



25th – 28th May 2021

OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Week



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



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Key takeaways

While the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged cities and their residents in many ways, it has also provided an opportunity to drastically rethink the way we develop cities, and highlighted the critical need for increased economic inclusion by providing opportunities for all. The 2021 **OECD Champion Mayors' Week**, a series of three virtual Mayors panel events culminating in the 5th Champion Mayors Meeting, allowed Mayors to share best practices, inspire one another around what is possible, draw lessons from the past five years, and strategise ways to ensure that their collective recovery strategies reinforce and advance the inclusive growth efforts already in the process of implementation. Champion Mayors reflected on what they had accomplished over the past five years by **prioritising access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups**, as well as how they can continue to advance the inclusive growth agenda post-COVID-19 by **supporting the labour force**. The Fifth (closed door) Meeting of the OECD Champion Mayors also reaffirmed the commitment to **support the young generation**, which has suffered disproportionately from the pandemic's economic and social impact. Through the Initiative's fifth political document, the [Pledge For Youth For An Inclusive Post-COVID Recovery](#), Champion Mayors affirmed their intention to target, engage, and protect youth during and after the pandemic by maximising their access to housing, employment, education, and recreation, placing their difficult circumstances at the heart of the post-pandemic recovery agenda.

1. BACKGROUND

The OECD is at the forefront of developing a “people-centred growth model” in which wellbeing is the yardstick of success, not GDP per capita. In this model, everybody can contribute to growth, independent of their background or origins, and receive a fair share of the benefits. These are the central propositions of the OECD Inclusive Growth Initiative, launched in 2012 to provide answers on how to reduce the increased inequalities of income and opportunities that many OECD countries have experienced during the last decades.

As part of its Inclusive Growth agenda, in 2016, the OECD launched the **Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative** (“the Initiative”) as a global coalition of mayors dedicated to tackling inequalities and advancing an inclusive urban economic growth agenda.

The Initiative forms a coalition of willing leaders who have committed to tackling inequalities and promoting inclusive economic growth in cities. The Initiative provides Mayors with a unique platform in the debate on inequality: it serves to elevate their voices in national debates and global agendas, and to facilitate exchanges and the sharing of concrete solutions among city leaders to address inequality.

Each year, on the occasion of their plenary meeting, Champion Mayors have adopted a political outcome document as a symbol of their commitment to the inclusive growth agenda:

- The [New York Proposal for Inclusive Growth in Cities](#) (2016) defined the policy pillars of an inclusive growth agenda around education, skills and the labour market, housing and the urban environment, infrastructure and public services.
- The [Paris Action Plan for Inclusive Growth in Cities](#) (2016) provided clear steps to advance the New York Proposal’s pillars, such as capturing the multi-dimensional nature of urban inequalities, and supporting cities in implementing and evaluating their inclusive growth strategies.
- The [Seoul Implementation Agenda for Inclusive Growth](#) (2017) focussed on two strategic areas: how to bridge local climate and inclusive growth strategies, and how cities can create a level playing field to harness the inclusive growth potential of SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- The [Athens Road Map on Innovation for Inclusive Growth in Cities](#) (2019) called to leverage the full potential of innovation to make cities places where prosperity is shared, access to opportunity is equitable, and well-being is expanded to all of society

Five years after the launch of the Initiative, Champion Mayors continues to elevate the voice of mayors as global leaders and enables them to share opportunities and lessons in scaling up policies, practices and solutions in cities. Launched as a response to rising inequalities, the coalition looks to advance local policy innovations in education, labour markets and skills, housing and the urban environment, infrastructure and public services to ensure that no one is left behind. The Initiative is managed under the programme of work of the Centre of Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities at the OECD.

OECD Key Facts on Inequalities

- The top 20% of the income distribution earns 9 times more on average than the bottom 20%.
- In many OECD countries, inequality is at its highest level in 30 years and gaps are widening.
- Regional economic disparities have increased in half of OECD countries since 2008. Two thirds of OECD countries have regions where productivity has stagnated or declined for a decade.
- Estimates suggest that up to 400 million people worldwide could be pushed into extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic, adding to the roughly 700 million in poverty prior to the pandemic.

