

REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Smart City, Just City. An IHC Global Initiative in Support of the New Urban Agenda

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Abstract

This article describes IHC Global's "Smart City. Just City" initiative which it launched at a panel at the ninth World Urban Forum (WUF 9) held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018. The initiative is a key component of IHC Global's commitment to the New Urban Agenda and to achieving the aims of Global Goal 11. By seeking to align two different approaches to urban development – the technology driven "smart city" approach and the "social justice" informed "just city" approach – its goal is to fill a policy and practice gap with a policy framework and supporting indicators which will enable cities to intentionally use technology to achieve greater inclusiveness and equity and so to create places and spaces which are both "smart" and "just."

Too often "smart cities" focus on technology almost exclusively and when other benefits are seen as "by-products" of the technology. On the other hand, the human-centered focus of "just cities" too often fails to think sufficiently progressively or to use available technologies to advance its goals. "Smart City. Just City" aims to bring these two approaches together, to show that "technology" and "human centeredness" are not mutually exclusive terms and that the often private-sector driven use of technology can in fact serve "public good" purposes when these purposes are intentionally pursued. IHC Global's premise is that when a city uses smart technology with the purpose to achieve greater inclusiveness and justice, divisions will be lessened; economic opportunities will be more plentiful and widely available; a large number of people will be more robustly prepared to cope with natural and other "shocks"; and the city, as a whole, will prosper.

Keywords: smart city, just city, New Urban Agenda, WUF9

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The city of the future uses technology and data to advance inclusive and equitable urban development.

IHC Global launched its “Smart City, Just City Initiative” at the ninth World Urban Forum (WUF 9) in Kuala Lumpur, bringing together voices from city government, urban planning, public space, journalism and urban policy. The standing-room-only event was held on the World Stage of Next City. This initiative is a key component of IHC Global’s commitment to the New Urban Agenda and to achieving the aims of Global Goal 11.1 It fills a gap by seeking to align two different approaches to urban development – the technology driven “smart city” approach and the “social justice” informed “just city” approach – with the goal of developing a policy framework and accompanying indicators that cities can use to guide their efforts to create a city that is both “smart” and “just.”

IHC Global’s premise is that when a city uses smart technology with the purpose to achieve greater inclusiveness and justice, divisions will be lessened; economic opportunities will be more plentiful and widely available; a large number of people will be more robustly prepared to cope with natural and other “shocks”; and the city, as a whole, will prosper. Too often “smart cities” focus on technology almost exclusively and other benefits are seen as “by-products” of the technology. On the other hand, the human-centered focus of “just cities” too often fails to think sufficiently progressively or to use available technologies to advance its goals. “Smart City. Just City” aims to bring these two approaches together, to show that “technology” and “human centeredness” are not mutually exclusive terms and that the often private-sector driven use of technology can in fact serve “public good” purposes when these purposes are intentionally pursued.

The launch: building momentum at WUF 9

The focus of WUF 9 was “Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda,” so it was a fitting venue to launch the Smart City. Just City initiative there as one way to advance the ambitious and inclusive intentions of the New Urban Agenda and meet the goals of Global Goal 11. The first phase of this two-phase initiative aims to heighten awareness and bring diverse voices and perspectives to the global urban development discussion while developing tools to enable the “smart” and “just” alignment. The objective is to change the nature of global discourse so that cities focus intentionally on achieving greater inclusiveness and fairness as they also achieve greater efficiency.

At the launch event, the initiative resonated with the audience in what was a highly interactive session. The differing but mutually reinforcing perspectives of the

¹ Global Goal 11 is one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, sometimes referred to as SDG’s, that together comprise Agenda 2030, a global compact signed at the United Nations in September 2015 with the aim of eradicating poverty. Goal 11 calls for cities to become inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

presenters² proved a compelling way to underscore urban intersections and variety of ways that “smartness” and “justice” could come together. At the “Smart City. Just City” launch event, speakers from the World Bank, City Space Architecture, Next City, IHC Global together with the Mayor of Baltimore spoke about the importance of cities being both “smart” and “just.”



Fig. 1. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage. From left to right: Luisa Bravo, City Space Architecture / The Journal of Public Space; Ahmed Eiweida, World Bank; Tom Dallessio, Next City; Judith Hermanson, IHC Global.



Fig. 2-3. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage. On the left: introduction by Judith Hermanson. On the right: presentation by the Mayor of Baltimore Catherine Pugh (via video message).

