

# National **Science** Challenges

**BUILDING BETTER  
HOMES, TOWNS  
AND CITIES**

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Ko ngā wā kāinga hei  
whakamāhorahora

## 2018 Youth Assembly at the United Nations

Jacqueline Paul

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March 2018. Contact: [jacqueline.paul@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jacqueline.paul@aut.ac.nz)

# Acknowledgements

Would like to thank Auckland Youth Advisory Panel for enabling the opportunity to send a delegation to the 21st session of the Youth Assembly at the United Nations. This was supported by the National Science Challenge: Building better homes towns and cities team and funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

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This is more than just a financial investment but providing the opportunity to continuously develop professional and personal capability at an international level. I aim to disseminate this new knowledge, education and experience with other young people in our grassroots communities.

This exposure to international relations with other global delegates strengthens partnerships and enable future collaborative opportunities.

Nga Mihi,

Jacqueline Paul

# Contents

Acknowledgements	03
Contents	05
1.0 Introduction	07
2.0 Education Accountability	09
3.0 Finding Your Voice to Change the World	13
4.0 Social Inclusion in cities	19
5.0 Building Resilience to Natural Hazards	23
6.0 Reflection	29
7.0 References	31





# 1.0 Introduction

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This report discusses the key learnings from the 2018 Winter Youth Assembly held at the United Nations in New York. It provides an insight into the workshops held throughout the conference. This paper identifies and focuses on the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities. This is a global focus in relation to the UN Agenda for 2030. There is a great correspondence between both this SDG 11 and the current research stream National Science Challenge 11: Building better towns homes and cities.

The Youth Assembly is an international platform to elevate the voices of young people from all over the world to create dialogue, empower young people to engage in advocacy and activism and ensure intergenerational mobility to instigate systemic change within their own communities. It is an amazing opportunity where international relations are strengthened through political and civic engagement at the United Nations. Young people are the leaders of today and tomorrow, the youth assembly encourages personal and professional development through an educational approach to further understand the importance of the sustainable development goals as we progressively work towards achieving UN Agenda 2030.

The Youth Assembly at the United Nations this year discusses several SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). These particular goals include:

- SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation
- SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG: 12: Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 15: Life on Land

The conference provided workshops and sessions with activists and civil society groups to offer the delegates the chance to develop their entrepreneurial skills and hone their talents in advocacy and organizing. The workshops and sessions derived from these sustainable development goals included topics such as:

- Education Accountability: Meeting our commitments
- Find your voice to changing the world
- Building partnerships to Eliminate Human Trafficking
- Innovation and Food Security: New Approaches to End Hunger and Reduce food waste
- Social Inclusion in cities
- The Road to 2030 Engaging the Private Sector in the SDGs
- Building Resilience to Natural Hazards
- Addressing Global Health Crises

This report will highlight 4 of the work sessions identified above. This consists of the thorough discussions from facilitators and engaging conversations with delegates. This is a direct insight into the operations of each session as well as understanding key issues and queries arising during these workshops.

## 2.0 Education Accountability: Meeting our commitments

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This panel presentation of the 2017/8 GEM Report demonstrates the vital role of young people is when ensuring the provision of equitable quality education. Led by UNESCO Researcher Priyadarshani Joshi, the panel discussed key findings and recommendations from the 2017 GEM Youth Report and include inputs from student activists, right to education experts and global youth ambassadors. Munira Khalif (U.S Youth Observer) and Chris Ganon (Deputy Chair of U.S Student Association) were also on this panel discussion.

This session aims to:

- Share key evidence-based findings and recommendations from the 2017/8 GEM Report relevant to youth audience.
- Discuss ways that youth can advocate for governments and the international community to align national policies with SDG 4 and provide sufficient resources to enable countries to meet global education commitments.
- Discuss what is needed for effective accountability systems based on transparency, collective responsibility and trust.

Priyadarshani Joshi discussed the 2017/8 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report “Accountability and education: Meeting our commitments” continues its assessment of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4) and its 10 targets, as well as other related education targets in the SDG agenda. The 2017/8 Report examines accountability in education, analyzing how all relevant stakeholders can provide education more effectively, efficiently and equitably. The Report examines different accountability mechanisms that are used to hold governments, schools, teachers, parents, students, civil society, the international community, and the private sector accountable for inclusive, equitable and quality education. By analyzing which policies make accountability work or fail, and which external factors impact on their success, the Report concludes with concrete recommendations that will help build stronger education systems. Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. (2018)

From a youth/rangatahi perspective and as a general overview, this session discusses a significant aspect of accountability of the education systems within our countries. There is such a high need for continued advocacy in regards to how we can instigate change to help improve education systems. It all begins with the central government where significant changes are written into legislation but also identifying implementation methods.