2. 25th-28th May: MAYORS REUNITE TO CHARTER THE ROAD TO BUILD FORWARD BETTER

While the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged cities and their residents in many ways, it has also provided an opportunity to drastically rethink the way we develop cities, and highlighted the critical need for increased economic inclusion by providing opportunities for all. The 2021 **OECD Champion Mayors' Week** - a series of three virtual Mayors panel events culminating in the 5th Champion Mayors Meeting - allowed Mayors to share best practices, inspire one another around what is possible, draw lessons from the past five years, and strategise ways to ensure that their collective recovery strategies reinforce and advance the inclusive growth efforts already in the process of implementation.



On 28 May 2021, led by Anne Hidalgo, (Mayor of Paris and Chair of the Initiative) and Angel Gurría (former OECD Secretary General) over 30 Mayors and local leaders, City Council Leaders, Ambassadors and Deputy Permanent Representatives to the OECD, leaders from the supporting institutions came together virtually for the OECD 5th Champion Mayors Meeting on **“More Inclusion, Better Recovery”** to commemorate the fifth year of the Initiative and discuss how cities are **“building forward better”**. Champion

Mayors reflected on their housing plans and policies that have increased the availability of affordable housing, these additions are also changing the urban form, resulting in the densification of their cities and contributing to their carbon neutrality goals. Likewise, this also provides better accommodation for migrants. From supporting living wages, to developing employment training programmes, and putting regulations in place to improve working conditions for essential workers, advancing inclusive growth takes a variety of measures, and will need to continue through the recovery process post-COVID-19.

The Fifth Meeting of the OECD Champion Mayors also reaffirmed the commitment to **support the young generation**, which has suffered disproportionately from the pandemic's economic and social impact. Young people living in cities were already struggling to secure consistent employment and affordable housing, two nagging urban issues exacerbated by the pandemic. With less work experience, less secure employment, and less savings than many older residents, young people have felt the brunt of COVID-19's ravaging of the service, tourism, and start-up sectors. Education systems and skills development programmes have been interrupted by vital social distancing measures, putting youth at a disadvantage in the labour market. Precarious employment for the young generation, along with low wages for younger workers and an already oversaturated housing market in many cities, has left many young people struggling to find stable housing that would allow them to start a family. The decimation of nightlife and many cultural activities by the pandemic has undermined many of the social benefits of city life for young people as well.

But far from being passive victims, young people all over the world have begun to fight back on a scale never seen before. Whether through education, technology, science or law — young people far and wide are tapping into their skills to speak up for climate action. Increasingly recognised as the key stakeholders in our planet's future, youth not only play an important hand in the fight against climate change, but can be the catalyst driving action in other pressing societal issues. In the US, teens have been in the forefront of the gun-control effort including through the March For Our Lives, which marked an indisputable turning point in the debate over gun violence, and will likely be remembered as the main catalyst that led to real change in gun safety legislation. Moreover, in the spring and summer of 2020, young people massively showed their support to the movement at the Black Lives Matter marches, which drew millions of demonstrators worldwide to protest against racial injustice.