² Presenters were Ahmed A. R. Eiweida, World Bank; Luisa Bravo, City Space Architecture / The Journal of Public Space; Thomas Dallessio, Next City; Honorable Catherine Pugh, Mayor of the City of Baltimore, MD; and Judith Hermanson, IHC Global.



Fig. 4-5. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage.

This launch event was intended to be the first in a series of strategic efforts, planned for the coming year, designed to bring together the two separate narratives common within the discourse on urban development. The “Smart City” movement focuses on harnessing data and technological advances to make cities function in a more efficient, integrated, and sustainable manner. The ‘Just City’, in this case, refers to various discourses, which include “the right to the city” and which focus on cities that are inclusive and equitable, in which everyone is able to participate and to shape the urban experience, and in which services and infrastructure investments are designed to foster greater opportunity for all, including the most vulnerable. This new initiative will seek to show that the smart city can be the just city, and the just city can be the smart city, and will specifically highlight ways in which the two concepts can be symbiotic.

Main Objective

The objective of the Smart City, Just City initiative is to develop and advance a policy framework that uses smart city techniques to attain a ‘just city’ vision of an equitable, inclusive, and participatory urban reality. Its outcome will be two-fold: (1) To provide a draft policy framework, together with draft indicators that aid in the intentional use of an equity lens when using data and technology driven solutions and (2) to test the framework and indicators in selected cities through pilot projects at the municipal level.

Narrative framing

The main characteristics of the ‘Smart City’ and ‘Just City’ concepts are outlined in the boxes below. Smart City techniques are tools that can be used to drive decisions, often based on large quantities of data, the ultimate goal of a “Smart City” being an efficient and integrated city.

A ‘Just City’ begins with a commitment to justice, and focuses on ensuring that all residents are able to benefit from and participate in urban processes, the ultimate goal of a “Just City” being an inclusive and equitable city.

In reality, a city needs to pursue both Smart City and Just City visions in order to bring about the goals of both. This initiative will promote a framework that sees the Just City

as the normative basis for a successful Smart City strategy and sees the Smart City as a necessary conduit for pursuing Just City goals.

Smart City	Just City
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involves the collection, processing and use of large quantities of current information on all aspects of the modern city; 2. Builds on the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) and Internet of Things (IoT) facilitated by inexpensive sensors on everything, widely distributed collectors and users of data, and much cheaper computing and data storage (cloud); 3. Covers all local public functions such as schools, libraries, transportation systems, hospitals, power, water waste management, law enforcement and other community services; 4. Requires a governance framework and institutional incentives to make smart decisions; and 5. Leads to more efficient, better managed and quicker decisions to address city problems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starts with a vision and commitment to justice - more equitable approaches; 2. Focused on better access to services and infrastructure for all; 3. Requires opportunity for good jobs for everyone; 4. Includes affordable housing, adequate investment in public services and fair taxes and charges; 5. Unifies the city through broad understanding and ownership of strategies.

Process

The *Smart City. Just City* initiative was conceptualized by IHC Global through its research and analysis of barriers to equitable urban development. It underwent vetting and review of IHC Global's Senior Technical Advisors³ and will have two phases. In the first phase, five main activities will be undertaken over the course of twelve months, with the goal of engaging a wide audience of local governments, civil society groups, and private sector representatives. The findings of the five components will provide input to a report that lays out a '*Smart City, Just City*' policy framework for how cities can utilize smart city techniques to attain a 'just city' vision. This framework report will be presented and debated at a multi-stakeholder convening that will bring together local government representatives, funding organizations, and civil society groups to connect, review and respond to the policy framework and its supporting indicators, prior to next steps which will include pilot testing in selected cities.

³ IHC Global's Senior Technical Advisors are Laurence Hannah, former Lead Urban Economist, World Bank; Blair Ruble, Distinguished Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars; and Eduardo Rojas, University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture and Design. The later Thomas Kingsley also contributed to the concept, together with IHC Global Board Member Steven Feldstein, Associate Professor and holder of the Frank and Bethine Church Chair of Public Affairs at Boise State University and nonresident fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Context

There are many examples of citizen-led movements and projects that do use data and technology to advance more equitable urban outcomes for citizens. For instance, Slum Dwellers International, among other NGOs, has a history of undertaking community mapping and citizen-led enumerations to fill in information gaps that exist in informal settlements, and using this data to negotiate with city governments for better service connections in slums.

