Around the world, inclusivity is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for climate action. As the impacts of the climate crisis disproportionately affect low-income communities, cities are including representatives from local communities in project development to ensure that city projects are all-encompassing and socially just, so that no one is left behind.
ACCRA:
Social inclusion of waste collectors reaps heaps of benefits

In Accra, informal waste collectors collected more than 300 tonnes of waste daily, which was disposed of at illegal dump sites with open burning, resulting in air and groundwater pollution.

In 2016, the Accra Metropolitan Authority (AMA) initiated a programme to integrate the informal waste collectors in the city’s official waste management system to increase collection of waste, close the illegal open waste sites, and ensure fair and inclusive employment. The official recognition of Accra’s informal waste collectors has increased collection of waste from 28% to 48% in just two years.

What has the city achieved?

The capital of Ghana was struggling with waste management, and more than 600 tonnes of waste were discarded in open dumps daily. This practice led to the challenges of fires spontaneously setting ablaze, increased GHG emissions, and soaring air pollution levels. To combat this, the AMA closed all open dumps in May 2017. Two of the dumps alone covered almost 100,000 m² and received more than 450 tonnes of waste every day. With the closing of the open dumps, the AMA instead opened Achimota transfer station, Koko-lemie mini transfer station, and Ring Road West mobile transfer facility. The Achimota transfer station is located in Greater Accra and can handle 1,200 tonnes of waste per day.

The city adopted a strategy of including informal waste workers to sustain closure of the open dumps and expand waste collection coverage. Since Accra began the strategy, 601 informal waste collectors have been registered. The city provides waiting areas at the transfer stations for the waste collectors to sort the waste and store the recyclables, which they often sell to middle-men to increase their earnings. The three newly opened transfer stations receive more than 400 tricycles daily and more than 20,000 households receive waste collection service from Accra’s informal collectors.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
By recognising the informal waste workers, more jobs have been created and their earnings have improved. Furthermore, they have become accepted by households in the city, allowing for more dignified work and increased collection of waste.

Health:
The reduction of more than 300 tonnes of daily waste burned in uncontrolled open dumps has significantly reduced air pollution. The increase in waste collection will also reduce the risk of disease, and the city has not recorded outbreaks of cholera since 2017.

Economic:
By integrating informal waste collectors, their numbers have increased from 350 to more than 600, which has increased salvaging of recyclables and is leading to more employment opportunities for people involved in downstream recycling efforts.

Environmental:
Closing Accra's illegal open dumps has reduced indiscriminate disposal of waste and reduced the city's carbon footprint due to fewer vehicles travelling to disposal sites more than 30 km from the city.

What can other cities learn?

Enable dignified work for myriad benefits:
Prior to the inclusion of the waste workers in the city’s waste management efforts, the informal waste collectors’ work was illegal and they were regarded as a nuisance to society. Their work is now accepted by households, especially in low-income areas, which not only leads to more dignified work, but has also resulted in a significant increase in waste collected. In turn, this has reduced emissions of odour and gases, and lowered the risk of diseases spread in the communities.

Formalise waste management to increase efficiency:
Since the city closed illegal dump sites and opened transfer centres, salvaging of recyclable materials has increased from 5% to 18%, which not only reduces emissions but also creates more work for the people involved in recycling. Since the integration of the waste collectors, their numbers have increased from 350 in 2016 to more than 600 in 2018, which has led to an average of 650 tonnes of waste delivered daily to the three new transfer facilities.

ACCRA

More than 600 waste collectors have been included in Accra’s waste management efforts, providing dignified work, fair wages, and more waste collected in the city.

300 TONNES OF WASTE diverted from open burning
In Barcelona, energy advisors are tackling energy poverty, one vulnerable family at a time.

Energy Advisory Points spread throughout the city help families understand their rights to energy, make their homes more energy efficient to reduce emissions and save money, while also assisting the communities in getting better access to the job market. Community members gain professional skills, as 20 people are trained to be part of the team every eight months, which enables easier access to employment later on.

What has the city achieved?

In Barcelona, many vulnerable families suffer from energy poverty, such as having electricity and heat turned off unexpectedly, struggling to pay energy bills, and living in homes in dire need of efficiency retrofitting. Energy Advisory Points (EAP) is a project set up to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Barcelona, especially those of the most vulnerable. By working to guarantee the right to energy and access to basic supplies, the EAP have become integral for the less fortunate in the Catalan capital.