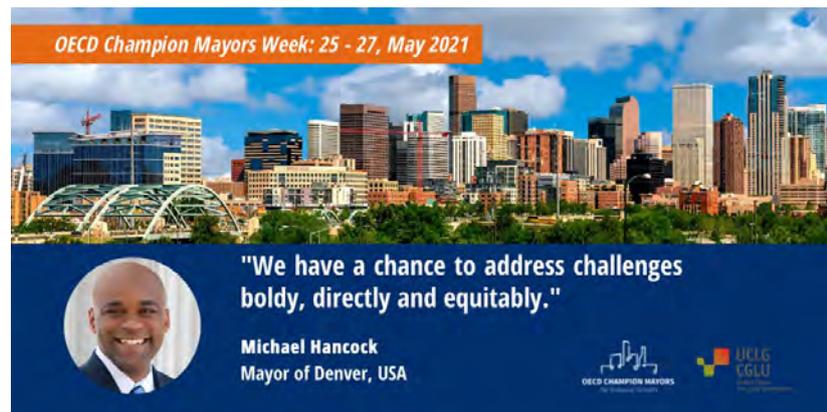
In response to these pressing issues, Champion Mayors discussed how cities have been working closely with schools, local community groups, youth organisations, businesses, and other levels of government **to bolster efforts in supporting youth and keeping them engaged in local life** in recognition of their significant contribution to accelerate transformative change in our societies.

Through the Initiative's fifth political document, the [Pledge For Youth For An Inclusive Post-COVID Recovery](#), Champion Mayors affirmed their intention to **target, engage, and protect youth during and after the pandemic** by maximising their access to housing, employment, education, and recreation, placing their difficult circumstances at the heart of the post-pandemic recovery agenda.

3. CHAMPION MAYORS WEEK: A CLOSER LOOK AT MAYORS' RECOVERY STRATEGIES

The CM Week explored how local governments are supporting disproportionately affected groups in the labour market and harnessing digitalisation and smart city strategies as well as the SDGs to guide long-term recovery strategies.

The 1st Mayors Panel "[Setback for now, not forever: Recovering productivity in Cities](#)", co-moderated by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) and Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG focused on how local governments supported small businesses and workers, especially in those key industries that have been hit the hardest, how they have mitigated job losses, and what cities can do in the more medium and longer term to support small and medium enterprises. Some cities like **Victoria (Canada)** provided grants, social safety nets, tax breaks, and loans, while boosting service delivery. **Mayor Lisa Helps** highlighted the city's long-term action in the city's recovery plan, *Victoria 3.0* focusing on the support of youth and indigenous-led businesses. Other cities like **Bilbao (Spain)** provided supports to their local SMEs through the *Bilbao Aurrera Social Emergency Plan*: focusing on social cohesion and culture. Added to these social measures, **Deputy Mayor Amaia Arregi** reported how **Bilbao** had coordinated extraordinary reductions in taxes and fees for SMEs, paid for small rehabilitation works, and facilitated access to public contracts for companies. Granting commercial rent as in **Denver (USA)** and fiscal exemptions has also emerged as one of the key drivers of successful responses from cities to help SMEs overcome difficult circumstances. In addition, **Mayor Michael Hancock** launched the *Small Business Emergency Fund*, to ensure all businesses can recover from the pandemic with a special focus on minority and women-owned businesses. Finally, cities like **Reykjavik (Iceland)** gave grants to businesses and deferred fees for companies or increased flexibility in collection of fees and payment deadlines for businesses which helped them overcome financial difficulties and laid the foundation for a strong recovery. **Mayor Dagur Eggertsson** launched *Reykjavik's Green Plan* in partnership with the private sector, to offer training opportunities to help unemployed people with an eye on inclusive low-carbon economy.



The Mayors Panel "[Fit for the Future: Reshaping Cities post-pandemic](#)", co-moderated by Sena Segbedzi, Coordinator of the OECD Champion Mayors Initiative (CFE) and George McCarthy, CEO of the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy discussed how initiatives like the rapid expansion of cycling infrastructure, the reclaiming of street space for pedestrians, adapting regulations for outdoor dining and schooling, and pop-up recreational space, or the growing discourse around the 15-minute city the crisis had accelerated the shift to more liveable cities. **Mayor Matúš Vallo of Bratislava (Slovakia)**, shared the city's biodiversity and local cooling initiative while **Mayor Kalisch-Rotem of Haifa (Israel)** explained how she was planning to reshape public space in Haifa post-COVID-19 through major urban renewal and rehabilitation projects, as well as pop-up bike lane paths in different areas of the city. In **Oakland (USA)**, **Mayor Libby Schaaf** has already overseen several initiatives shifting the dimensions of public space in her city, including community cabins designed to address



housing and homelessness, the promotion of public transport as part of its climate plan, and major development projects like the Gateway Industrial District, among others.

