SIDE EVENT @ THE 2023 SDG SUMMIT

WHAT IF WOMEN DESIGNED THE CITY?*
Intersecting SDG 5 and SDG 11

A KEY TRANSITION DIALOGUE

18 SEPTEMBER 2023
14h00-15h30 (EST)
UN Headquarters, New York, USA
Background

Women and cities are key elements within the indivisible SDGs agenda and are therefore key for achieving world-wide progress across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Cities generate their own wealth, shape local and often national policies and are spearheading a thrilling new vision of governance for the implementation of the SDGs. Pragmatic in approach, close to people and their problems cities also contain the seeds of their own regeneration. However, historically, cities have been planned and built primarily through taking the male experience as the reference. As a result, cities tend to function better for men than they do for women.¹

This dialogue is at the intersection between two megatrends informing the world we live in: women’s repositioning in society and the accelerated pace of urbanisation. It builds upon a series of recent documents and reports by international ‘agenda holders’ ii iii and ‘knowledge brokers’ iv v vi reaffirming that the systematic exclusion of women from urban planning means women’s daily lives and perspectives rarely shape urban form and function. vii Furthermore, what is known as gender-neutrality in urban planning it usually adopts a male perspective, reproducing gender stereotypes and often limiting women’s realities to the role and function of carer. viii

Hosted by UNITAR and facilitated by May East, UNITAR Fellow and author of the book What if Women Designed the City, the dialogue:

• Examines the interdependencies and gaps between SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities;

• Explores how women are de facto contributing to the SDGs urban targets through a mosaic of women-led regenerative interventions in cities at the forefront of gender-sensitive urban planning;

• Considers a disaggregated data revolution’s impact on urban policy and practice for greener, inclusive, liveable cities.

More specifically, this Dialogue adopts SDG 5 target 5.5 ‘ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life’ as a lens to appraise women’s roles in advancing SDG 11 targets, whilst mapping the gap between policy aspiration and place-making implementation.
From master planning to women-led place-making interventions, the city has since 1992 developed over 60 gender-sensitive projects including the Aspen Seestad neighbourhood and has embedded gender-mainstreaming in its urban planning decisions. Vienna’s creative patterns of place making pays particular attention to the soft measures democratising the way women and girls use and experience public spaces.

Hear from Lyon in France

Hear how Lyon became the largest city in France to implement a gender-sensitive budget conceived as a transformative instrument addressing societal inequalities and ensuring that funds are spent equally between women and men in all the public policies. Started in 2021, the city is adopting the budget genre in sports facilities, fine arts, green spaces and in public policies informing urban planning.

Hear from Barcelona in Spain

Hear how the feminist urbanism of Barcelona is deeply informed by participatory processes embedded in community and neighbourhood networks where women are seen as experts of everyday life and active players in urban diagnosis and transformation.

Hear from Glasgow in UK

Declared the First “Feminist City’ in UK, Glasgow is re-inventing itself a gender-sensitive city by promoting walkability, proximity to services, safe public spaces and open green spaces.
Urbanization is often associated with greater independence and opportunity for women. However, it is also characterised by housing inequality, a transport infrastructure informed by private car ownership, intersectional violence, inadequate disaster preparedness, and decision making that reflects deep gender-based inequalities. Understanding the key urbanization trends likely to unfold over the coming years, and revisiting the role women may play in their mediation of space and making of place, are crucial to forging a timely gender-sensitive framework of urban development. This Dialogue advocates that it is in the experience and practice of the city that we have the best chance of making a just world.

By emphasizing the intersection of gender equality, health, and urbanisation, the WHO highlights the need to integrate women’s health and well-being into urban planning. This includes ensuring access to healthcare, reproductive rights, and sexual health services. The WHO’s insights can bridge the gap between SDG 3, SDG 5 and SDG 11, fostering inclusive urban policies that promote both sustainable development and the overall health of women and communities.

Hear from the World Health Organization

By emphasizing the intersection of gender equality, health, and urbanisation, the WHO highlights the need to integrate women’s health and well-being into urban planning. This includes ensuring access to healthcare, reproductive rights, and sexual health services. The WHO’s insights can bridge the gap between SDG 3, SDG 5 and SDG 11, fostering inclusive urban policies that promote both sustainable development and the overall health of women and communities.

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Or go to: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7116929845097/WN_YiweqRXDR0qVBuUbtcG93w#/registration

Limited Spaces face to face
Unlimited Spaces on-line

* Title of the forthcoming book of Dr May East.


4 World Bank (2020).


7 World Bank (2020).


Program and Speakers

14:00
Welcoming Remarks
The interdependent and indivisible nature of the SDGs
Mr. Nikhil Seth
UN Assistant Secretary-General, Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

14:10
What if Women Designed the City?
Leverage Points to make your city work better for women and girls
Dr. May East
UNITAR Fellow

Vienna - Democratising the Use of Public Spaces
Ms. Lena Rücker
Senior Planner
City of Vienna

Glasgow, the first UK Feminist City
Ms. Sarah Shaw
Senior Planner
Glasgow City Council

Gender-Sensitive Budget Addressing Inequalities within Public Policies
Ms. Audrey Hénocque
Deputy Mayor Finance and Public Procurement
Mairie de Lyon

Planning for Everyday Life
Ms. Ana Paricio Cárceles
Senior Planner
Barcelona Regional

Urban Planning and the Impact on Productive Health and Gender Equality
Dr. Anna Coates
Gender Equality Advisor, Sexual and Reproductive Health Research
WHO
WHAT IF WOMEN DESIGNED THE CITY?

Dr. May East
UNITAR Fellow

Mr. Charles Landry
Author and International Adviser on the Future of Cities

Mr. Alex Mejia
Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion
UNITAR
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Strengthening human capacities to advance sustainable development

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