Built for All Cities Report

EQUITY IN PRACTICE

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Center for Inclusive Growth

in collaboration with

citypossible™

CONTENTS

Creating a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable world

The Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and Center for Public Impact's Built for All report (Built for All) was published in 2020. Outlining a framework to address global inequality and to build inclusive economies, Built for All identifies systemic barriers to a more equitable economy and society, as well as guiding principles for civic, public and private sector stakeholders to shape and guide a more equitable and sustainable future.

Cities around the world are working to serve millions of people, communities and businesses in the face of health, safety and economic challenges. Through digitization and transformation, cities have an opportunity to provide more efficient services, enable frictionless transit systems and embrace data-driven decision-making.

For more than a decade, Mastercard has been working directly with global cities to put the digital economy to work for everyone, everywhere, by deploying thought leadership, data insights, technology and payments to tackle pressing global challenges.

Built for All Cities applies the Built for All framework to place and people – focusing on global cities – and spotlights a series of public–private initiatives and collaborations that are leading the way in creating a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable world.

Built for All Cities aims to offer examples of equity in action to demonstrate how inclusion and fairness can be built into urban life. The challenge of developing spaces and cities of equity is a monumentally complex endeavor that requires long-term urban planning, robust public policies and multisectoral partnerships. While this report will not cover areas such as housing, planning or public spaces, it will showcase examples of public–private collaborations across global regions in payments and financial inclusion, transit and mobility infrastructure, climate resilience and sustainability, as well as equity and social inclusion.

01

Global Urbanization and Trends

The Urban Context

The growing global economy has served as a catalyst to lift countless individuals out of poverty and generate unprecedented growth in material well-being. It has contributed significantly to rising living standards while propelling innovation and technological advancements that have further increased productivity and economic growth. On average, this growth has yielded positive outcomes for society.

However, a substantial portion of the global population has not equally shared in the advantages stemming from decades of economic growth. As the world contends with the ramifications of a global pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, disparities in financial stability, employment vulnerability and access to opportunities have been exposed – not only globally, but also within countries at the municipal level.

As countries get richer, they tend to become more urbanized. Cities have experienced remarkable progress and transformation, where a majority and growing proportion of the global population is living in urban areas. This unprecedented migration of people has spurred prosperity, cultural exchange and technological advancements. On average, urban populations enjoy higher living standards across a spectrum of metrics, from access to public services like electricity and sanitation to decent housing and transportation.

However, as cities grow larger and living standards rise, so do congestion, crime, pollution and social exclusion. Although, on average, people in cities are better off economically, this is not true on a per-capita basis. Inequality is generally greater in urban areas than in rural ones, where the Gini coefficient of income inequality is higher in urban areas than in rural areas in 36 out of 42 countries with data. Additionally, while urbanization is propelling rapid growth and transformation, rising inequality and exclusion within cities put the longevity of this growth at risk.

Inclusive Cities: How to ensure the benefits of urbanization are spread to all inclusive cities

Uncontrolled and poorly planned growth of cities has yielded an uneven distribution of opportunities, public services and infrastructure – demonstrated by the growing number of people living in urban slums around the world. Yet, when properly managed, urbanization can reduce inequality and improve quality of life for all residents. To harness the momentum of rapid urbanization, cities must be designed with inclusion at the forefront.

Trends

More than half of the world's population lives in cities, reaching 70% by 2050 (2022)

80% of GDP generated worldwide comes from cities (2022)

Children born in big cities earn more as adults (2019)

93% of the world's patents are generated by today's cities (2022)

33% of urban residents globally are underserved by municipal services (2021)

+1.2 billion people lack access to basic everyday services (2021)

70% of global carbon dioxide emissions come from cities (2022)

1.3 billion people live in urban slums globally (2021)

02
Applying Built for All Framework to Cities

2.1 Systemic challenges perpetuating inequality

Structural forms of exclusion, based on personal characteristics, limit economic potential: Inclusive cities recognize and actively address structural forms of exclusion that are based on personal characteristics, such as race, gender, age and disability. These cities understand that such exclusions not only perpetuate inequality but also limit the economic potential of their diverse population. By implementing policies that promote equal access to education, employment and resources for all residents, inclusive cities work towards harnessing the full economic potential of their entire population, creating a more vibrant and robust local economy.

A fractured social contract as the terms of worker participation in the economy have deteriorated: Inclusive cities acknowledge the importance of a strong social contract that ensures fair and equitable terms for worker participation in the economy. These cities understand that a deterioration in the terms of worker participation leads to economic insecurity, lower wage growth and reduced access to social benefits. In response, inclusive cities strive to create an environment where workers are empowered, protected and fairly compensated. They support initiatives that promote decent work, provide social safety nets and advocate for policies that improve the overall well-being of their workforce.

Mounting wealth and opportunity gaps decrease the portion of society with an invested stake in the future success of the economy: Inclusive cities recognize that mounting wealth and opportunity gaps can erode social cohesion and decrease the sense of shared responsibility for the city's future success. To counter this, these cities implement strategies to bridge these gaps and ensure that a broader segment of the population has a stake in the city's economic growth. By promoting affordable housing, providing equitable access to education and healthcare, and fostering inclusive entrepreneurship, inclusive cities encourage a sense of shared ownership and participation, leading to a more prosperous and sustainable economy.