The 3rd and last Mayors Panel ["Could the Grass be Greener beyond COVID-19?"](#), co-moderated by Aziza Akhmouch, Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development division at the OECD (CFE) and Wolfgang Teubner, Regional Director of ICLEI Europe, examined the variety of strategies cities are using to achieve an inclusive economic recovery with advancing environmental sustainability. **Mayor Ricardo Rio of Braga (Portugal)** reported on the renewal of the city's bus fleet to provide sustainable, and COVID-safe



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"Transport and urban mobility are at the core of reducing carbon emissions."

Ricardo Rio
Mayor of Braga, Portugal

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public transport, as well as the pedestrianisation of Braga's historic area. **Mayor Aki-Sawyer of Freetown (Sierra Leone)** recognised both buildings and inefficient public transport as major sources of greenhouse gas emissions. She also emphasised that national and local governments need to work together to release resources in order to deal most effectively with climate change. **Mayor Kurz of Mannheim (Germany)** spoke about the promotion of bicycle-use through increased cycling infrastructure. The city is providing municipal funding to subsidise



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"We need to allow the green potential of cities."

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer
Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone

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cargo bikes and will close main roads crossing the city centre to transform them into public spaces such as playgrounds and terraces.

Finally, **Council Leader Susan Aitken** recalled **Glasgow's (UK)** journey from the birthplace of the industrial revolution, to the collapse of heavy industry and shipyards in the 1960s and 1970s and its renaissance in recent decades including through the 20-minute city model and creation of parks. As host of the United Nations Climate



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"Cities need to commit to green change. We have a responsibility to make a difference."

Peter Kurz
Mayor of Mannheim, Germany

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Change Conference, or COP26, set to take place in November 2021, she highlighted that the city's transition to a zero carbon future can be the template for other cities, especially those whose industrial path started long after that of Glasgow.



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"Responses to climate change need to be accelerated and must be green, sustainable and inclusive."

Susan Aitken
Council Leader of Glasgow, UK

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4. TAKING STOCK OF THE LAST 5 YEARS

Over the last five years, Champion Mayors have delivered and implemented policies designed to foster inclusive growth, including expansion of affordable housing, increasing digital connectivity crucial to modernising the economy and labour force, leveraging innovation to improve residents' quality of life through better service delivery, and fighting climate change through the development of green infrastructure. As part of a review of Champion Mayors' extensive accomplishments, **Anne Hidalgo, the Mayor of Paris (France) and Chair of the Initiative**, opened the discussion by stressing her efforts to develop social housing for the working class and investing in infrastructure, including in public transport for the poor, with an eye toward sustainability, bridging climate change and equity.

Prioritising access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups

Discussion among the Champion Mayors confirmed that housing affordability is one of the most pressing challenges for cities all over the world. This is particularly true in large cities where housing prices and rents have often increased faster than national averages. Champion Mayors shared several bold steps they have taken to leverage certain policy instruments controlled by local government in order to provide accommodation and reduce the financial strain on households. Approaches include leveraging public ownership of land to promote private development that includes subsidised or social housing, limiting rent price increases, and increasing density in certain areas. In addition to the youth, many cities are also seeking to address housing shortages for other vulnerable populations such as the ageing, immigrants, and refugees.

Rui Moreira, Mayor of Porto (Portugal) shared his solution to provide more affordable public housing to low-income households through partnership contracts with the private sector to increase the supply of publicly owned housing in exchange for the development of public land. In **Reykjavik (Iceland)**, **Mayor Dagur Bergþóruson Eggertsson** reported that the city has seen a building boom over the past five years, including for social housing. Reykjavik's housing strategy is grounded in large scale redevelopment, urban planning, and partnership contracts with non-profit developers and unions, ensuring that new housing does not only include luxury units. Reykjavik's housing strategy is also prioritising the densification and redevelopment of land in order to promote carbon neutrality.