*“The legislatures of New Zealand, Norway, Peru, the United States and Zambia have permanent education committees which scrutinize government actions, review laws and recommend changes” UNESCO. (2018)*

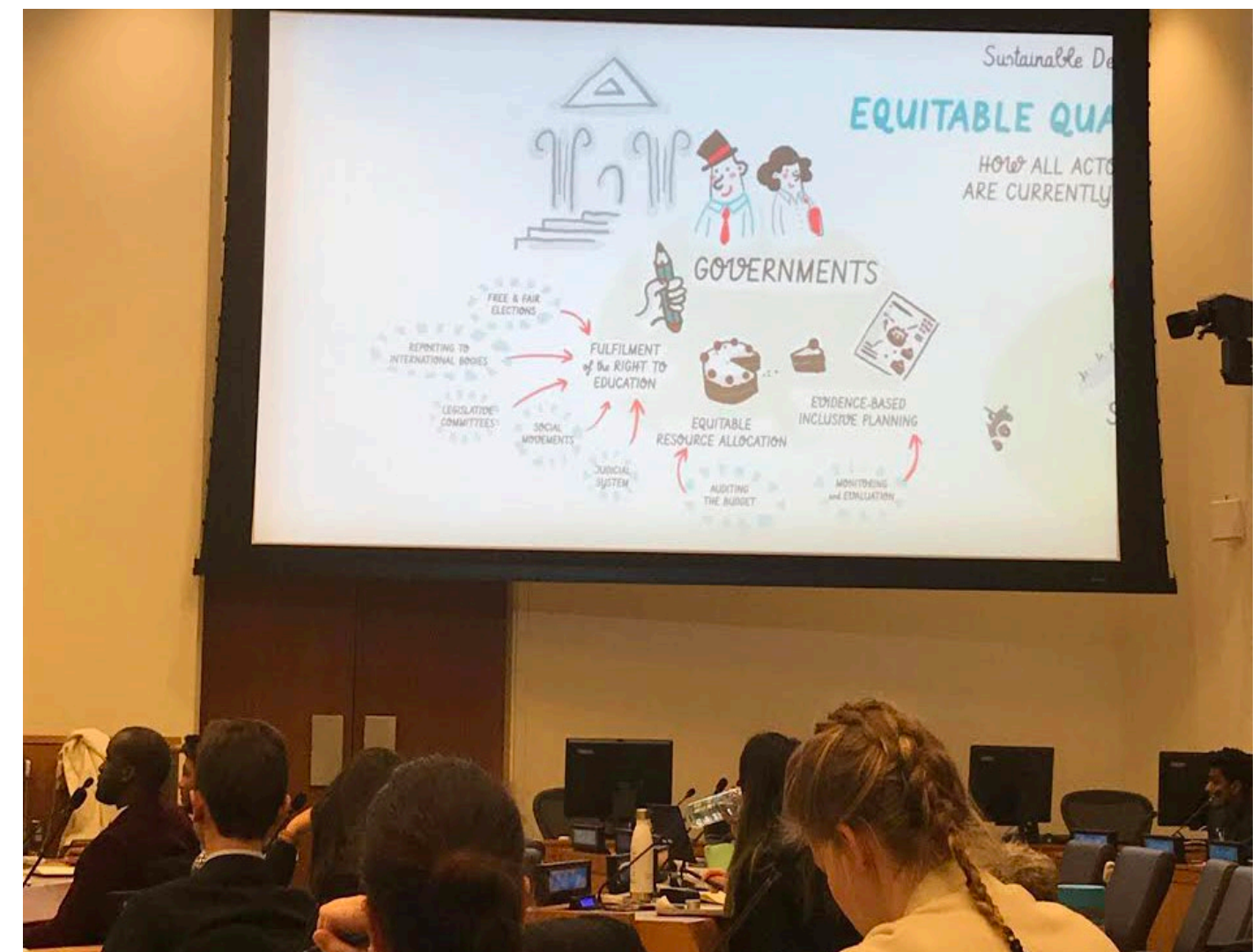
Technically citizens can take the government to court for violating the right to education. There needs to be a level of accountability where governments are responsible and need to be meeting commitments to ensure the right to education but this tends to mean little practice.