The EAP are a team of 40 energy advisors distributed at 11 points across the city. Their work has three main focus points: guaranteeing energy rights and improvement of energy efficiency, helping to promote employability among the most vulnerable, and to empower citizens. Beyond their work to retrofit homes and make them more energy efficient, the EAP hires 20 people every eight months who lack access to the labour market and integrate them into the team of energy advisors, to make a team of 60. In total, 80 people have been trained and empowered to work as professional energy advisors under the EAP.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
The overall objective of the energy advisors is to empower the most vulnerable families to be better equipped to reduce their expenses. They also help inform families about their energy rights in relation to the energy suppliers, and help them cope if they struggle to pay their bills.

Health:
Focusing on vulnerable families, the energy advisors have been able to ensure that they can maintain an adequate temperature in their homes, all year round. This both helps to avoid issues such as respiratory diseases in children and elders, but also lessens effects on mental health due to stress from fear of having electricity and heating cut off.

Economic:
For 2018, advice provided to the families by the energy advisors resulted in 2,008 individuals reducing their energy use leading to more than $100,000 in savings, which is roughly a $50 saving per family each year.

Environmental:
The energy advisors work directly with families to help them gain new habits in their home electricity use. By working with their behaviour as well as helping to install low-energy lighting, insulation for doors and windows, and timers for example washing machines, the families were able to reduce their energy use by a total of 2,165 kW in 2018.

The energy advisors go from house to house to educate families on how to reduce their energy use and help retrofit homes in areas, such as around windows and doors, which will significantly improve the energy efficiency of the homes.

What can other cities learn?

Financial assistance is key to help citizens escape energy poverty:
The main objective at an economic level is to enable the most vulnerable families to reduce the economic cost of energy in their home. To achieve this, the energy advisors reduce the fixed costs in their monthly bills by helping the families reduce their overall energy use. However, there is often the need for low-cost measures in order to improve the households’ energy efficiency. By granting social bonds, 2,728 families were able to cut their energy bills by 25% to 40% in 2018.

Professional training changes lives:
By introducing 20 people every eight months to the Energy Advisory Points, people who were otherwise excluded from the job market are able to get the adequate training and experience that will allow them to move on after the eight months and receive employment elsewhere as energy consultants. By professionally re-qualifying people, they gain access to the labour market they would likely not have had the opportunity to.

1,108
PEOPLE ARE HELPED EVERY MONTH by the Energy Advisory Points
In the heart of Buenos Aires is Barrio 31, one of the oldest informal settlements in the city. Despite its central location, it has been separated from activities and opportunities that would otherwise go hand-in-hand with living centrally in a buzzing capital. Barrio 31 is not only separated by train tracks and a highway but also socially – lacking access to education, healthcare, and jobs. In 2016, the city commenced the Elevated Park project to integrate the area’s 40,000 residents and provide the infrastructure needed to secure access to basic services and rights.

The city is now working to transform the highway into the Elevated Park, which will increase public space per inhabitant in Barrio 31 by 387% and connect the neighbourhood with the rest of the city. The elevated park will incorporate green areas, electric public transport, and a biological corridor, while a 64,500 m² space underneath it will be used for recreational, sporting, and cultural activities. The city is providing safe and accessible housing to the residents, making improvements where possible and building new, sustainable housing where necessary.

BUENOS AIRES:
Revitalising a marginalised neighbourhood into a green oasis provides opportunity for residents

What has the city achieved?

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The city government in Buenos Aires is working for the social and urban integration of marginal neighbourhoods to create the same rights and opportunities for all citizens.

In the neighbourhood of Barrio 31, a comprehensive plan to guarantee access to education, health, and formal jobs is being carried out. The plan will transform a noisy, polluting highway into an elevated park providing residents with green, recreational spaces as well as safe and sustainable homes.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
Before the Elevated Park project, 1,000 families were living beneath the Illia Highway in inadequate and unsafe living conditions. The city is building new, sustainable housing for these families, providing them with dignified and healthy living circumstances.

Health:
Before the project, Barrio 31’s residents were exposed to emissions from vehicles and above 80 dB noise from the highway’s activity. The planned transformation will reduce vehicle emissions and particulate matter and therefore improve air quality and related health issues.