Lack of investment in shared resources and future generations creates a lack of resilience in essential sectors and unsustainable consumption of natural resources: Inclusive cities prioritize investment in shared resources and future generations as a key strategy for building resilience and ensuring long-term sustainability. Recognizing that neglecting these aspects can lead to vulnerabilities in essential sectors, these cities allocate resources to improve infrastructure, healthcare, education and social services. Additionally, inclusive cities adopt sustainable development practices that promote responsible consumption of natural resources, reduce environmental degradation and mitigate the impact of climate change. By doing so, they create a strong foundation for a thriving economy that can withstand challenges and support the well-being of present and future generations.

2.2 Redefining prosperity

Built for All Cities features case studies and highlights opportunities for inclusive city development, to intentionally harness the momentum of urbanization toward inclusive outcomes for all. Through the examples that follow, this report aims to illustrate examples of integrating and building inclusion into cities through impactful public–private partnerships that further the overarching themes of the Built for All framework:

Pillar one:

Equitable access to resources and opportunities

Equitable access to resources and opportunities enabling more of the population to meaningfully contribute to the economy fuels broader growth and, ultimately, human flourishing. Today, the basic resources and systems needed to achieve economic prosperity, such as quality education, affordable housing, essential technologies and affordable financial services, are not accessible to all who seek them out. Socially constructed barriers (e.g., discrimination, segregation) hold back individuals, often based on uncontrollable factors such as race, religion, place of birth, ability status or parents' income level. These barriers have resulted in widening spatial segregation in cities across the world that perpetuates a lack of access for disadvantaged communities.

Equitable access to resources and opportunities within cities has emerged as a paramount concern, particularly underscored by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The essential components required for achieving economic well-being, including quality healthcare, affordable housing, accessible technology and inclusive financial services, remain out of reach for a significant portion of urban residents. Within this context, it becomes evident that socially constructed barriers, rooted in factors beyond an individual's control, such as race, religion, place of birth and ability status, among others, continue to hinder progress. Addressing and removing these barriers will subsequently generate more equitable access to resources and opportunities. In the urban context, we'll explore examples in financial inclusion, social safety nets, and payments, as well as transit and mobility infrastructure.

To construct more equitable cities, it is essential to envision a society where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and pursue their aspirations. To this end, the following are key actions and examples that various sectors – business, government and civic organizations – have collectively taken to create a more inclusive urban landscape.

2.2 Redefining prosperity

Pillar two:

A level playing field for work and competition – promoting equitable urban opportunities

While urban centers have undoubtedly contributed to raising living standards in previous generations, recent decades have witnessed an uneven distribution of the benefits of economic growth and progress. The vitality of cities hinges on a diverse and thriving business landscape, encompassing both established corporations and nascent enterprises. It is imperative that urban markets foster an environment conducive to the success of businesses of all scales.

The significance of financial inclusion within cities, particularly for small businesses and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), takes center stage. These enterprises form the backbone of urban economies, generating employment opportunities. To enable their growth and resilience, cities must create an ecosystem that empowers them with access to credit, technology and supportive policies.

The notion of employment within urban landscapes has also evolved. For numerous workers, especially those belonging to minority groups, employment doesn't necessarily guarantee prosperity. Recognized by experts worldwide, the cornerstone of an inclusive urban economy lies in ensuring that workers receive wages that facilitate a dignified standard of living. A consistent and stable living wage represents a pivotal stride towards fostering economic inclusivity.

Addressing and removing these barriers will, in turn, generate a more equitable and competitive workforce and economy.

Pillar three:

Collective stewardship of shared resources for future generations

The conventional pursuit of growth as the ultimate objective for cities has often prioritized immediate gains at the expense of enduring investments in the well-being of residents, neighborhoods and the environment. Contemporary issues, ranging from climate change to perpetuating generational prosperity, necessitate a reimagining of urban stewardship that extends across generations yet to come. This paradigm shift entails a profound commitment to safeguarding shared resources, stimulating sustainable practices and championing social cohesion within cities.

The urban landscape must transition from short-sighted financial gains to a holistic understanding that encompasses the long-term vitality of our communities and the environment. By recalibrating urban development strategies to prioritize climate resilience and sustainable infrastructure, cities can nurture environments that are not only prosperous today but also poised to thrive in the face of future challenges.

03

Built for All Cities

Defining Built for All Cities

Urbanization has emerged as a driving force in recent global development, offering pathways out of poverty and acting as a catalyst for economic growth. As focal points for critical activities and services, cities hold the potential to unlock better opportunities and improve livelihoods.

However, amidst this rapid urbanization, there is growing concern about rising inequality and exclusion within cities, which can disrupt or limit development progress. It is vital now more than ever to find balance, harnessing the advantages of urbanization while addressing these disparities, in order to ensure that its benefits and prosperity are shared widely across all inhabitants.

The World Bank has outlined three components to developing inclusive cities and ensuring that the cities of tomorrow provide opportunities and improved living conditions for all:

- **Economic inclusion:** creating jobs and giving urban residents the opportunity to participate in economic growth.

- **Spatial inclusion:** affordable necessities (including housing, water and sanitation) and access to essential infrastructure and services.

- **Social inclusion:** equal rights for and participation of all, including amplifying the voices of the urban poor and others who are marginalized.

These dimensions of inclusive cities are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. At Mastercard, inclusive growth is defined using similar pillars of Place, Economy and Community. These pillars are mapped against Growth (level of change) and Inclusion (level of access) metrics. A blend of Mastercard anonymized and aggregated data, other private data and public data make up the Inclusive Growth Score™, a tool that provides local planners, policymakers, community leaders and impact investors with a view of social and economic indicators at the hyper-local level.