As a young person we discuss the approach of accountability but what does a robust accountability system look like? In education but also in civics? We continue to identify the issues where the government is failing but where is the level of meaningful engagement to encourage dialogue between students and those in decision-making? Lack of intergenerational partnerships definitely informs the quality of equitable education.

Priyadarshani Joshi recognizes that there needs to be significant involvement of parliamentary committees review education policy, there is a need to develop education plans and transparent budgets and ensuring that national education monitoring reports and published regularly. This also means that governments should be using test results to improve quality and support struggling schools as it marginalizes the disadvantage if we are not adapting to provide progressive education. If we invest information that helps understand the way the system works it will continue to work towards equitable quality education.

Joshi also adds that government needs to be committed by funding education which means spending at least 4% of GDP on Education and meeting funding benchmarks. This suggests building capacity and setting up strong institutions by investing in training teachers and evaluators.

This isn't going to happen overnight so it is our responsibility as young people to push for lobby changes in order to improve education for other young people and future generations. We need education reforms and regular reviews as our society evolves and the population of young people increases rapidly. With 264 million children and youth not going to school, we need change and we need it now in order to ensure that disadvantaged communities have access to education and mainstream continues to progress and develop.



## 3.0 Finding Your Voice to Change the World

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In this workshop led by The Nature Conservancy, delegates learn how to tell their personal story and channel their passion for creating change into becoming youth advocates for the urban sustainability and the SDGs. Participants learn how to exercise their civic voice by developing a personal advocacy strategy around an urban sustainability challenge of their choice. In conversation with staff and partners from The Nature Conservancy, delegates craft a civic engagement strategy and action plan to address challenges in their own communities.

This session aims to:

- Understand the major challenges to sustainability in urban areas and connect this to challenges they see in their own communities.
- Understand what it means to be an advocate and how to use their personal story, skills and unique perspective to affect change locally and globally.
- Develop a personal civic engagement action plan to address an urban sustainability challenge in their community and receive training on how to be an effective advocate.
- Key Themes/Issues to be Addressed: Sustainable cities and communities, Youth leadership and advocacy, Civic engagement, Leveraging personal experience, skills and perspectives to affect change

This session focuses on discussing Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It is identified that as our cities continue to grow, that 70 percent of the world's population is going to live in urban areas and 60 percent of that population is expected to be under the age of 18. There is a high mass migration of people moving to the cities at an astonishing rate. As a result of rapid urbanization and growth in metropolitan areas, there are several consequences, that affect both people and the natural environment. These include:

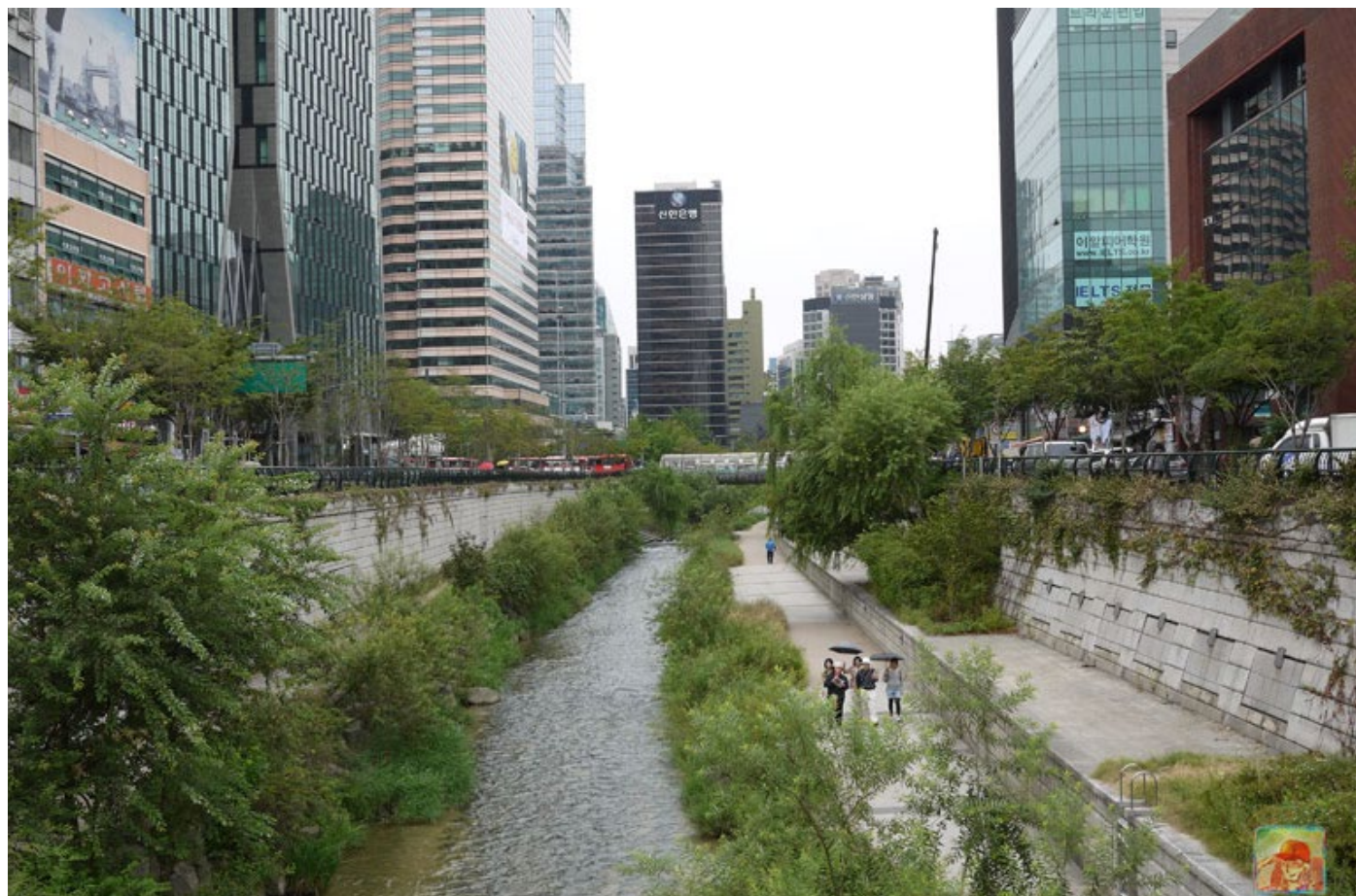
### 1. The natural environment that surrounds the cities.

