

Can cities save the world? The impact of city networks and city-partnerships for peace and development

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Over half of the world's population already lives in urban areas, by 2050 this figure is expected to rise to 70%. On the one hand, cities are spaces fostering innovation and economic opportunities. On the other hand, growing marginalisation and social inequality. At this year's Berlin Summer Dialogue, we will discuss with international experts to what extent bilateral twinning agreements and multilateral city networks contribute to crises prevention and sustainable development.

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF CITY NETWORKS IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Due to opposing interests and open conflicts, nation states around the world are less and less willing and able to find collaborative solutions to global challenges. Here, municipalities can step in. They have to worry less about state interests and geopolitical tensions, but share a responsibility to provide reliable public services. Municipalities across the world face similar problems, which enables them to focus on interpersonal (instead of intergovernmental) relations and provide a stable foundation for constructive cooperation. This has inspired the ideas: "States talk — cities act" and "Cities will save the world". To enhance the visibility of urban needs, cities increasingly organise themselves in formalised networks. Approximately 300 city networks are currently active across the world, working on a wide range of topics such as employment, digital transformation, migration and mobility, climate change and protection of natural resources, democratic participation, and civic involvement. What added value do city networks such as UCLG, C40, U20, ICLEI, Metropolis or the Pact of Free Cities offer in promoting peace and sustainable development? To what extent do city networks strengthen the national and international scope of action for cities? And does the growing number of city networks also have downsides?

Discussion Round

- Alfredo Malaret Baldo Peace in Our Cities, Urban Violence Program Officer Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego
- Laura Valdés Cano, Head of Policy, Metropolis

- Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi Leiter des City Diplomacy Lab Columbia Global Centers

Chair Nora Witt Research Coordinator Development and Peace Foundation(sef:)