- **Place:** housing, infrastructure and the built environment. Examples of metrics include affordable housing, acres of park land and internet access.

- **Economy:** business growth, jobs and spending. Examples of metrics include new businesses, small business loans, minority- or women-owned businesses and commercial diversity.

- **Community:** individual economic and social conditions. Examples of metrics include personal income, early education enrollment, Gini coefficient and health insurance coverage.

As cities are home to a growing majority of the world's population, rising attention is being paid to urban affordability and climate resilience, according to the World Economic Forum and C40 Cities. Richer cities have spearheaded innovations to tackle basic service provision and socioeconomic inequality, but there are 3.4 billion people living in cities in low- or middle-income countries where increased quality of life, decent and stable jobs and climate-resilient infrastructure are ongoing challenges.

04
Built for All City Spotlights

Built for All City Spotlights

Cities around the world are reimagining their futures through new initiatives, partnerships and programs that advance equity. To contextualize these Built for All principles in practice, the following spotlights a series of Built for All Cities applying and prioritizing equity lenses to civic, private and public sector partnerships and to place-based initiatives.

The spotlights that follow aim to showcase particular initiatives in which cities are embracing Built for All principles, as well to demonstrate a global breadth of new approaches to financial health, inclusive transit and social inclusion. However, no city is perfectly equitable, and the list is intended to inspire wide audiences, including those in the City Possible community, to find creative, collaborative paths forward to advance equity in their cities.

Global city spotlights

Jelgava, Latvia

Warsaw, Poland

Dhaka, Bangladesh

NYC, USA

Chicago, USA

San Jose, USA

Birmingham, USA

Mexico City, Mexico

Bogotá, Columbia

Malé, Maldives

La Paz, Bolivia

Digitizing social benefits | Jelgava, Latvia

Description

In partnership with Transact Pro, a leading Latvian non-banking financial service provider and digital currency institution, and the Municipality of Jelgava, Mastercard rolled out a new card solution in Latvia called Mastercard City Key. The card was first launched with students and pensioners in Latvia who could make use of the related benefits, including accessing government resources.

Impact

The City Key card offers several benefits to users in Jelgava, including the ability to use it as an identification card to access municipal facilities and as a tool for social benefit disbursements. Jelgava residents use the card to perform several important functions, including accessing social welfare benefits, receiving discounts at merchants who accept Mastercard, delivering loop payments and using the card as means of identification. Over 100 governments worldwide have now implemented City Key programs.

Built for All alignment

This public–private partnership improves access to essential social benefits for users and increases the ease of disbursement for the government by combining Mastercard technology with public-sector reach and designing a product fit for purpose. The City Key solution is a critical tool to improve everyday life for users in Jelgava.

Jelgava joins hundreds of other member cities in the City Possible network, which features other European cities including Prague, Athens, Dublin and Warsaw. This network also improves collaboration and cross-sector learning between municipalities facing similar challenges of increasing access to social benefits and identification for residents.

Source: [Mastercard Transact Pro and the Municipality of Jelgava bring City Key Cards to Latvia for the first time](#)

"At the heart of every thriving, inclusive economy are trusted interactions between its people, government and businesses. For more than a decade, Mastercard has been working directly with governments to put the digital economy to work by deploying data insights, thought leadership, technology and payments to tackle pressing global challenges which is why we created Mastercard for Government as a new approach to working with the public sector at all levels that is fundamentally rooted in inclusivity and partnership."

- Jody Barnett - Global Lead, Public Sector Center of Excellence, Mastercard

Supporting in times of crisis | Warsaw, Poland

Description

Warsaw has been a place of refuge for nearly 700K people since Russia invaded Ukraine. Most of these refugees have been women, children and the elderly, in need of access to social services and support networks. The city and its residents welcomed Ukrainian refugees with the determination to ensure aid be provided to everyone effectively. Between residents, businesses and institutions, Warsaw provided full-scale support for refugees.

Impact

Since arriving in Warsaw, 180k refugees have obtained social security numbers, and 105k are now permanent residents in the city. 17K children were able to continue attending school in Warsaw, and almost 10K were provided with free transportation, similar to their Polish peers. Not only were refugee students brought into the education system, but healthcare was also made available to refugees in need. For example, over 300 children were born in Warsaw hospitals in the year following Russia's invasion. According to opinion polls, 74% of Warsaw residents were involved in helping refugees in some capacity as they transitioned to life in Poland. Over 1K residents offered their apartments to the city to house refugees, and over 14K volunteers were involved in supporting refugees upon arrival.

Built for All alignment

From the onset of the invasion, Warsaw's strategic goal was to provide protection and assistance to refugees without lowering the standard of living for existing residents or reducing the quality of city services (across education, healthcare, security and public transportation). Operating from an equity standpoint, the city committed to a rule that residents and refugees were to be treated equally within Warsaw's existing legislative framework regarding access to public services.

Early city planning provided foresight to the challenges of welcoming and integrating so many people over an urgent time frame, and Warsaw quickly mobilized resources accordingly. Though the city faced challenges, given the scale of the crisis and the speed with which waves of refugees arrived, residents and the social fabric of the city played a key role in this success, organizing social assistance programs themselves, opening their apartments to refugees and volunteering to support the cause.

Source: Help for refugees – a report after three months of crisis - City of Warsaw (um.warszawa.pl)

"A week before the outbreak of war, I visited Kyiv, where all the politicians and officials I spoke with expected some form of escalation of military action and armed attack by Russia. Upon my return to Warsaw, I convened a crisis staff, where we discussed in detail the role of the capital, which will be the main destination for Ukrainian refugees. We prepared information points and accommodations. But without the reflex of civil society, our residents, we would not have mastered the migrant crisis."