As rapid urbanization continues to sprawl there is a huge impact on the peripheral areas. Usually, these are agricultural areas where land is used for food production/consumption which supports urban centers. It also has a negative effect on the local ecology of native species and habitats. As if these aspects aren't already under the stress of climate change it creates more issues for these living environments to flourish.

### 2. Water Pollution

In urban centers, there is such a high proportion of impervious surfaces and built environments. This causes so many environmental and health issues. With climate change occurring we are experiencing an increase of rainfall which makes contact with these impervious surfaces absorbing contaminants from chemicals, gases and oils which is then channeled directly into our natural water bodies such as lakes and streams. This is where a majority of our water is sourced from which we rely on for drinking water and other domestic household purposes.





Urban Renewal Project  
Cheonggyecheon Stream, Seoul, Korea  
Photo: The Way Fairing Soul

### 3. Deadly Heat

The urban heat island has a huge impact on the health of people living in densely built environments. As a result of temperatures soaring and heat absorption rising in urban centers, people are dying. In 2003, at least 35,000 people died due to the heat wave that hit Europe with France suffering the most damage with 14,802 people dying from related heat causes. This shows that if we don't start thinking and planning for the future how we can mitigate higher temperatures through better urban planning, people are going to continue to suffer or die as the climate continues to change globally.

### 4. Air Pollution

Toxic matter and pollutants from industries, energy production, vehicles, and factories create a huge environmental risk to health. Air pollution in both cities and rural areas is estimated to have caused 3.7 million premature deaths in 2012 and because of this unhealthy air, there is an alarming increase in the rate of children with asthma worldwide.

But there is a better way! This is why we need to integrate better environmental strategies in new urban cities to reduce the health risks so that young people and children are better protected. New innovative approaches and intergenerational thinking will shape the way we develop and design the future of our cities.

A great example suggested by Angela Brissson demonstrates that we need a bigger, better vision for urban areas. Revitalizing urban green space within the city will help clean our air, filter storm water and improve quality of life for 'life in water' e.g. aquatic species, and 'life on land' e.g. recreational purposes for families. We need to embrace nature as a tool as it is the solution for all of these key issues identified.

#### Tamara Thomas, Oceans Policy Advisor, The Nature Conservancy.

Sustainable Development goals were created in 2015 which aim to be reached by 2030 negotiated by states. These provide a guideline for all nations to work towards in order to develop.

Tamara Thomas acknowledges the link between national level policy and international level policy. When you have an international level policy and states negotiating that policy, they are feeding in their country-level policies and desire into the international policy arena where they negotiate so they can develop some form of agreements internationally. Those are then signed on by states and then fed back down into countries which supports the desires of countries who want to see these certain aspects implemented.