Mayor Fatma Şahin explained that **Gaziantep (Turkey)** is host to 500,000 refugees, and the city has taken steps toward developing sustainable housing for them. Gaziantep has closed its temporary refugee camps and provided land to build social housing for its refugee population. The city has built 5,000 such housing units so far and will continue to confront the challenge of housing refugees, as well as people with disabilities and low-income residents. The **Mayor of Palermo (Italy)**, **Leoluca Orlando**, similarly stressed the need to take migrants' needs into account, and ensure their inclusion in the housing market. The city has sought to diversify its tourism-heavy city centre by setting up a housing agency that helps residents of Palermo find affordable housing in the area and also distributes residency certificates to migrants that enable them to become citizens. Palermo is also providing development subsidies initiated by the National Government after the COVID-19 outbreak to promote the renovation of rundown buildings.

Mayor Plante of Montreal (Canada) adopted a bylaw for a mixed metropolis to encourage the construction of social, affordable, and family housing. The city of Montreal is also working to reduce the systemic barriers that prevent the integration of people of immigrant and diverse backgrounds. **Peter**

Danielsson, Mayor of Helsingborg (Sweden) highlighted the need to densify development, as well as the importance of involving residents in the urban fabric by listening to and incorporating their priorities.



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"We must not underestimate the power of cities, their residents and their businesses, to make green and sustainable recoveries."

Lisa Helps
Mayor of Victoria, Canada

OECD CHAMPION MAYORS UCLG (CGLI)

Mayor of Victoria (Canada) Lisa Helps recalled the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in the face of the city's housing crisis, having launched the housing first programme in the city's history that builds low-rent housing in collaboration with the regional government. Mayor Helps also recounted that the COVID-19 crisis has spurred another round of partnership with the provincial government.

Supporting the labour force in response to COVID-19

COVID started as a health crisis, but quickly became an economic crisis with people working in certain industries, such as restaurants, hospitality and retail, at particularly high risk of income loss. To address these pressing issues, Council Leader of Leeds (UK), James Lewis has set up an inclusive anchors network, which gathers the city's largest public and private employers providing public services and utilities to residents, to facilitate employment training, apprenticeships, and matching unemployed people with relevant jobs. Yeom Tae-young, Mayor of Suwon (South Korea) has invested in improving the working conditions of essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic by setting up mobile resting areas, has installed resting and shower areas for janitors and other workers in apartment buildings, and mandated insulation, air conditioning, and adequate ventilation in worker facilities.

Mayor of Montreal (Canada) Valérie Plante recalled that the diversity of the metropolis is an important asset, which the city has a responsibility to maintain as it recovers from the pandemic and ensures no one is left behind. Mayor Andy Burnham of Greater Manchester (UK) stressed the importance of building a more resilient, fairer, equal and inclusive city to meet future challenges, and has launched an independent commission on inequality to assess the public sector's efforts and address rising inequalities in response to COVID-19. The city also wants to become the UK's first city region to ensure all residents receive a real living wage. The Mayors Sōichirō Takashima of Fukuoka (Japan) and Yuriko Koike of Tokyo (Japan) agreed that cities were on the frontline of tackling both the climate and COVID-19 crises.

Satoshi Endo, Mayor of Hirono Town (Japan), explained that the city enacted an ordinance "To be a People-Friendly Town" in an effort to put residents at the centre of city policy, and collaborated with international organisations to facilitate wide-ranging cultural exchanges through sports to assure an inclusive recovery that leaves "no one behind". As they build back better following the crisis, the deputy Mayor of Bilbao (Spain), Amaia Arregi, recalled the city's goal to continue advancing as a city of values, committed to sustainable development goals, and addressing challenges such as demographic growth and urban concentration, social rejuvenation and improving the quality of citizen services and sustainability while leaving no one behind.