- Rafał Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw

Care economy innovations

Warsaw, Poland

Description

Since 2019, all municipal and non-public nurseries in Warsaw have been subsidized by the city, ensuring free nursery care for all taxpayers in the city. This policy was complemented by additional initiatives to construct new municipal nurseries and facilitate cooperation with operators of private nurseries in Warsaw.
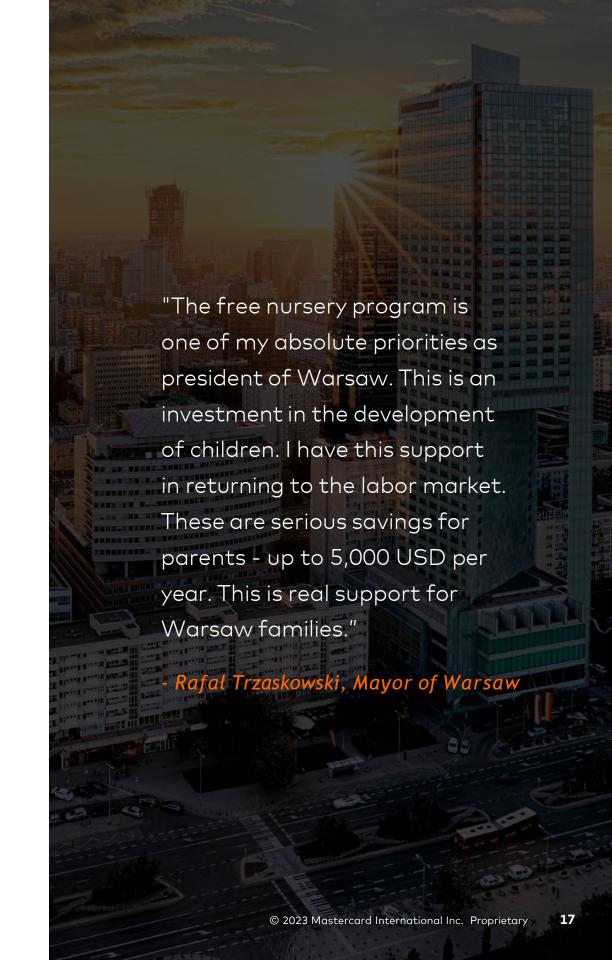
Impact

By 2023, over 16,000 places of free care have been made available to families. Warsaw guarantees its residents at least 33% of spots in nurseries, taking into account the demographics and number of guaranteed available spots in nurseries. This strategic initiative not only provides high-quality early childhood education but is designed with inclusion at the forefront to empower women to return to the workforce.

Built for All alignment

The Warsaw nursery program underscores the intersection between accessible childcare and gender equality in the workplace. Expanding nursery availability through public–private partnerships like this ensures that more families have access to childcare, directly impacting the ability of women to return to work, pursue their careers and contribute to economic activity and growth in Warsaw.

Source: Free-of-charge childcare in nurseries - City of Warsaw (um.warszawa.pl)

"The free nursery program is one of my absolute priorities as president of Warsaw. This is an investment in the development of children. I have this support in returning to the labor market. These are serious savings for parents - up to 5,000 USD per year. This is real support for Warsaw families."

- Rafał Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw

North Austin Center and
We Rise Together | Chicago, USA

Description

We Rise Together: For an Equitable & Just Recovery is a funders collaborative working with community members to respond to the urgent economic needs of Black and Latinx communities. The organization's model for community investment at scale supports coordinated, community-led commercial and economic development. Through strategic grants to community-directed real estate development projects that leverage additional investment, the organization is building thriving neighborhoods and a stronger Chicago.

One such investment was made to the North Austin Center (NAC) in 2022 and helped launch the 10-acre sports campus in February 2023. The center is located in West Side Chicago and involves a partnership of the Grace and Peace Church, By The Hand Club for Kids, and Intentional Sports. Since opening, the organization has provided local North Austin youth with access to safe recreation, state-of-the-art athletic facilities, tutoring, mentorship, and other activities that were previously inaccessible.

In addition to opening recreation and learning opportunities to ~25,000 individuals annually, the facility is also expected to drive increased economic activity to the surrounding community. Data analysis was able to identify that since opening in February, NAC has helped generate more than 100K in incremental Mastercard transactions at businesses in the immediate surrounding community relative to similar Chicago communities. Much of the growth has been driven by local restaurants, which have experienced ~$330K in incremental Mastercard spend. NAC has acted as a community pillar, helping to drive traffic from those outside the neighborhood and encouraging North Austin residents to spend in their community.

Built for All alignment

NAC is well aligned with two Built 4 All pillars by supporting equitable access to opportunity. The Austin community has historically experienced systemic discrimination through redlining and blockbusting practices, which depressed real estate value of primarily black homeowners and depressed the local economy. The lot on which NAC currently resides had been vacant for decades, as investment in the community was not supported. The opening of NAC could contribute to the revitalization of the local economy by acting as a community pillar and catalyst for continued investment.

Long-term, NAC will also support the development and safety of youth in North Austin by offering them a hub for safe recreation, education, team sports, mentorship, and more. The facility includes after-school education programs, a weekly food pantry, a baseball academy, and additional activities that were previously inaccessible to local youth. NAC leadership hopes such programs can teach community members new skills as well as values and build relationships among them. Additionally, NAC is designed to support free programming for the community. We Rise Together and North Austin Center leadership will continue work to identify and highlight the economic impact of NAC's work on Chicago's West Side.