SDG 11 is one of 17 SDGs and the focus is to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities by 2030. Representatives from each country built the SDGs to ensure integration and will be creating an 18th SDG on Resilience. All the SDGs are categorized by targets and indicators.

Targets for SDG 11 discussed at this session include:

#### 11.3

By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

#### 11.6

By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

Tamara Thomas reiterates that the world is trying to tackle this urban SDG globally and everyone has a voice. If there is something you want to see in your country you can start now.



### **Joshua Kurtz, Director of Policy Development, The Nature Conservancy**

Mr Kurtz shares his experience of growing up in contaminated waters which have influenced his career where he works on policies to reinvigorate rivers. "It's about giving back to our communities". Through further dialogue, he discusses the importance of learning how to communicate with community leaders and continues to identify how global issues and advocacy is so important in order to create better localized sustainable solutions.

### **Khalil Kettering, Director of Urban Conservation in Washington, D.C., The Nature Conservancy**

Mr Kettering manages wastewater systems in Washington DC and indicates that 3 billion gallons of raw sewage enter the local rivers annually which is the same source for drinking water supply. It is a huge challenge that he faces on a daily basis. It raises the importance of caring about nature. "If we can't take care of nature then we cannot take care of ourselves". Do not separate equity of nature and people as they are intertwined.

Nature and green spaces are for everyone and we need to continue to help push our representatives, community leaders and governments to think comprehensively about how we should look after the environment. This is why advocacy work is so important especially now for young people. We continue to build capability within young people to meet with elected officials and community leaders. We teach them how to communicate their ideas to prepare and plan efficiently because what makes an advocate successful? It is about you and a strategy to help you to understand the current state and work towards your desired state. You have to be strategic in how you respond to solving issues and problems.

If we begin with thinking about what are the issues we as young people face and then envision what the desired state of what the environment looks like? This means being critical and strategic in how we are going to get there and what approaches should we be taking in order to progress forward? If we understand this process then we can create a plan of action order to work towards the desired state.

Delegates from New Zealand found the opportunity to share a current issue they face with other delegates. Elja Murphy (Waitakere Ranges Representative on the Auckland Youth Advisory Panel member) discusses the current state of the Waitakere Ranges, Auckland.

*"This place at home is a very beautiful forest, very lovely place – if you ever have the opportunity to go you should – it looks like it is from LOTR. But unfortunately, we have these truly beautiful native trees called kauri there and over time a disease has come through the forest known as the kauri dieback which is affecting the trees at a rapid rate. So, what has happened is local iwi (tribes) people have placed a rahui on the forest in an attempt to save the forest. And unfortunately, the local council and local tribe have seen the extent of the issue differently. The local council has only placed a partial ban on entering these tracks and the community as a result has entered into this split state between preserving the forest and trying to save it or continuing to enter the forest and spreading this disease which is rapidly affecting this national treasure."*

The desired state would see the Waitakere Ranges kauri dieback disease eradicated, the forest to be preserved and ultimately to have the forest return to its original state where it previously flourished whilst managing and mitigating the adverse effects of human impact and degradation. The trouble is how do we fix this issue and continue to allow people to enjoy the beautiful tracks amongst this forest without having such a negative impact on the forest as a whole. It needs to be preserved and protected because it holds so much history and provides resources to support livelihoods as it is a valuable asset both culturally, environmentally and socially.

I added to the discussion that being a young indigenous person of New Zealand and identifying from a more holistic approach that the valued importance of the kauri is a cultural taonga/treasure.

*"When we as Maori identify ourselves through landscape it provides a lot more depth and sense of belonging. The kauri is one of the most significant trees to Maori culture and was traditionally used for carving waka/canoes (modes of transport) and building our homes in villages but these trees take hundreds of years to grow. So this implies that it's not like you can just cut these trees down and replant them again and expect to see them during this lifetime because you won't. Additional to this there is a significant amount of water sourced from this forest which helps support the Auckland region and the city continues to grow. This is why we need to continue to advocate to protect and preserve these forests so that future generations are able to immerse themselves in these environments and live to see the kauri thrive and flourish."*

As a brief overview and reflection of this discussion, it has highlighted the importance that rangatahi Maori such as ourselves need to discuss these local issues at an international level. We need to understand the operational side of how policies are formed and where young people are integrated into the process. It provides a wider perspective and corresponds with similar issues that other young people face which means further dialogue on what innovative approaches might take place. This platform is a great opportunity to talk about things that are significant to our generation and future generations to come. We can provide all the statistics and evidence-based data with thorough analysis but still, local governments still struggle to respond effectively in order to work towards our desired state of environments. This also suggests that we need to continue to build capacity and capability within other young people in order to create a substantial impact and change from grassroots level to regional, national and international levels.