The Mayor of Bari and President of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), Antonio Decaro, stressed the importance of multi-level governance to recover collectively from the pandemic with the co-elaboration of the National Plan of Recovery and Resilience with the Italian

Government. He listed the major challenges awaiting local leaders as they are called upon to build back better: the digitization of public services, the ecological transition of cities, and the need to shape policies to support education and the social development of individuals and communities.

Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, Mayor of Buenos Aires (Argentina), expressed the city's desire to reduce the gender gap by training 9,000 women in tech, and how it is working to reduce skill mismatch in the labour market. **Athens (Greece) Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis** described how the Greek city is continuing to invest in early childhood education by ensuring that thousands of families will be able to join a free public early educational system, starting from four years old. In addition to tax exemptions, Athens has

also provided financial support to small businesses, recognizing their role as the backbone of their economy through European, national, and local funds. Similarly, **Mayor Kalisch-Rotem of Haifa (Israel)** has encouraged residents to buy from local small businesses to support the local economy through the "Cashback" Initiative where they could get a refund for their purchase.

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"The scale of place-making has changed but sustainable development is more relevant than ever before."

Einat Kalisch-Rotem
Mayor of Haifa, Israel

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The Next Generation: Champion Mayors Pledge to Empower Youth

While the fallout from COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities across all demographics, young people have been particularly affected. **By the end of 2020, youth unemployment rates had increased in nearly all OECD countries at a rate twice as high as for older generations.** The youth are also more likely to shoulder the burden of the long-term social and economic costs stemming from the pandemic. The Champion Mayors shared how they were protecting and empowering youth to get through this crisis and prepare for the post-COVID world.



The [Pledge For Youth For An Inclusive Post-COVID Recovery](#) commits the city leaders to three key actions: (i) increasing youth access to local services; (ii) improving youth access to jobs; (iii) bolstering local engagement among youth in public life.

Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD, and Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris (France) and Chair of the OECD Champion Mayors Initiative

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol (UK), introduced an educational recovery plan to ensure that young people, particularly those from minority groups, don't fall behind academically, with a focus on mental health. Mayor Rees also explained how the city has established a Young People's Board to elevate the voice of the youth and increase their inclusion in shaping city policy, as well as the city's broader ambitions and goals for the next 15 years.

Mayors Einat Kalisch-Rotem (Haifa, Israel), Marvin Rees (Bristol, UK), Fatma Şahin (Gaziantep, Turkey) and Ricardo Rio (Braga, Portugal) each described their cities' efforts to equip young people with proper technology (e.g. laptops, tablets etc.), thus providing access to online services and follow online classes in order to ensure a continuation of studies in the midst of social distancing.

Mayor Dario Nardella of Florence (Italy) described the city's *Back to School Programme*, designed to support students and the teachers during the pandemic by training students as tutors to comply with the safety regulations and raise awareness about regulations. Another project in Florence, Granaio dell'Abbondanza, operates as a hub and co-working space for start-ups that help create economic opportunities for young people and combines innovation, tradition, and public and private collaboration.

Nathalie Appéré, the Mayor of Rennes (France), noted that half of the city's population are under 30 years old and highlighted the city's efforts to provide emergency assistance to support access to housing, social connectivity, and counselling services for those most at risk. The city of Rennes also helped young people access income assistance services, reduced transport fares, and lower rents.

Mayor Ricardo Rio described Braga (Portugal) as the capital of youth, with nearly 40 per cent of the city's population under 30 years old and a strong network of universities. The city has worked closely with various youth associations and invested heavily in digital equipment for students who lacked such access before the pandemic. Mayor Rio has also attempted to develop entrepreneurial conditions in the city to help youngsters access the labour market and develop their business projects. One strategy has been to engage young people to assist at vaccine centres.

Peter Danielsson, Mayor of Helsingborg (Sweden), created a Digital Fund which allows young people to develop bottom-up projects. The programme grants 100 000 EUR annually to fund innovation projects, including up to 10 000 EUR dedicated exclusively to youth initiatives. Since 2014, over a hundred ideas have been implemented by citizens, enabling young people to take an active part in shaping the city's future.

