

# **URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS**

THE CITY WE NEED

## **A Guide to Urban Thinkers Campuses**

*Prepared by the World Urban Campaign  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The Urban Thinkers Campus is an initiative of UN-Habitat conceived as an open space for critical exchange between urban researchers, professionals, and decision-makers who believe that urbanization is an opportunity and can lead to positive urban transformations. It is also intended as a platform to build consensus between partners engaged in addressing urbanization challenges and proposing solutions to urban futures.

The first Urban Thinkers in Campus was organized on the theme '*The City We Need*', and brought together urban thinkers and established UN-Habitat partner organizations and constituencies to reflect on current urban challenges and trends and to propose a new paradigm. The new paradigm will be a contribution to the New Urban Agenda, which will be delivered at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016.

Building on the previous deliberations of the World Urban Campaign, this Campus was meant to gather new thinking and strengthen the first campaign position entitled *The Future We Want - The City We Need* that was prepared from September to December 2013 and launched in March 2014 in New York prior to the Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum (April 2014, Medellin).

Through an inclusive debate and review process driven by partners sessions focused on *The City We Need*, the Campus has allowed all participants to express their views. It has opened space for debate, learning, consensus building, and drafting between a large number of participants. The meeting outcomes were a second version of key principles of *The City We Need*, agreed upon in the drafting session of all constituent groups, as well as distinct *The City We Need* positions from each partner constituent group.

The First Urban Thinkers Campus was acknowledged by participants as a model to pursue for further debates in order to bring partners around the table to negotiate principles, policies, and action planning on key issues that need to be addressed at the Habitat III Conference and built up in the New Urban Agenda.

The World Urban Campaign Steering Committee recommended that other Urban Thinkers Campuses be solicited by the WUC Secretariat in order to amplify the urban thinkers' movement towards Habitat III. Those new campuses would allow strengthening *The City We Need* position of partners further. By holding future Urban Thinkers Campuses, this space can be opened to new regions, partners, and themes in order to facilitate comprehensive and diverse feedback from as many groups and perspectives as possible before Habitat III.

These guidelines are intended to provide a framework for future Urban Thinkers Campuses. They are meant to guide organizations which have an interest in being part the urban thinkers' movement in the context of Habitat III, contribute to *The City We Need* process and the New Urban Agenda.



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## II. CAMPUS GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

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### A. CONTRIBUTING TO A NEW URBAN PARADIGM

Humanity is at a crossroads, undergoing a major urban shift that is transforming our world. Urbanization has become an inevitable process that presents tremendous challenges, with cities growing at unprecedented rates in many nations. If not critically re-examined, urbanization will continue to propagate negative trends, including: increased segregation, inequality, and environmental degradation.

Many researchers, professionals and decision-makers believe that urbanization is an opportunity that has the potential of cities should be harnessed to lead a positive transformation. They are part of those urban thinkers who believe in a better urban future. They are convinced that cities do offer enormous promises, with overwhelming potential for innovation and a better life. Cities can become engines of economic development and spaces of freedom, innovation, prosperity, and resilience as stated by the World Urban Campaign partners in *The City We Need*.

Cities are either helpful or unhelpful in achieving sustainable development. As we declared in the 2012 Manifesto for Cities and further reiterate here: “the battle for a more sustainable future will be won or lost in cities”. How we plan, build and manage our cities now will determine the outcome of our efforts to achieve a sustainable and harmonious development tomorrow. Well-planned cities afford all residents the opportunity to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. Well-designed cities present nations with major opportunities to promote social inclusion, resilience and prosperity.

Partners of the World Urban Campaign have also called for a new urban paradigm based on a critical review of current urbanization patterns and practices:

***To make sure we have the city we need in the 21st century cities our new urban paradigm will have to be guided by*** a set of principles preliminarily articulated in the Manifesto for Cities (...). We will have to translate these principles into policy action areas tailored to local conditions.

The first version of *The City We Need* was prepared by the World Urban Campaign from September to December 2013, launched in March 2014 in New York prior to the Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum. It represents a first consensus of all partners engaged to date in the global coalition and set nine principles:

1. *The city we need* is socially inclusive
2. *The city we need* is well planned
3. *The city we need* is a regenerative city
4. *The city we need* is economically vibrant and inclusive
5. *The city we need* has a singular identity and sense of place
6. *The city we need* is a safe city
7. *The city we need* is a healthy city
8. *The city we need* is affordable and equitable
9. *The city we need* is managed at the metropolitan level.

While principles need to be clearly acknowledged by all partners; policy and legislative frameworks, as well as urban solutions should also be proposed in order to guide the New Urban Agenda for Habitat III in 2016. Although building consensus and proposing solutions is an ongoing effort, it is key that Urban Thinkers Campuses feed into the Habitat III process in order to ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach is taken over the following twenty years.

The Urban Thinkers Campus will pursue the debate and open the conversation to all urban thinkers ready to contribute and join the battle for a sustainable urban future.