Economic:
The new park will serve as an attraction for recreation and tourism, which is favoured by residents and the city as it will lead to commercial development and increased economic opportunities for the residents.

Environmental:
The Elevated Park project has included a myriad of initiatives to improve the environment, including separating organic waste to use as fertiliser, installing solar energy and LED lighting in the neighbourhood, rainwater collection to use in the park, a public bicycle system, and an electric bus driving in a loop in Barrio 31.

What can other cities learn?

Consider gentrification in urban renewal projects:
A project such as this, which includes renewing and improving vulnerable urban areas, often triggers increased land valuation. Therefore, if no instruments are created to prevent locals from being displaced by higher-income residents from outside the neighbourhood, the final objective of the integration project would be compromised. To address this issue, Buenos Aires introduced anti-gentrification policies relating to property deeds, the options for selling properties in the future, and extra taxes for companies and people from outside the neighborhood wanting to purchase land or property in Barrio 31.

Take a holistic approach to development that leaves no one behind:
Although it could be a relatively simple task to create a park for environmental reasons, the holistic approach taken by Buenos Aires is resulting in a slew of benefits for the 40,000 residents in the area. The Elevated Park project has a number of objectives it wishes to obtain for every resident of Barrio 31, such as ensuring 1) access to public education, for which the city is building educational hubs, 2) quality healthcare close to every home, for which three healthcare centres have been built, and 3) economic development via access to formal jobs, training, and formalisation of the economic activities in Barrio 31.

BUENOS AIRES

The city created a campaign to inform the residents of the Elevated Park project and to ask them to share their own ideas for the project. In four days, 72 residents proposed 177 ideas for the project.

↓6462
TONNES OF CO₂ will be absorbed every year by the 4,038 trees that will be planted in the park

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The Watts Rising Transformative Climate Communities project is a community-driven vision to transform one of Los Angeles’ most disadvantaged communities.

The city conducted an extensive stakeholder engagement process including a host of local NGOs, which resulted in the launch of a comprehensive plan in April 2019, including clean energy projects, urban greening efforts, and zero-emission transportation. The project incorporates workforce development plans as well as displacement avoidance plans, making sure that Watts’ existing communities will benefit from the initiatives.

What has the city achieved?

Situated in southeastern Los Angeles, the neighbourhood of Watts is surrounded by numerous sources of intense air pollution, faces some very serious health discrepancies, and has limited public transportation options. The Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) project aims to solve these issues with a suite of coordinated projects, which include affordable housing, low-carbon transportation options for residents, and planting more than 3,300 trees, to name a few. Additional strategies include weatherisation of 250 homes, safe and accessible walkways and bikeways that connect housing, amenities, and transit in the project area, and retrofitting of commercial businesses.

The main climate change risks for Watts stem from exposure to additional extreme heat days. Additional concerns include lowered water quality due to runoff that impacts watersheds. The TCC project will develop new green space and sustainable infrastructure in Watts, which will increase the number of children able to walk or bike to school and increase utilisation of parks and open green spaces. These efforts are expected to lower the number of severe injuries and fatalities from traffic collisions. Additionally, the project intends to reduce violent crime rates and increase neighbourhood perceptions of safety, which will lead to improved quality of life for the citizens of Watts.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
By building 285 units of LEED-certified affordable housing units, while preserving and lowering operating costs of existing affordable and low-income housing opportunities for current Watts residents, the project prevents displacement and lessens economic stressors.

Health:
As a part of the TCC project, annual community surveys will track the project’s goals of increasing residents’ daily physical activity, healthy eating habits, and improved perceptions of individual and community health in Watts.

Economic:
The city is planning to create 340 temporary jobs and 170 new permanent jobs in the community. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and their development partners will continue to work on the Local Hire program, which requires that 30% of all construction and post-construction jobs are prioritised for Watts residents.

Environmental:
The city aims to strategically plant more than 3,300 trees, increasing canopy coverage by 50%, thus reducing the urban heat island effect and increasing energy efficiency via their insulating properties. More than eight acres of new parks and urban farming will allow for greater stormwater retention and the recharging of groundwater aquifers.

Introduce low-carbon transport options to solve multiple issues:
The TCC project includes fully electrifying the Watts DASH bus line with 10 battery-electric buses and creating a program that includes seven EV passenger vanpool vans and eight car-sharing EVs. While this decreases major sources of local air pollution, it also decreases congestion, which in turn will reduce economic losses and improve the quality of life for commuting citizens. Furthermore, the electrification will improve air quality and lower CO₂ emissions from the transportation sector.