Among the two million residents of Gaziantep, roughly half are youth and nearly one third are students. The city's GAZMEK programme (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality Art and Vocational Training Courses) facilitates training and allows young people to find jobs. Gaziantep has also increased connectivity in areas with low internet access, created a digital environment through which children can access books, virtual museum visits, and other educational resources, and provide resources for youth to participate in sports activities.



Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim (Germany), emphasised the need to think holistically about our efforts to integrate young people into the workforce: “These programs are successful because they identify the young people’s strengths and the challenges they face and offer tailored support”. Before the crisis, the city of Mannheim worked to support the efficient transition of young adults from school to the workforce, especially those at high risk of discrimination. As a result of the initiative, which in 2020 engaged an average of 540 young people each month and offers internships in over 60 fields to young jobseekers under the age of 25, the city now has one of the lowest youth

unemployment rates in Germany. Mayor Kurz noted that youth employment is currently at 2.5 per cent, and only 0.3 per cent of eligible youngsters have never had a job. However, internships are only part of the story. Participants receive support from trained case managers as they enter the workforce. Mannheim also offers tailor-made programming for specific target groups, including single parents and migrants. The city has adapted their programme to respond to the unique needs of young job seekers. During the pandemic, the city opened up 25 per cent more apprenticeship positions for young job seekers with limited skills across companies, including the public transit authority and local energy company, hoping that this inspires similar commitments from the private sector.

Even before the pandemic hit, the Mayor of Victoria created a programme to empower young people and give them the right to the city. The programme includes a free transit pass allowing youth to travel to work free of charge, a key pillar of the city’s economic inclusion strategy.

In **Grigny (France)**, 50% of the population is under 30 and 50% of the population lives below the poverty line. **Mayor Philippe Rio** noted the city is working with different partners, including civil society and the national government, to reduce school inequalities through the programme “Cités éducatives”. The Mayor has also created a task force to tackle youth unemployment.

Mayor Lisa Helps of Victoria (Canada) set aside a fund for youth projects that gives the youth the power to decide which projects to fund in order to introduce them to city budgeting, plus ensure that the city takes into account their input. As a result, Victoria has actually made different (and better) budgeting decisions, including more funding for bike lanes, climate change, and affordable housing for youth.

Mayors Rodríguez Larreta of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Libby Schaaf of Oakland (USA) have both aimed to put youth at the centre of their COVID-19 recovery. Oakland strove to keep its residents connected, learning and up to date regarding life-saving information through the Oakland Undivided campaign that provided laptops, internet connection, and tech support to more than twenty-five thousand households with school-aged children throughout the city. For its part,

Buenos Aires has committed to training 15 000 young people in programming, data analysis and web design to improve their chances of entering the job market much quicker.

In **San Jose (USA)**, **Mayor Sam Liccardo** is providing information to help students in high school enter college through counselling services. The city launched "San Jose Aspires" entailing a digital platform to support students starting from their first week in high school to inform them on how to qualify for financial aid, find a summer job etc. For each of these tasks and achievements students are rewarded with virtual scholar dollars, and the digital platform allows them to navigate various educational resources and options over the course of their four years in high school.

Jorge Muñoz Wells, the Mayor of Lima (Peru), launched the Metropolitan Youth Strategy in December 2020, a territorial action guide designed to meet the demands of the young population. Roughly 1 500 young people were directly engaged in the development of the document, ensuring the inclusion of the youth's voice in the city's goals and planning. Lima has also implemented the territorial strategy "Lima takes care of youth" which facilitates testing and prevention of COVID-19 while providing access to training, workshops and support to entrepreneurs amongst others.

Mayor Plante of Montreal (Canada) is working with community stakeholders to adapt service offerings for the most vulnerable people, especially for youth, while **Mayor Endo of Hirono Town (Japan)** is supporting youth by lending out scholarship funds and providing temporary special grants.