## B. CREATING AN OPEN SPACE FOR CRITICAL EXCHANGE AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

The Urban Thinkers Campus should offer an open space for partners. It should convene representatives of constituencies and partner organizations to debate around urban challenges and solutions, to learn from each other and to exchange on emerging practices that can positively contribute to a new urban paradigm.

The Campus should not be presented as a formal conference where speakers make official presentations. The Urban Thinkers Campus is meant to be a place to share, learn and brainstorm on the new urban paradigm towards Habitat III. The format of the Campus should be flexible, based on open facilitated sessions, allowing a high level of interaction. All participants should have equal opportunities to voice their views, ideas, and stories to support their vision.

The Urban Thinkers Campus is also meant to allow partners to build a consensus. Urban Thinkers should ask themselves what the common values and principles are that they want to support. They should also agree on the key messages that they want to promote to make the New Urban Agenda a collective and therefore stronger contribution to the Habitat III process and the future implementation of the New Urban Agenda.



### III. THE URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS MODEL

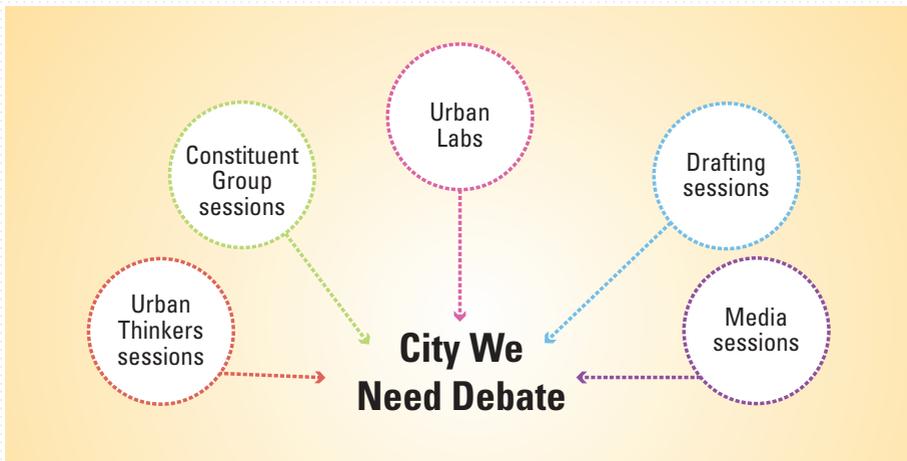


Figure 1: The Urban Thinkers Campus Model

#### A. CONSTITUENT GROUP INTERACTION

Constituent Group sessions can be organized along partners' constituent groups, in which urban thinkers will debate and brainstorm with their peers on the theme of the Campus. These constituent groups should meet every day, in the style of a caucus, in order to reflect on inputs from the previous day, debate and decide on the key messages of that constituency, and create systems to constantly re-evaluate and incorporate inputs and feedback into the group position. The Constituent Group sessions should provide a space for the key members of the constituencies not only to get to know each other but to be on the same page in terms of policy and lobbying efforts.

These sessions should ultimately produce detailed and comprehensive position documents, which can inform the New Urban Agenda. The groups should have the freedom to elect new chairs, co-chairs, and rapporteurs to represent and record their conclusions at any time. Every participant's input should be considered valuable, provided that it is informed and related to the topic at hand.

In particular, the sessions can focus on:

- Debating the theme, the related challenges and issues, particularly since Habitat II;
- Agreeing on policies and principles that will address the challenges and issues;
- Proposing tangible solutions and best practices;
- Summarizing views and proposals in order to contribute to a joint 'City We Need' that will support the New Urban Agenda.



Figure 2: Partners categories proposed by the World Urban Campaign for 'The City We Need'

## B. INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE LABS

In a spirit of learning, the Campus should include Urban Labs to explore new practices and models that can inspire participants in their thinking. While the labs should focus on new thinking and innovation, participants should always question the likelihood of new models to be implemented at a meaningful scale.

"Innovation" should be the key word for Urban Labs. However, participants should always consider the feasibility, testing, and implementation of new models. This underscores the importance of bringing possible implementing partners around the table in those creative labs.

## C. ACROSS THE BOARD THEMATIC DEBATES

In a spirit of sharing, the Campus should include Urban Thinkers Sessions that will allow a high level of exchange by small constituency groups and across, through thematic exchanges.

Urban Thinkers Sessions should be open to all participants and should be able to feed the debate on key issues that partners want to bring up in order to contribute to a new urban paradigm.

The themes addressed in urban thinkers sessions should feed into the main Campus theme. Duplication should be avoided and the organizers should encourage groups to join hands to debate on particular issues. Organizers should keep in mind that these sessions are meant to be organized in a roundtable session, with a participant size that remains small enough to enable discussion and debate.

### D. CONSENSUS-BUILDING

While Constituents Sessions, Urban Thinkers Sessions, and Urban Labs are meant to feed the debate and allow participants to bring their ideas; Drafting Sessions should allow groups to prepare substantive written inputs to help deliver the above outcomes.

Through joined plenary sessions, participants should be able to share outputs and to debate their views.

