum will be held from 8-10 June 2015 in New York City, USA.

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