Sources: https://www.cct.org/stories/stories-of-impact-2022-we-rise-together
https://northaustincommunitycenter.org

Cash for Trash | San Jose, USA

Description

The City Key card provides a platform for the city of San Jose to maintain and deepen relationships with a hard-to-reach community and to promote inclusive engagement, which increased opportunities for city staff to offer much-needed resources.

By 2050, the United Nations estimates more than two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. With the high cost of living in cities, tackling the issue of homelessness has taken on a renewed meaning across the globe. As cities look to support high-density populations, the concepts of equity and inclusivity must be at the forefront of how cities govern. This goes beyond delivering government services to opening more pathways that promote economic mobility and sustainable wealth creation for all residents.

Impact

During the recent pandemic, increased unemployment led to higher rates of homelessness. Even in cities with eviction moratoriums, shelters were impacted by health and safety protocols. Many had to limit bed space or close, resulting in increased numbers of unhoused individuals.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, San Jose, California, is the tenth-largest city and one of the most diverse in the United States. Whilst San Jose has one of the largest concentrations of technology companies and expertise in the world, Greater San Jose is also an extremely affluent community with vast wealth disparity that continues to widen as deeply embedded poverty increases. Currently, San Jose has the highest youth homelessness rate in the nation, with 85 unhoused young adults (age 18–24) for every 100,000 residents.

The city of San Jose launched a variety of programs to address illegal dumping and support sanitation and public health efforts, one of which is the Cash for Trash program.

Local businesses were very supportive of the program because the cleanup efforts led to more foot traffic. The city also saved money on their waste management budget as they did not have to hire third-party contractors to support city sanitation.

It was also important for the city to ensure the deposited funds were used to pay for essential items, with minor restrictions on items such as alcohol and tobacco. San Jose leverages the spend data provided by the card program manager to understand how the money is being spent, to inform other policy and program decisions.

Cash for Trash | San Jose, USA

Built for All alignment

San Jose envisions longer-term goals because of the program, including a pathway for unhoused people to exit homelessness and enter affordable housing. At the same time, unhoused individuals can also avail themselves of the larger social service ecosystem and chart steps toward economic stability.

The Cash for Trash program was launched in November 2020. It was piloted under the BeautifySJ initiative, which sought to increase civic participation and support residents' efforts to beautify their neighborhoods for a cleaner and more vibrant San Jose.

The goal of the program was twofold: firstly, to mitigate the growing homelessness crisis by providing extra income; and, secondly, to combat illegal dumping throughout the city while encouraging sustainable practices. Cash for Trash received US$230,000 from the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the city's trash clean-up budget.

The program sought to battle blight by incentivizing unhoused residents to pick up trash at encampments. This trash can be redeemed at US$4 per bag, and participants are able to turn in up to five bags for a total of US$20, which is deposited onto a reloadable card as income.

The City Key debit cards are program-specific, maintenance-free cards provided by Mastercard as part of an urban innovation partnership under the Mastercard City Possible network. City Possible worked directly with San Jose to outline a strategy to address underlying issues and build trust with the unhoused community, while making the traditional financial system accessible.

San Jose is the first city in the country to launch a program like Cash for Trash, incentivizing unhoused residents to be part of the solution.

Within 10 months of launching Cash for Trash, 294 unsheltered residents had participated, removing over 243 tons of trash at 22 locations. Speaking to the

pilot's success, former Mayor of San Jose Sam Liccardo allocated additional funds in March 2021 towards the expansion of the project to serve 500 unsheltered residents and planned to create further incentives for the housing-insecure to receive government services, such as checking into shelters and working shifts at local businesses. During FY21–22, the program collected 401 tons of trash. In May 2023, Cash for Trash was yet again expanded to support an increase of at least 200 participants to an estimated total of 700 participants, while doubling the weekly limit of bags that participants can redeem.

Sources: • https://www.clc.gov.sg/docs/default-source/urban-solutions/urbsol23pdf/09_case-study_economic-inclusivity.pdf

• https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/parks-recreation-neighborhood-services/beautifysj

• https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/Components/News/News/2096/4699

• https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/97944/638200921407470000

Small business inclusion | Birmingham, USA

Description

Birmingham was one of seven cities chosen to participate as part of Mastercard's "In Solidarity" commitment to invest $500M in Black communities over the course of five years. Goals of the In Solidarity initiative include expanding city programs to support Black communities, granting access to affordable financial tools and resources, and supplying capital and resources to Black-owned businesses.

While Birmingham's population is 70% Black, only 3% of businesses in the city are Black-owned, representing one of the largest racial disparities in business ownership in the U.S. Mastercard partnered with the Birmingham Business Resource Center (BBRC) and the municipal government to encourage Mastercard cardholders to shop at Black-owned businesses, while also supporting Black entrepreneurs in adopting digital tools and skills.

Impact

One of the Birmingham In Solidarity initiatives included a campaign alongside the World Games. Over the course of 10 days, Mastercard offered its cardholders 20% cashback each time they used a Mastercard on purchases that were $20 or more at participating Birmingham businesses. This program included 50 World Games vendors and 40 Civil Rights Marketplace vendors.

Another initiative, Ascend Birmingham, is a program designed to help small businesses pivot to digital operations and thrive in an age of more digitally engaged consumers. This program was part of Mastercard's wider recovery efforts designed to support businesses and governments across the globe looking for resources to help better manage the health, safety and economic risks presented by the recent pandemic.