In joint drafting committees, representatives of each constituent group should be able to negotiate a common position that they will be able to share in other instances. Through that experience, they will learn the global negotiation processes and ensure that the outputs of each Campus are inclusive and therefore be able to feed into the Habitat III process.

### E. GLOBAL COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The experience of the First UTC in Caserta has shown the tremendous interest of participants in relating their experience to the media. Understanding the importance of social media and mainstream journalism, participants should learn how to share their views with the media world in order to promote their views and build buzz as well as substantive coverage on their issues and the existing good practices.

Specific sessions can be held with the medias in order to communicate results and debate on specific themes of interest. There is a need to establish a real interaction between urban thinkers and the medias.

Experts in communication, journalism, and social media who specialize in urban issues, and in the theme addressed at the specific Campus, can be invited to help to train participants to properly cover these themes and ideas, demonstrating the best ways to convey these vital issues to a wider audience.

### F. FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES TOWARDS A STRONGER 'CITY WE NEED' VISION

UTCs should be conceived as outcome driven events that are related to the global partners' process for Habitat III. As such, it is important to prepare participants for this process before the starting of the Campus.

In particular, participants should be ready to produce the following at the end of the Campus:

- City We Need thematic positions from each constituency, along a format to be agreed by participants at the Campus.
- City We Need thematic positions from each thematic group defined at the Campus and along a format that will be agreed upon by participants.
- A detailed joint City We Need thematic document on the theme of the Campus, as a collective position of constituencies represented at the Campus.

Organizers should consult with the WUC Secretariat and review the outcome documents of past Urban Thinkers Campuses to ensure that the new UTC outcome goals do not repeat those of past Campuses, but instead add to them by establishing detailed positions on specific topics.

## IV. DESIGN YOUR CAMPUS

In order to build a global City We Need position of partners, three entry points are envisaged:

- Constituent Group positions: agreed positions from each of the 12 constituent groups (examples: The City We Need for Women, *The City We Need* for Parliamentarians, etc.)
- Thematic positions: Detailed positions on specific themes that address *the City We Need* principles, agreed-upon by all Constituent Groups (examples: “Mobility for *the City We Need*, Public Space for *the City We Need*, etc.)
- Country positions: agreed positions of non-governmental organizations at the country level that will feed the National Urban Campaigns at the country level and contribute to national reports.

On the basis of that City We Need process framework, two types of Campus can contribute to defining the global City We Need position:

- Global or regional thematic Urban Thinkers Campus
- National Urban Thinkers Campus.

Constituent group positions shall be elaborated by each constituency through their own partnership process. All positions will be harmonized at the global level through the General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III.



Figure 3: City We Need process framework

## A. GLOBAL OR REGIONAL THEMATIC URBAN THINKER CAMPUS

UTCs may be organized along the themes of *the City We Need*. UTC themes should be articulated around the framework provided by *the City We Need*. The figure 3 below provides a thematic framework based on the most recent outcomes.

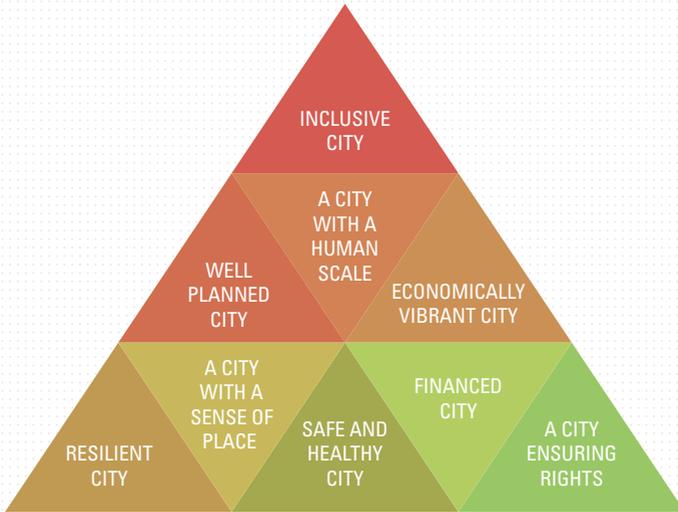


Figure 4: *The City We Need* in a nutshell (based on the draft core principles)

## B. NATIONAL URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

The main decisions made at Habitat III will be made by Member States, or individual nations. This makes it vital for partners to lobby their national representatives in order to ensure that their voices are heard.

UTCs may be organized by non-governmental partners at the country level on *the City We Need* as a whole.

This shall take place if possible within the framework on National Habitat III Committee and the National Urban Campaign spearheaded by the Committee.

UTCs are meant to stimulate partners' engagement, and organize a national debate for the preparation of Habitat III. The outcomes of the National Urban Thinkers Campus should be a final input document from that nation's civil society and non-governmental representatives that expresses their position, and how they would like their national representatives to act in the Habitat III PrepComs and Conference itself. These outcomes should be country-specific, addressing policies, legislation, land systems, and other systems that they want to see improved in their nation in the New Urban Agenda.

Organizers of National Urban Thinkers Campuses are encouraged to get in touch with their National Habitat III Committee in order to ensure that their goals and outputs are as concise and useful for these representatives as possible.



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