What can other cities learn?
Include grass roots organisations for maximum effectiveness:
The TCC project is based on years of successful stakeholder engagement and inclusion of local actors and the community. The project builds upon a decade of community planning, including 200+ community engagement activities, and outreach to 5,000+ individuals. The project also includes a wide array of NGOs and nonprofits, including Restore Neighborhoods Los Angeles, Grant Housing and Economic Development Corporation, From Lot to Spot, TreePeople, Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, and many more. By making sure all voices in the communities are heard, the city can be sure it is tackling the appropriate – and most urgent – issues and challenges in the city.

LOS ANGELES

↓ 69K
TONNES OF CO₂ emissions expected to be reduced via the components of Watts Rising TCC project

Build our Community

The Watts Rising TCC project is based on years of successful stakeholder engagement and inclusion of local actors and the community. The project builds upon a decade of community planning, including 200+ community engagement activities, and outreach to 5,000+ individuals.

Photographer: First page - Pedro-marroquin, Unsplash
A new social housing project in Milan is shooting for the stars: Aiming to be zero-carbon in 30 years’ time. L’INNESTO is the recent project showcasing the city’s ambitious sustainability strategies.

The buildings will use energy, heating, and cooling from renewable sources, 100% reused water, and be built with green roofs. The surrounding area aims for 60% green spaces and is accompanied by a green mobility strategy that has just one parking spot for every seven residents, as well as extensive goals to keep the air clean. Milan is showcasing what the blueprint for sustainable housing districts looks like.

What has the city achieved?

In recent years, Milan has significantly increased its ambitions and goals to become a more resilient city. One of its latest projects is L’INNESTO: the first zero-carbon social housing project in Italy. The project is a showroom for Milan’s new sustainability strategies. One of these strategies is the development of an innovative, fourth-generation district heating system powered by renewable sources, which includes an urban wastewater heat-recovery system. This district heating system will enable the social housing project to be carbon neutral in 30 years.

The main plan for the district is the design of nearly zero-energy buildings combined with an optimal bio-based material mix, allowing structures to be disassembled and 100% recycled at the end of their life. The aim is a long-term, responsible, resilient management of resources, spaces, and the community. Plans for the new district include building 400 units totalling 21,000 m², a residence for 300 students, 3,000 m² for commercial activity, and 45,000 m² of green areas including vegetable gardens, a nursery garden, green roofs, and edible landscapes.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
Despite the new housing district’s innovative elements, L’INNESTO offers affordable housing, which reduces the demand for social housing in the city, and ensures that sustainable, quality living is open to all Milanese.

Health:
Green areas will cover 72% of the site, offering fresh air and mitigating heatwaves. Air quality will also be improved thanks to a 66% reduction of motorised travel in the area.

Economic:
Beyond reaching zero carbon, L’INNESTO is proposing the creation of a Circular Economy District. The district will focus on creating value-added shared spaces for sustainable economic activity as well as enabling relationships to be established between residents.

Environmental:
100% of the energy used for air conditioning in the summer, heating in the winter, as well as 100% of the electricity from shared use in the neighbourhood will come from onsite renewable resources, which will help the district achieve zero-carbon emissions and ensure a resilient, adapted neighbourhood.

What can other cities learn?

Design a social housing district with climate change in mind:
The new social housing district is designed to mitigate the shock and stress caused by the impact of extreme weather events such as heatwaves and intense rainfall. The project will include sustainable water resource management for the entire water cycle: onsite reuse of rainwater for irrigation and interception of rainwater from extreme events thanks to green roofs and stormwater tanks. Green spaces and new spaces for biodiversity and urban reforestation will mitigate biodiversity loss and sequestrate carbon.