Built for All alignment

With support from Square, Accion Opportunity Fund and Sunrise by Lendio, Ascend Birmingham provided education, tools and resources focused on building out an effective digital presence, accepting digital payments, growing and managing entrepreneurs' businesses, gaining access to capital and keeping businesses and their customers protected.

Over the course of these programs, several hundred businesses participated, which in turn drove robust local community and economic growth. Through targeted marketing campaigns and business support programs, it became clear that social capital in Birmingham was as important to business owners as financial capital, and the program and campaign offered support and spotlights to targeted local businesses.

Sources:
New campaign to support black owned businesses during world games

Black owned businesses are getting some love during the world games

Mastercard and bbrc announce new campaign to support black owned businesses during world games

Mastercard partners with birmingham department of innovation and economic opportunity

The Equitable Commute Project | New York City, USA

Description

The Equitable Commute Project: Advancing Transportation Justice in NYC is designed to connect 5,000 lower-income frontline workers in the Bronx and Brooklyn with e-bikes through subsidies and low-cost microloans. The groundbreaking initiative will also leverage strategic outreach and communications to overcome financial, social and logistical barriers to e-bike purchase and upkeep.

The ECP will support access to e-bikes for under-resourced communities in NYC by overcoming the financial, social and logistical barriers to e-bike purchase and upkeep. As the first comprehensive e-bike equity program, the ECP combines a $600 purchase subsidy with access to low-cost microloans, including for individuals without credit. The ECP also includes workforce training to ensure New Yorkers are first in line for jobs in the $500B micromobility industry; safety and maintenance training to prepare riders; and strategic communications to engage the community and maximize program impact.

Sources:
https://www.equitablecommute.org
https://www.equitablecommute.org/program
https://www. nytimes.com/2023/09/04/nyregion/ebike-trade-in-lithium-batteries-nyc.html

Impact

The ECP program includes 3 components:

ECP Access will administer e-bike incentives and currently connects participants with low-dollar, low-interest loans regardless of credit history. The team partners with employers and community partners to conduct outreach and bring the bikes to the people through test rides, education and engagement. Learn more

ECP Green Jobs is building a workforce training program to train individuals with high barriers to employment for jobs as bike technicians and lithium-ion battery handlers. Learn more

ECP Accelerator supports workplace e-bike programs and leads research, communications and advocacy efforts to promote the benefits of e-bikes and support more equitable transportation policy and incentive programs. Learn more

Built for All alignment

The Equitable Commute Project (ECP) is a collaboration of NYC-based nonprofits, community development organizations, academics and industry leaders, many of whom serve disadvantaged communities in the Bronx and Brooklyn. The team includes Transportation Alternatives (TA), NYC's leading active transportation advocacy organization, with grant management support from Empire Clean Cities (ECC), a clean transportation nonprofit, and the US Department of Energy's designated Clean Cities Coalition for the region. Spring Bank, a B-Corp certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), is the ECP's financing partner. The HOPE Program, a workforce development organization, will upskill individuals with barriers to employment for green jobs as mechanics with expertise in lithium-ion battery handling. Leading economic development consultant Barretto Bay Strategies (BBS) will engage local businesses and community groups to identify ECP participants. Micromobility policy experts Electric Avenue (EA) will lead on local and national policy and communications. NYU will provide the academic anchor, with the NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business (NYU Stern CSB) managing researchers from NYU Tandon's C2SMART Center and NYU Wagner's Rudin Center, as well as supporting program replication through private-sector engagement.

Driving gender parity | Bogotá, Colombia

Description

As in most parts of the world, in Bogotá, the unpaid care burden falls disproportionately on women. Bogotá has a female population of 4 million, of whom 30% carry out unpaid care work full time. Not only does this work exacerbate inequality by widening the gender wage gap, but it also translates to considerable economic losses for society. If such work were paid, it would represent 13% of Bogotá's GDP.

The Care Blocks initiative, developed by the municipal government of Bogotá, includes areas within the city that centralize several types of services and activities within a 20-minute walk from residential areas. Care Blocks services and activities for women include vocational and educational training to improve their marketable skills, psychological and legal aid, and even exercise classes and free laundry services. These services improve the quality of life for caregivers and allow women to pursue personal and professional development opportunities while still meeting their unpaid caretaking responsibilities.

Impact

Currently, there are 20 Care Blocks in Bogotá, which have benefited over 400,000 women and families and provided over 2,000,000 services. As part of Bogotá's Development Plan (PDD) rolled out from 2020 to 2023, the city aims to include one more Care Blocks initiative by the end of 2023. According to Bogotá's Urban Master Plan (POT) 2022 to 2035, long-term urban planning includes 45 Care Blocks by the end of 2035.

During the first few years of the program, between October 2020 and December 2022, Care Blocks provided educational courses to 12,000 women and helped more than 500 get their high school diploma.

Built for All alignment

Through partnerships between the municipal government and businesses, schools and service providers in various neighborhoods, Care Blocks is an innovative solution to gender and income inequality in Bogotá. By providing access to education and vocational training for caregivers, the initiative encourages an equal playing field for work across all genders and promotes equal access to opportunities.

Sources:
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Making small business loans more accessible | Mexico City, Mexico

Description

Konfio is a Mexico City–based online financial services platform, offering MSMEs access to credit and loans. Their digital platform reduces costs for consumer uptake and allows for rapid credit assessment, meaning that Konfio can offer lower rates to MSMEs than traditional lenders can. Additionally, their proprietary algorithm evaluates applicants on a wider basis of financial metrics, enhancing financial inclusion of MSMEs, who often lack formal credit history.