## 4.0 Social Inclusion in cities

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This panel discussion explored initiatives to ensure that cities are welcoming and safe places for all people, whether minorities, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, or any other group that faces discrimination.

Key speakers include:

Moderator: Dr Setha Low, Director of the Public Space Research Group, City University of New York

Dr Gregory Donovan, Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University,

Elka Gotfryd, Senior Project Associate, Project for Public Spaces

Sahar Moazami, UN Program Officer, OutRight International

Maria Gabriela Gonzalez R., Co-founder and Architect, EPIC Placemaking

The world's population is rapidly urbanizing, with 50% of the world's population currently living in metropolitan areas. Cities will be home to the majority of the world's future population, but arriving at and living in a city can be very challenging and create huge strains on resources and infrastructure. Cities provide more opportunities compared to wider rural areas but can also produce some of the most serious issues of division. Some of the questions generated were -

What measures can be taken to build social cohesion in urbanizing environments?

How can digital tools be used to improve communication and strengthen community safety?

What role will youth play in advocating for inclusive urban planning and governance?

This panel focuses on the high relevance of Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities. As our cities continue to grow and expand, we need to think about the integration of intergenerational living and social cohesive practices in order to maximize better social outcomes. This also means that there is such a high need for more young people to be involved in the decision making processes but how do we build the capacity and capability of young people to get involved in these spaces?

Dr Setha low discusses social inclusion in the public space and why public space matter at both a local and global level. We need to understand democratic practices. We need to understand ways that civil society can work together to address social issues within their communities. Communities need to be integrated into the process of developing public space and civic life. It means there is diversity, equity and becomes inclusive when there is a genuine partnership to contribute shaping and transforming the faces of cities. However in response to young people's' needs, there is still a high level of difficulty to build capacity of youth in both design and decision making diluted in the process because relationships in with governments lack when engaging with youth.

As a brief overview, speakers from Pratt Institute discuss the unfair distribution of space and principles for social inclusion. Understanding how value and principles are integrated into the process. This also acknowledged the fact that colonization has had a huge influence on cities globally. Erasure of local history embedding identity and culture within the built and natural form. This stimulates the thinking about how we as New Zealand might be able to contribute to the way we transform our cities where Maori identity is embedded within the built and natural environment. This is where indigenous place-making can be the transformative approach to public spaces.

As a delegate at this panel discussion I felt that there was a lack of representation of diversity and people of colour on this panel which as an audience we addressed.

In response to the EPIC place-making team whom presented on their housing development and other projects, I felt there was a need to highlight the importance of perception in regards to building communities instead of houses. Being very critical I think it is important to challenge the status quo.

"I have rather a statement ending with a question. We continue to talk about housing as physical objects but when are we going to start talking about building homes? It changes the dynamics of communication and the way we think about these types of places.

When are we going to stop building housing and start building communities?  
This becomes socially inclusive through a holistic approach"

I found this relevant and it needed to be heard if we are thinking about SDG 11 when talking about how we are building communities through better cohesive methods. If we changed the mentality behind the way we see housing, that it's more than a structure and more than a physical environment. It's a place where families build lives and build futures for themselves and future generations. A place for them to sustain themselves and grow. A place for children to thrive and learn within their environments. That's when we start thinking about how we build homes and not houses so that families and communities have a real sense of belonging.





## 5.0 Building Resilience to Natural Hazards

This was a high-quality panel discussion which examines and analyses the success of partnerships in long-term strategies to mitigate risks from natural disasters but also recognizes how young people can be involved in the conversation and processes.

Key panelists include:

Rocío Díaz-Agero Roman, Associate Expert, UNISDR

Dr. Ebru Gencer, Executive Director, Center for Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

Reese May, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer SBP

Kenza Kaouakib-Robinson, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA



This panel engages in discussion recognizing that disaster risk is on the rise, with an estimated average of \$250-\$350 billion in losses per year. This means that low socioeconomic countries are at higher risk in regards to the economic losses and mortality rates. This is because they are under-resourced and struggle to invest in long-term risk management and planning.