Values people over cars when designing new mobility strategies:
The project has an ambitious mobility strategy: limiting car parking spaces (only 100 spaces for 700 tenants) and including a 1,200 m² bike garage, 10 electric car charging terminals, and a shared neighbourhood car fleet. This comprehensive sustainable mobility approach will provide residents with solutions for all their mobility needs, promoting active mobility, public transport, sharing systems, and a drastic reduction of private parking areas. Overall, the project proposes an innovative system of active mobility together with an open central pedestrianised area and a sustainable mobility hub.
New Orleans has dealt with the brunt of climate change for years and has managed to recover from major urban emergencies, such as those brought by Hurricanes Katrina and Isaac. The CAEP was set in motion to ensure that New Orleans continuously considers the city’s most exposed communities. With an advisory board at the heart of the project, New Orleans takes its responsibility to safeguard and include all strata of the city seriously. The advisory board is in charge of offering detailed recommendations on how to implement the climate action strategy in the most equitable manner possible. The advisory board includes six community leaders and four individuals with advocacy experience and expertise in the areas of the city’s climate action plan. The community leaders were recommended by community-based organisations serving residents of colour, low-income residents, and/or immigrant communities in each of the city’s council districts. Through a range of public meetings, a venue was created for residents to learn about the recommendations made by the advisory board. The meetings enabled residents to express ideas about how to achieve equity in the plan, offered a safe space for conversations about potential barriers and feasibility of the recommendations, and supported residents in building an equity platform and gave them a voice on the city’s climate change policies.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
The community meetings enabling residents to review the recommendations made by the CAEP advisory board offered free childcare, free food, and free parking to encourage high attendance by New Orleanians.

Health:
Part of the city’s climate action strategy is to modernise energy use, improve transportation infrastructure, and reduce waste. Combined, these efforts will reduce concentrations of air pollutants and limit the spread of allergens, which exacerbate respiratory and allergy problems.

Economic:
New Orleans ranks second in the nation for highest energy cost burden on low-income households at 18.9%: more than five times higher than the national average cost burden of 3.5%. CAEP seeks to support small business opportunities in climate action that also support economic growth and resilience and improve household energy affordability.

Environmental:
The implementation of the city’s Climate Action Strategy will help avoid an estimated 4.3 million tonnes of pollution by 2030. The CAEP will contribute to meaningful implementation of the plans in the strategy and make certain that all communities of New Orleans are considered in the climate actions.

What can other cities learn?

Close the gap between residents and decision-makers:
CAEP aimed to develop a platform where community leaders and advocates can work with government decision-makers and implementers on climate and equity issues in line with the city’s climate action strategy, giving agency and collecting input from traditionally marginalised groups. This not only helps New Orleanians understand how their daily life is impacted by climate change, and what actions they can take to mitigate their family’s risk, it also enables the local government to more fully consider vulnerable communities in their climate action planning.

Set clear goals to ensure equity:
To make sure that no community was overlooked in the implementation of the Climate Action for a Resilient New Orleans, the city set itself goals to keep on track and to ensure equity. The goals include making sure that climate mitigation solutions such as community solar are benefitting vulnerable communities directly, to see to it that energy and transit solutions add to the economic security of vulnerable communities – such as lower electricity bills, transportation costs, and healthcare costs. This will increase their resilience in the face of climate change impacts.

NEW ORLEANS

50% REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS by 2030 pledged in Climate Action for a Resilient New Orleans

The goal of the Climate Action Equity Project is to engage residents of colour, low-income residents, and immigrant communities in making equity a priority in the implementation of New Orleans’ climate action strategy.
NEW YORK CITY:
New strategy to secure a fair and safe city for all New Yorkers

New York is looking 30 years into the future and setting ambitious goals for how it wants the city to look in 2050.

The strategy OneNYC 2050 is a blueprint for inclusive climate action. Whilst setting the city on a path to **carbon neutrality and 100% clean electricity**, it ensures that every New Yorker is guaranteed an equitable future with healthcare, affordable housing, and access to excellent education. With 30 initiatives included in the strategy, New York City is confronting the climate crisis by building a strong and fair city for all.

What has the city achieved?

In developing OneNYC 2050, New York City launched a digital listening campaign, met with New Yorkers in their communities, and held pop-up events and community meetings. More than 16,000 voices were heard and their input shaped the strategy. Released in April 2019, the OneNYC 2050 strategy has eight goals that seek to set New York City on a path to achieve equity by creating good-paying jobs through climate action, expanding voting rights, and provide banking access to underbanked New Yorkers, to name just a few.