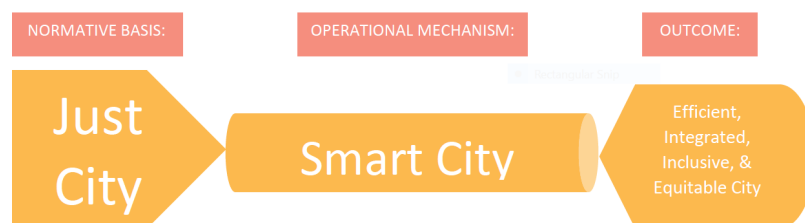
Another recent example of an effort utilizing smart city techniques to create a more equitable city is the Digital Matatus project in Nairobi, a collaborative effort between Kenyan and American universities that utilized cellphone technology to collect transit data and develop a mobile routing application to map the city's informal transit system routes⁴. With 3.5 million people in Nairobi reliant on informal public transport, increased information on how these systems are utilized can help the city plan more equitable transportation investments in the future.

As these examples show, Smart City techniques can be used to much more quickly and precisely identify inequitable conditions and to consult all citizens. This makes the Just City vision more practical and ultimately attainable. In reverse, the use of Just City goals as a lens through which to identify and prioritize Smart City solutions will lead to a more efficient and effective city which is attractive economically and socially to all stakeholders including private sector investors.

To date there have not been comprehensive efforts for how to prioritize smart *and* just efforts holistically within city-wide policy. Some cities have developed detailed 'smart city' plans that do include human-centered goals, such as livability, as important outcomes. For instance,

Copenhagen's smart city strategy, called 'Copenhagen Connecting', seeks to harness big data to reduce traffic congestion, make the city carbon neutral by 2025, and improve the quality of life for all cities. This strategy won the World Smart Cities Award in 2014 and has been lauded for utilizing smart-city techniques as instruments to attain specific goals⁵. However, a policy framework that can both be applied broadly and adapted to local contexts is needed to ground smart city techniques to specific just city goals. With this initiative, IHC Global will be reaching out to partners and participants over the coming year to help raise awareness and provide input a draft policy framework and indicators to gauge progress. These tools will in turn be vetted and tested in a second phase working with selected pilot cities across the globe.

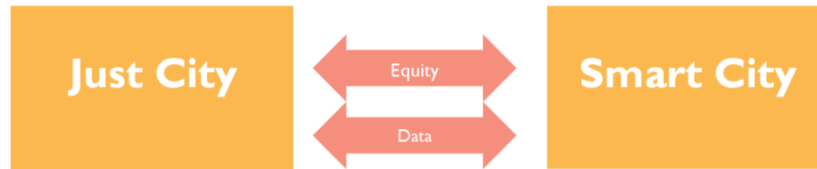
Smart City and Just City pursued together:



⁴ <http://www.digitalmatatus.com/about.html>

⁵ <http://www.copcap.com/newslist/2014/copenhagen-is-the-worlds-smartest-city>

This initiative will focus on two main ‘connectors’, data and equity (with special attention to data equity), that can help bridge the gap between these two narratives. While there are many potential focal areas that are relevant to both “smart” and “just” narratives, IHC Global chose these two connecting topics because they are cross-cutting in nature and have broad-reaching implications.



Phase I of *Smart City. Just City* is composed of five components:



In addition to the Launch Event, the other four are Public awareness and Advocacy, Data, Gender perspectives and Policy Research and Resource Hub. Each of these has several streams of work and each of the planned activities will include complementary awareness raising, consultation, and outreach components, each one designed to reinforce the others. For example, a blog series will bring the woman’s perspective to safety and ‘liveability’ of cities and a design effort will focus on inclusive approaches to

data gathering. Another example is an already realized product, a paper released also at the Kuala Lumpur Launch Event, “*Harnessing the Data Revolution to Support Housing and Urban Development*,” which analyzes and recommends practical ways that a city can begin the process of using data to support justice.

The outcomes of each of these components will be distilled and provide input into the Policy Framework with indicators, drafts of which will be presented, debated and refined at an Expert convening to be hosted by IHC Global.

Phase 2 will focus on testing, refining and validating the policy framework and accompanying indicators in a ‘real world’ context with selected cities.

In both phases of the project, IHC Global is seeking partnerships to reach widely and to develop pilot projects at the municipal level that are grounded in the *Smart City Just City* policy framework.