However, as knowledge of disasters expands, it is increasingly the case that natural hazards need not turn into the disasters that they too often become. With the right long-term planning and initiatives in place, countries can avoid the worst effects of natural hazards, no matter how unpredictable or severe they might seem. In addition, while disaster management has traditionally been the domain of the public sector, this is not a challenge that can be met by local or national governments alone. Given the enormous magnitude of the problem, which is expected to be compounded by climate change, it is imperative to strengthen multi-sector partnerships to meet the scale of the challenge.

Rocío Díaz-Agero Roman, Associate Expert, UNISDR indicates that faculties, Institutions and legal capacities cannot cope with the incoming populations to provide necessary infrastructure housing or services. This means that poor and low socioeconomic communities are minorities and will face higher consequences due to the low financial capacity. Vulnerabilities range from spatial, social and economic combined with hazards has so many physical and social effects as disaster risks arise.

Haiti is an example from the Latin America and Caribbean region where the majority of poorer families live in slums and suffered the consequences of everyday risks. The flooding in Bangladesh is also another example of everyday risks that minorities are prone to major impact and displacement due to these natural hazards taking place in their regions.

So what are some of the strategies that can we use to reduce our risk and build our resilience for disasters and the effects of climate change?

In March 2015 the Sendai Framework was adopted by the 185 members of states and the states have agreed to make substantial changes to reduce loss from natural disasters by adopting national and local strategies.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, with seven targets and four priorities for action. UNISDR. (2015)

**The Seven Global Targets**

- (a) Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- (b) Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020 -2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- (c) Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to the global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.
- (d) Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.
- (e) Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.
- (f) Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030.

- (g) Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

**The Four Priorities for Action**

**Priority 1. Understanding disaster risk**

Disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment. Such knowledge can be used for risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response.

**Priority 2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk**

Disaster risk governance at the national, regional and global levels is very important for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. It fosters collaboration and partnership.

**Priority 3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience**

Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment.

**Priority 4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction**

The growth of disaster risk means there is a need to strengthen disaster preparedness for response, take action in anticipation of events, and ensure capacities are in place for effective response and recovery at all levels. The recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase is a critical opportunity to build back better, including through integrating disaster risk reduction into development measures.

Panelists also identify that UNISDR has also provided a resource booklet to support local governments in how they can build resilience within their local communities -

'How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders'. UNISDR. (2012)

**The Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient**

**Essential 1: Institutional and Administrative Framework**

“Put in place an organization and coordination to understand and reduce disaster risk, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society. Build local alliances. Ensure that all departments understand their role in disaster risk reduction and preparedness.”

**Essential 2: Financing and Resources**

“Assign a budget for disaster risk reduction and provide incentives for homeowners, low-income families, communities, businesses and the public sector to invest in reducing the risks they face.”

**Essential 3: Multi-hazard Risk Assessment— Know your Risk**

“Maintain up-to-date data on hazards and vulnerabilities, prepare risk assessments and use these as the basis for urban development planning and decisions. Ensure that this information and plans for improving resilience are readily available to the public and fully discussed with them.”

#### **Essential 4: Infrastructure Protection, Upgrading and Resilience**

“Invest in and maintain critical infrastructure that reduces risk, such as flood drainage, adjusted where needed to cope with climate change.”

#### **Essential 5: Protect Vital Facilities: Education and Health**

“Assess the safety of all schools and health facilities and upgrade these as necessary.”

#### **Essential 6: Building Regulations and Land Use Planning**

“Apply and enforce realistic, risk-compliant building regulations and land use planning principles. Identify safe land for low-income citizens and develop upgrading of informal settlements, wherever feasible.”

#### **Essential 7: Training, Education and Public Awareness**

“Ensure education and training programmes on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and local communities.”

#### **Essential 8: Environmental Protection and Strengthening of Ecosystems**

“Protect ecosystems and natural buffers to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices.”

#### **Essential 9: Effective Preparedness, Early Warning and Response**

“Install and develop preparedness plans, early warning systems and emergency management capacities in your city and hold regular public preparedness drills.”

#### **Essential 10: Recovery and Rebuilding Communities**

“After any disaster, ensure that the needs of the survivors are placed at the center of reconstruction, with their support in the design and implementation of the recovery and response, including rebuilding homes and livelihoods.”

UNISDR. (2012)

Panelists provide a general overview of these essentials but focus on two of the essentials in specific. Strengthening institutional capacity and understanding and strengthening society capacity. These two essentials provide ways for civil society communities and youth engagement for disaster risk reduction. This also highlights the importance of stakeholders and organizations providing educational initiatives to build capacity within communities to support disaster risk management by building resilience within people through a better understanding of how they can prepare and manage better through localized solutions. Elderly and disabled children are the most vulnerable in these types of situations. This is why there is a need for education programmes for children and youth to train and teach them how to prepare themselves for disasters.