Entrepreneurship is a strategy many low-income individuals pursue to improve their livelihoods, especially in Mexico. Before the pandemic, there were over 5 million MSMEs in Mexico, who generated 14.6% of national GDP and employed nearly 50% of the workforce. However, access to capital and loans is one of the largest barriers faced by small businesses, limiting their potential to scale and grow.

Impact

Konfio levels the playing field by providing accessible business loans to financially under-represented and underserved MSMEs. Since it was founded in 2013, Konfio has provided 45,000 loans to more than 27,600 MSMEs in Mexico. On average, Konfio clientele experience a 28% increase in annual sales and a 14% increase in transactions, demonstrating growth for MSMEs accessing their services. As well, woman-led MSMEs receive 33% of Konfio's financial disbursements, demonstrating the fintech's commitment to inclusion via their focus on gender.

Built for All alignment

Most MSMEs in Mexico are not served by commercial banks because they are small, informal and not seen as profitable. Further, informal lenders who will serve MSMEs often charge interest rates of 100% or higher, locking small businesses in a cycle of debt and limiting their potential.

Konfio has helped more than 50,000 families grow their small businesses and indirectly helped generate thousands of new jobs across cities in Mexico. Access to decent work and living wages are essential to a thriving city, and Konfio has demonstrated the power of unlocking MSME potential through inclusive finance.

Source: https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/assets/pdfs/Built_for_All/mcg-23003b-Built_for_All-mexico_v3.pdf

Gender equity in transit | Bogotá, Colombia

Description

La Rolita is the first public transportation operator in Bogotá. It has a 100% electric and sustainable bus fleet, reducing pollution, improving the city's air quality and reducing energy consumption levels.

During the first year of operation, it has transported more than 10 million passengers in a fleet of 195 electric buses that are accessible for passengers with disabilities and offer Wi-Fi, USB outlets, screens for public service and route information and security cameras. There are currently 11 routes covering 210 miles (338 kilometers) of the city.

Impact

The most significant distinguishing factor of La Rolita is its gender equity commitment, achieved through the recruitment of women in driving positions, transforming dynamics in a historically male-dominated industry and placing women in leadership and empowerment roles. During the first year of operation, La Rolita served more than 10 million passengers and avoided 9,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions into the environment. With the start-up of this operator, 600 new jobs were generated in the city. Of these 600 jobs, 55% were obtained by women and 45% by men, highlighting the program's commitment to gender equality. As of September 2023, there are 281 women behind the wheel, setting an example and paving the way for more women to enter the transportation sector.

Built for All alignment

In 2021, of the 17,000 bus operators in Bogotá, only 1.5% were women. Through a multisectoral partnership between the municipal government, the Inter-American Development Bank and C40 cities, this project developed a training program to support 450 women in earning certification for eco-driving in urban transportation. La Rolita represents a commitment to equal access to work and opportunities for men and women in Bogotá, and it encourages financial independence and health by incorporating financial skills workshops into the training process. Additionally, the program has paid for many of its female drivers to upgrade their driver's licenses.

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Innovating waste management solutions | La Paz, Bolivia

Description

The number of vehicles in Bolivia has grown exponentially over the last decade and is expected to increase from 1.8M to 2.6M by 2030. 80% of these vehicles are driven in the larger cities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.

Not only is air pollution an environmental hazard, but it is also a health risk for those living in the cities. 90% of air pollution in La Paz is caused by vehicle emissions, and it is estimated that within these four cities, 1,500 deaths per year are caused by air pollution.

Markets for Recycling is a project that encourages green businesses to improve their business models for waste recycling, in order to manage and reduce waste from the transportation sector across these cities. The project promotes proper separation of waste, such as batteries, tires and scrap metal, and it provides a suitable eco-friendly destination or collects them as raw materials for green businesses who will later transform the waste. In doing so, Markets for Recycling promotes the circular economy and reduces carbon dioxide emissions across the transportation sector.

Impact

Markets for Recycling is grounded in three intervention areas, working to (1) Build a robust regulatory environment, (2) Improve business development for green businesses, and (3) Raise awareness about climate risks facing four major cities in Bolivia. Since its inception in 2019, the project has supported 17 green businesses to recycle 1,106 tons of waste from the transportation sector and reduce 1,978 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

By supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem for green businesses, 142 companies and 5,416 vehicle users have improved their waste management strategies. Additionally, 31 companies across La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz have received training and technical assistance to help scale green businesses and improve their operations.

Built for All alignment

The Markets for Recycling public- and civic-sector partnership, bringing together the Bolivian Ministry of the Environment and Water and Chambers of Industry and Commerce with the nonprofit Swisscontact. The initiative promotes collective stewardship of shared resources for future generations by helping to grow the infrastructure for waste management across Bolivian cities.

As well, most green businesses involved in the Markets for Recycling project are MSMEs. The project not only provides training and skill development for employees and entrepreneurs, but by partnering with the government, it also improves the regulatory environment for these businesses to grow and thrive in the future.

Source: https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/assets/pdfs/Built_for_All/mcg-22003r-gla-2062-bolivia_v6.pdf

Frictionless mobility | Malé, Maldives

Description

Mastercard has partnered with the Maldives Transport & Contracting Company (MTCC) and the Bank of Maldives (BML) to roll out the first multi-model, open-loop transit payment and digital ticketing system in South Asia. The new technology, powered by Mastercard Payment Gateway Services (MPGS), will enable seamless credit and debit card payments across Maldives' public transport network, including buses and ferries. The move is part of Mastercard's strategic ambition to work as a trusted partner of government and private-sector entities to accelerate digital payments uptake and usage across key sectors, such as transit.