5. PLEDGE FOR YOUTH FOR AN INCLUSIVE POST-COVID RECOVERY

As a symbol of their recommitment to inclusive growth building on their efforts and lessons learned over the past five years, and taking into account our specific local and national contexts, Champion Mayors pledged to work closely with communities, youth organisations, schools, colleges and universities, citizens, NGOs, employers, social enterprises, and other levels of government to upscale their efforts to support young people severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure a resilient and inclusive recovery for this generation. Champion Mayors will do so including by taking advantage of available grants, recovery and support funds that are being put in place, as well as other innovative financing mechanisms. Champion Mayors committed to spur further their efforts to support young people by taking concrete actions in three main areas: i) youth access to local services; ii) youth access to local economic opportunities; and iii) youth participation in local public life. Across these three areas, Champion Mayors committed to engage actively with other local actors, including public employment services, higher education institutions, community colleges and training institutions, social services, community centres, social economy organisations, innovation labs, the cultural and creative sector, and the private sector (including large, medium, and small businesses, and social enterprises) to deliver well-coordinated support for young people that follows them from education/training, and to expand opportunities for greater civic engagement for young people well-being and development.



1. WHAT'S NEXT?

Building on Champion Mayors' feedback, the work of the Initiative for the next years will focus on three strategic priorities:

1. Rejuvenating the pillars of Inclusive Growth in cities. The Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative wants to align its priorities with current and anticipated urban challenges related to COVID-19, climate change, digitalisation, innovation, resilience, and resident well-being at large.
2. Building an Inclusive Growth assessment tool for cities. The development of an assessment tool will help monitor the outcomes and impacts of Champion Mayor's inclusive growth commitments and assess results against intended goals and best practice.
3. Serving as a conduit between national and local governments. The Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative will continue to serve as a bridge between Mayors and national governments, because their effective cooperation is key for a successful post-COVID recovery.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MAYORS

Kostas Bakoyannis
Mayor of **Athens**, Greece

Antonio Decaro
Mayor of **Bari**, Italy

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of **Braga**,
Portugal

Marvin Rees, Mayor of **Bristol**,
United Kingdom

Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, Mayor
of **Buenos Aires**, Argentina – *by
video*

John Alexander, Council Leader of
Dundee, United Kingdom

Dario Nardella, Mayor of
Florence, Italy

Sōichirō Takashima, Mayor of
Fukuoka City, Japan – *by video*

Fatma Sahin, Mayor of **Gaziantep**,
Turkey

Philippe Rio, Mayor of **Grigny**,
France

Einat Kalisch-Rotem, Mayor of
Haifa, Israel

Peter Danielsson, Mayor of
Helsingborg, Sweden

Satoshi Endo, Mayor of **Hirono**,
Japan

James Lewis, Councillor of **Leeds**,
United Kingdom

Jorge Muñoz Wells, Mayor of
Lima, Peru – *by video*

Andy Burnham, Mayor of **Greater
Manchester**, United Kingdom – *by
video*

Peter Kurz, Mayor of **Mannheim**,
Germany

Valérie Plante, Mayor of **Montreal**,
Canada – *by video*

Libby Schaaf, Mayor of **Oakland**,
USA – *by video*

Leoluca Orlando, Mayor of
Palermo, Italy

Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of **Paris**,
France

Rui Moreira, Mayor of **Porto**,
Portugal

Nathalie Appéré, Mayor of
Rennes, France

Dagur Bergþóruson Eggertsson,
Mayor of **Reykjavik**, Iceland

Sam Liccardo, Mayor of **San Jose**,
USA – *by video*

Tae-Young Yeom, Mayor of
Suwon, Korea

Yuriko Koike, Mayor of **Tokyo**,
Japan – *by video*

Lisa Helps, Mayor of **Victoria**,
Canada

VICE MAYORS

Amaia Arregi, Deputy Mayor of
Bilbao, Spain

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