If we teach the community small actions to understand how they have a wider contribution to responding to disasters it can make a difference. For example, removing trash during post-disaster in order to avoid continuous flooding from residue build-up and blockages. When there are collaborative partnerships between organizations, the community and local government to work together to provide these initiatives or actions then we build and strengthen capacity in both institutions and civil society.

The panel suggests that young people can increase their own capacity for future risk reduction activities. You can advocate for your institutions and schools to provide further educational opportunities on how to respond to climate change and disaster risk. For example, if you are learning political science you can request to learn about risk governance if you are studying architecture or engineering you need to demand new techniques for climate resilient construction. At Columbia University they teach urban planning students to plans cities and taking into consideration the impacts of climate.

As a landscape architecture graduate, I understand that there needs to be better integration of these types of programmes within our institutions in order to actually ensure that the next generation progressing into the industries whom plan and build our cities actually create transformative change and implement innovative techniques and approaches towards working to build resilient cities. This awesome feedback and review that Dr Roman provides amongst several delegates encourage the dissemination of knowledge back into communities.

#### **Reese May, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer SBP**

Reese May shares his work for SBP on major disaster recovery efforts in six states. As Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, Reese oversees SBP's operations across the country to shrink the time between disaster events and full community recoveries. Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. (2018).

The space he works in discusses how governments are impacted by disasters over and over again but fail to provide smarter policies that help people, more people for less money and less time. He has great knowledge on how we unlock federal funds quickly and how to leverage state and local knowledge better. He continues to advocate for reform for disaster recovery and strategies policies.

Those of you who disrupt, who study, who challenge, who advocate, who speak out, who demand more ...you are all the creators. Your work and spirit creates a life that balances darkness, creates hope for our future. - Reese May

As a reflection of this panel, I think it was definitely high quality across the whole panel. Different expertise involved in different levels of society all on the same journey trying to advocate for better solutions and better policies. I found that these speakers were very empowering and create an amazing atmosphere within that space. It also provided an opportunity for myself to raise the question around how do we continue to create that paradigm shift in resilient development within the way we build cities at an institutional, organizational and government level. This could also relate to the fact that there will be the 18th SDG on resilience which means it will be an international policy where states will be involved in responding to and also a level of accountability to ensure there is a progressive movement to build better-localized solutions and pro-actively build that capacity.





## 6.0 Reflection

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This experience has been very educational and very eye-opening. As a young New Zealander who is on a mission to create real substantial change from a bottom-up and top-down approach. We can build young leaders, advocates and change-makers from grassroots these are the types of opportunities we need to be enabling for young people to participate in. This international platform creates a safe space for young people to discuss issues happening in their own backyards.

We learn to understand the operations and processes of international relations and how international policies are formed which are then filtered back down to our communities. We need more evidence-based policies relevant specifically to young people which enables youth participation to exercise their basic human rights.

As a young professional emerging into research and academia, this also provides the exposure to actually think about how youth perspective can bring something different to the table that we sometimes don't even have a seat at.

Yes, we need more young leaders involved in decision-making processes, building capacity and capability of those in our wider communities. We need better guidance and support for young people advocating and working in activism for better improvements within society and encouraging institutional and organizational capacity for those working with youth, for youth.

As a young Maori, I did feel like there was a lack of discussion on indigenous youth at this forum. This may encourage a further opportunity to get involved in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The fact is, there isn't a safe space available to my knowledge to openly discuss young indigenous people on the issues they have and currently still face as results of colonization and western influences. This stimulates the idea of what does a decolonized city look like and how might we as young individuals contribute to dismantling the systems and patriarchy? We could potentially develop local initiatives and hui in the near future around finding the voice of young Maori and creating that space to discuss underlying themes and issues.

I am very privileged to wear several hats in this experience so I bring several different perspectives to this type of forum being young, indigenous, and female. But this experience was never about me or what I have done to work to get here, it as about the substantial difference and change that I can do for other marginalized and less fortunate rangatahi back home who need to have the same opportunities as me. For us brown privileged ones to think about the positive impact we can have on in the wider communities - from exposure to these events, from breaking down societal barriers and assisting in funding applications etc. We need more organizations and institutions to invest in young people so that we can start having these conversations of intergenerational thinking which will inform better sustainable cities and communities.

## 7.0 References

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