With open-loop acceptance for contactless credit and debit cards, commuters will be able to participate in a frictionless experience, while accelerating digital payments adoption in the country. For many years, Mastercard has worked to simplify daily commutes in cities around the globe.

The new multi-model technology will enable commuters to simply tap their contactless credit and debit cards on a ticketing device inside the bus or at a ferry terminal to pay for their journey, or pre-purchase tickets online via the Raajje Transport Link (RTL) mobile app. Alternatively, commuters who do not have a credit or debit card can apply for an RTL–Mastercard co-branded prepaid card.

Impact

As the first multi-model, open-loop transit payment solution in South Asia, this solution allows commuters to both use the app to pre-purchase tickets (generating a QR code) and to tap their card at the device on the bus or ferry. All transactions are processed via MPGS, and the project was supported by Mastercard Advisors throughout its implementation. For commuters who do not have a contactless, open-loop card, the Bank of Maldives also agreed to issue a Transit Authority co-branded prepaid card exclusively with Mastercard.

Launched in January 2023, the program enabled 300,000 BML customers with Tap-and-go transit capabilities. Tap-and-go transit has become the most accepted method in Maldives.

Built for All alignment

The Maldives government wanted to improve the commuting experience by enhancing convenience, improving efficiency and upgrading Maldives' public transport network. Mastercard is delighted to support MTCC's vision to deliver world-class services and payments solutions to the people of Maldives. With open-loop acceptance for contactless credit and debit cards, commuters will be able to enjoy a frictionless experience, while accelerating digital payments adoption in the country.

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Digital financial inclusion | Dhaka, Bangladesh

Description

Home to over 165 million people, nearly half of whom live in cities, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The country is also home to a large part of the unbanked population. As of 2021, 47% of the adult population still did not have a bank account.

However, 69% of unbanked adults have access to a mobile phone, offering a gateway for financial inclusion. bKash is a mobile financial service (MFS) regulated by Bangladesh's Central Bank in Dhaka. bKash is a mobile banking service that uses a USSD interface technology to allow users to send and receive money from their mobile phones with limited cashing and transfer fees.

Impact

In addition to facilitating ease of cash transfers, bKash introduced a savings product for customers to save money in their e-wallets and earn interest rates between 1.5% and 4% on their account balances. For many low-income customers, this service provided their first formal opportunity to save.

bKash has also set up its agent network across all 64 districts in Bangladesh, acting as a key financial service bridging the gap between urban and rural access. As a result, the platform is now trusted and used by more than 70 million people across the country.

Built for All alignment

bKash has played an instrumental role in opening a new channel of financial services that are equally accessible for all customers, irrespective of gender or wealth. As well, throughout the pandemic, the government leveraged bKash's countrywide network to reach workers and digitize wages. By May 2020, 82% of workers were paid wages through digital channels. The solution is catalyzing financial inclusion across Bangladesh to improve access to financial services for the remaining unbanked population.

By 2050, it is projected that more than two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas.

By 2050, it is projected that more than two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. The extreme pace of urbanization is affirming cities across the world as drivers of economic growth, innovation global leadership and, above all, magnets for people looking for a better life. With growth comes major challenges. Cities and the private sector have begun to address these issues. Yet too often, private enterprises focus on fixing a specific problem, while cities are looking for roadmaps to transform their whole operations. Meaningful change demands a fundamental change in the way city and business leaders work together.

Moving forward, cities continue to push at the forefront of building and growing equitable, sustainable, innovative communities. Emerging trends include sustainability innovations, adapting to post-pandemic shifts in urban life and needs, and emphasizing disaster preparedness. From cities in Africa to Southeast Asia, leaders and experts can define and shape the next generation of cities by drawing upon inspiring use cases from every corner of the world to find new models of collaboration and pilot initiatives that advance equity, inclusion and innovation.

Cities are at an inflection point, and in the modern 24-hour world, city life does not stop when the sun goes down. Urban economies keep producing, city services continue to function and cultural activities energize the night. Mastercard created the 24-Hour Cities network to consider issues of transit, infrastructure, safety, mobility, racial equity, nightlife and economic development, among others.

How are your cities evolving and innovating to support sustainability and inclusive economies globally?

About Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth

The Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth advances equitable and sustainable economic growth and financial inclusion around the world. The Center leverages the company's core assets and competencies, including data insights, expertise and technology, while administering the philanthropic Mastercard Impact Fund, to produce independent research, scale global programs and empower a community of thinkers, leaders and doers on the front lines of inclusive growth.

For more information and to receive the latest insights, follow the Center for Inclusive Growth on LinkedIn and Instagram and subscribe to its newsletter.

www.mastercardcenter.org

About City Possible

Pioneered by Mastercard, City Possible is a model for urban innovation, built around a network of cities, businesses, academics and communities that come together to discuss how to make the world's cities more digital, inclusive and sustainable. Since its founding in 2018, the City Possible network has evolved into a global ecosystem of hundreds of cities, industry partners, NGOs and academia all focused on driving inclusive economic development and building resilient communities.

Imagine how much more is possible when we work together! Get involved:

- Join the City Possible Community
- Follow the City Possible LinkedIn page
- Sign up for the City Possible newsletter
- Learn more about the Inclusive Growth Score