With 30 initiatives across the eight goals outlined in the strategy, New York shows that the future of the city is one of equity, inclusivity, and resilience. Some of the initiatives include providing economic security via fair wages and benefits, increasing integration, diversity, and inclusion in New York City schools, designing a physical environment that creates the conditions for health and well-being. Although the OneNYC 2050 plan has only recently been released, results from the 2015 strategy include affordable housing for 275,000 New Yorkers, decreasing pedestrian fatalities by 45%, and creating more than 700,000 jobs, proving New York City has both the ambition and the will to create a prosperous city.
NEW YORK CITY

What are the co-benefits?

Social:
New York plans to reclaim streets to meet the needs of the public. The city will create People Priority Zones, which restrict vehicular access, create more public spaces, and improve safety and air quality. The first zone will be in Lower Manhattan.

Health:
One of the 30 initiatives in the strategy is guaranteeing healthcare by creating the most comprehensive universal coverage in the country for uninsured New Yorkers, regardless of ability to pay or immigration status.

Economic:
The transformation to a liveable climate will create thousands of new jobs for New Yorkers. The mandatory building retrofit programme alone is expected to create 27,000 jobs in the city. In addition, New York City will divest city pension funds from fossil fuels and invest in climate solutions.

Environmental:
The city plans to reduce city-wide NO₂ levels by 25% by 2030, retrofit nearly one million buildings, and invest more than $20 billion to guard against rising sea levels and increased extreme weather events.

What can other cities learn?

Listen to citizens to discover unexpected issues:
Before developing OneNYC 2050, the city included thousands of New Yorkers from all communities to ensure all voices were heard. By listening to New Yorkers, the city ensured that all issues were taken into account, even those that might have been invisible to city officials and planners.

Make the strategy value-based:
New York City has based the OneNYC 2050 strategy on five values that inform all its goals and initiatives. By making “equity” and “diversity and inclusion” two of the five values, the city is ensuring that the future of New York City will not be one of inequality and exclusion.

The OneNYC 2050 strategy is underpinned by five values that inform all its goals and initiatives, with “equity” and “diversity and inclusion” as two key components of the city’s strategy.
About 4.5 million people are homeless or living in informal settlements in the Philippines, approximately three million of whom are in Metro Manila. Many people live in spaces that not only pose risks to their health but also to their safety with the added risk of eviction. Quezon City’s socialised housing programme has enabled thousands of informal settler families who used to live in slum dwellings to now help build, own, and reside in decent and safe houses they can call home. The current programme finalised 37 communities and aims to complete 44 by the end of 2019. In earlier attempts to resettle families, financing has been an issue that was tough to solve for the local government. For Quezon City’s socialised housing programme, the informal settler families were given three different options, depending on their income status and capacity to pay. The financing options were facilitated and funded by the local city government. Strong policies, such as the ‘Socialized Housing Tax Ordinance’ and the landmark ‘Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code’, also backed the programme. This led to the successful relocation of 5,698 families that now reside in communities that adhere to the Green Building Codes, which established standards for safe, sustainable, and resilient structures, making sure the families can rest easy in their new homes.

As the city grapples with homelessness and informal settlements in high-risk areas, such as roadways, waterways, and in water pipelines, Quezon City’s socialised housing programme was developed to provide superior quality of life to residents via affordable and secured human settlements. The informal settler families are assured well-built shelter in safe locations, mostly in the city, aiming to avoid dislocation from workplaces and current income-earning opportunities.
What are the co-benefits?

Social:
For the thousands of families now residing in Quezon City’s socialised housing communities, they can feel safe and not worry about eviction or the demolition of their settlement. They are able to enjoy the economic advantages, mental, and emotional well-being that comes with owning homes that they can pass on to future generations.

Health:
The resettled families now live in areas with sanitation facilities, better air quality, and safer surroundings instead of living near waterways with the risk of flooding and disease or busy, trafficked roads.

Economic:
By increasing the proportion of the population with access to public transportation, schools, and workplaces, more people are able to receive a formal education, create better economic opportunities, and become part of the job market.

Environmental:
With many families moved away from the riverbanks and waterways, the city is able to mitigate urban flooding by restoring original river boundaries and clearing the waterways. This improves the resilience of the city and residents living in close proximity to the water.

What can other cities learn?

Innovative governance structure to help solve homelessness:
Through a process of several years, the socialised housing programme introduced innovative multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder governance structures as well as innovative housing financing schemes to make the rehousing of thousands of families successful. The project included collaboration between the local government and the private sector, as well as private developers, non-government organisations, and local and international organisations in building capacity and empowering communities.

Providing safe and sustainable housing is possible:
Despite the need to build thousands of homes quickly, the programme has also ensured the new homes were safe, decent, and sustainable. As well as adhering to the Green Building Codes, Quezon City’s socialised housing programme also complies with the requirements on indoor environmental quality which guarantees high-quality lighting, good indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and quality acoustics. The site development plan allocates 30% of the land as open space for parks and community facilities as well as promoting an urban gardening programme.
The District of Columbia’s Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) acknowledges that the impacts of climate change are not fairly disseminated and those bearing the largest burden are often already exposed to chronic stressors stemming from profound inequality and institutional racism. Consequently, the DOEE partnered with Georgetown Climate Center in undertaking a year-long project in which the focus was to support the residents of one of the most climate-vulnerable parts of the city. The support centered on how the residents can imagine a vision for a safe, resilient, and sustainable community. The project relied on an Equity Advisory Group (EAG) comprising of 13 residents, all chosen to be demographically representative of the community. Each EAG member received a stipend and, if needed, also received transportation assistance, meals, and childcare during the meetings. The EAG was to deliver a set of recommendations on how to implement the mitigation plans from Clean Energy DC and adaptation plans from Climate Ready DC. The delivered recommendations outlined how the District could implement and build resilience hubs in an equitable manner and what a green workforce development programme could look like for both youth and adults. The EAG also tested and refined methods for better community engagement; the results are summarised in a community engagement guide that is set to be shared widely.

From January to June 2018, the Equity Advisory Group (EAG) – 13 residents representing the communities in the District – met monthly to develop recommendations that provided guidance on taking equitable climate action of interest to the local community.

The core recommendations informs the District on how to implement the Clean Energy DC and Climate Ready DC plans while aligning core community needs with climate resilience.

What has the city achieved?

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Washington

What has the city achieved?
Washington

Community Members met monthly to help the District engage in equitable climate action

What are the co-benefits?

Social:
The EAG will have lasting social benefits, as it encouraged a shift in power to the community to be agents of change. As committee members become more knowledgeable and empowered to become champions of their own recommendations, they will engage with other residents to promote lasting neighbourhood resilience and success.

Health:
One of the key recommendations of the EAG is establishing community resilience hubs. These resilience hubs would help protect residents from physical hazards such as flooding, storms, and extreme heat as well as offer resources during a disaster such as power and essential provisions including medical services.

Economic:
The EAG recommended expanding workforce development programmes that lead to employment for the youth, especially those who may not pursue college. The programmes can provide a path to education in trades such as plumbing, as well as developing high school curricula to help youth prepare for green certifications after graduation.

Environmental:
Environmental causes often take a back seat to more pressing and immediate concerns like affordability, safety, and economic development. The EAG helped the District think about how it can focus on actions that provide important co-benefits while benefiting the environment, too.

What can other cities learn?

Make citizen engagement community-centered:
In addition to providing valuable insights into the implementation of the District’s climate and energy plans, the work of the EAG also informed a new model of community-centred citizen engagement. This model is being shared to help other cities engage with their citizens in a meaningful way. Takeaways from the model include realizing that a community committee may reflect a democratic profile without speaking for the entire community and that dedicated funding towards community engagement can open doors for more equitable engagement.

Uncomfortable conversations necessary for equitable climate action:
The project sought to create an environment where residents could collaboratively work together. The project did not shy away from uncomfortable conversations about race and inequality, and specifically tried to make sure residents of colour were leading the conversation. Other innovative elements of the EAG include the support provided to enable diverse community participation, a neutral community facilitator, an evaluator who observed the process and provided key insights, and equity and diversity training provided to District agency staff to help embed considerations of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work.

One of the key lessons from the community-centred citizen engagement guide was acknowledging that co-designed recommendations are not compromises, but rather stronger recommendations informed by the expertise of community and grounded in the realities of government.
The Cities100 report features 100 leading climate action projects from cities around the world. The report demonstrates that cities’ leadership on the climate crisis provides the added benefit of creating safe, liveable, and equitable cities for all citizens.

The 2019 digital report is the fourth edition of Cities100 and features 12 different categories of climate action.

Cities100 is a collaboration between C40 Cities and Nordic Sustainability, and is funded by the Danish philanthropic association Realdania.

Read them all by visiting: cities100report.com