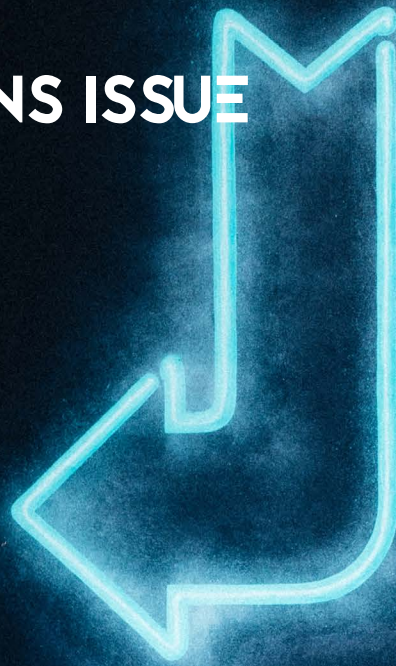


VOLUME FOUR

# CITY LIMITS

THE SOLUTIONS ISSUE



REDEFINING  
HOMELESSNESS

BRANDS AND THE  
URBAN ECOSYSTEM

MEGACITY REBRAND

DESIGNING CITIES  
SAFE FOR ALL

CROWD.DNA





## INTRODUCTION

There's a lot of moving parts to cities. They are forever work in progress and sometimes things really do need fixing. Thus the latest volume of City Limits – Crowd DNA's exploration of the ever evolving urban experience – focuses on solutions; the smart, dextrous and contemporary ways that issues are being addressed and positive outcomes arrived at.

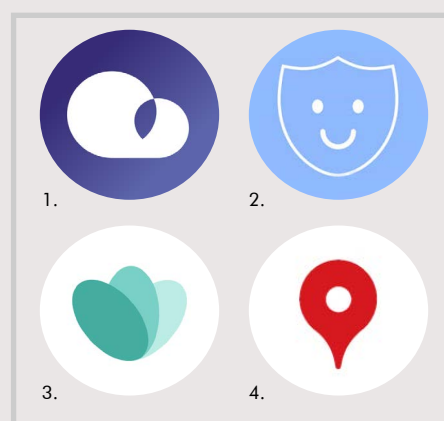
For instance: the word 'homeless' mainly evokes stereotypes but, as we discuss, in truth there are many different narratives that sit behind why people find themselves without a home. From new apps to fresh planning initiatives, we celebrate those hard at work making cities better places for women. Elsewhere, we check in with two of our favourite nonprofits in New York and London. And though the notion of the 'megacity' is one steeped in ominous tones, our piece on the topic suggests these can be hotbeds for hope and opportunity, too.

We love cities, but they do need looking after. Thankfully, this new City Limits shows that help is at hand.

*Andy Crysell, group managing director, Crowd DNA*

### CITY LOGOS

Problem-solving apps in a city near you – which would you use?



1. Air by Plume Labs (air pollution forecasts)
2. Companion (the app that walks you home at night)
3. Too Good To Go (fighting food waste)
4. Streetlink (connecting the homeless with local services)







# CITIES SAFE FOR WOMEN

Most cities have been designed and managed by men, without much attention to women's safety. But a new wave of urbanism is here – where technology and design are creating cities safe for all

**W**omen's safety is high on the global agenda. Allegations of sexual violence in the wake of #Metoo and large scale events such as the Slutwalks and women's marches have opened up discussions on a global scale, making women's safety a mainstream issue. The UN estimates that, worldwide, one in three women have experienced sexual or physical violence.

Also, as more women take over positions of power, industry norms are being reassessed from a female point of view. It's often said that cities have been designed by men, for men. Less than a third of qualified architects in the UK are women, for example, and many Chinese cities still follow strict planning guidelines laid down by male emperors.

When women aren't part of the planning process, the specific circumstances of their lives tend to be ignored, resulting in spaces that don't address women's needs or fears. Streets may have a lack of lighting or no public toilets; there might be an insufficient presence of authority; spaces may become empty at night; public transport made unavailable, and buildings built without consideration to communal living or the benefits of neighbours.

Cities have simply not been planned with female safety in mind. The consequences of this go beyond the trauma to individual victims. The fear of being attacked can cut off entire areas of a city (and its services) for women. Many charities cite this as a reason for so many girls dropping out of school, showing how a lack of safety can restrict the free movement of women and, in turn, stop them reaching their potential.

**One in three women worldwide  
have experienced sexual or physical  
violence at some point in their lives**

But the tide is turning and international focus on women's safety has extended into urban planning, as well as new technology designed to address harassment. One of the key ways to end violence against women is to expose the extent of the problem, and digital platforms are well placed to collect sensitive data quickly, anonymously and, over time, identify patterns or areas of activity.



Anti-harassment group Hollaback! works in this way to make the scale of the epidemic known. Their mission is to end harassment in public spaces by connecting and empowering women in cities online. Users can upload details onto a map reporting acts of violence in real time. In Jakarta, for example, around 300 recent incidents can be seen, alongside blogs and advice written by victims. Now operating in 21 cities around the world, the digital hub offers bystander guides; virtual messages of support, as well as local resources on how to successfully report street harassment.

### Their mission is to end harassment in public spaces by connecting and empowering women online

Like Hollaback!, HarassMap also crowdsources data to map cities from a female perspective. Founded in Cairo, the app exposes the extent of the problem by logging incidents of harassment and sexual violence in Egypt's capital. When a user reports an event, they receive an automated message with advice to get support. The extensive dataset is said to have had huge implications on policy – as of 2014, sexual harassment is recognised as a crime in Egypt.

While platforms like these work to report incidents as they happen, Safetipin focuses on preventing them in the first place. Founded in Delhi, and now operating in 25 other Indian cities, the app's more subjective assessment of safety lets users rate streets for criteria such as lighting, visibility, number of other women, security and ease of access. The data can then be aggregated to offer safest route options, helping women navigate the city with less risk.

However, you can't erase the threat of violence against women via apps alone. Thoughtful urban design and government intervention are crucial to improve safety in the long term. Thankfully, more women than ever are being consulted in planning developments, and female-focussed organisations are popping up worldwide. The Women Led Cities Initiative in Philadelphia, for

example, unifies women from different urban fields via conferences and working groups. By bringing diverse female voices to the fore, the aim is to achieve a greater level of equality in urban design from the get-go, and start conversations around issues affecting women, such as safety in public areas.

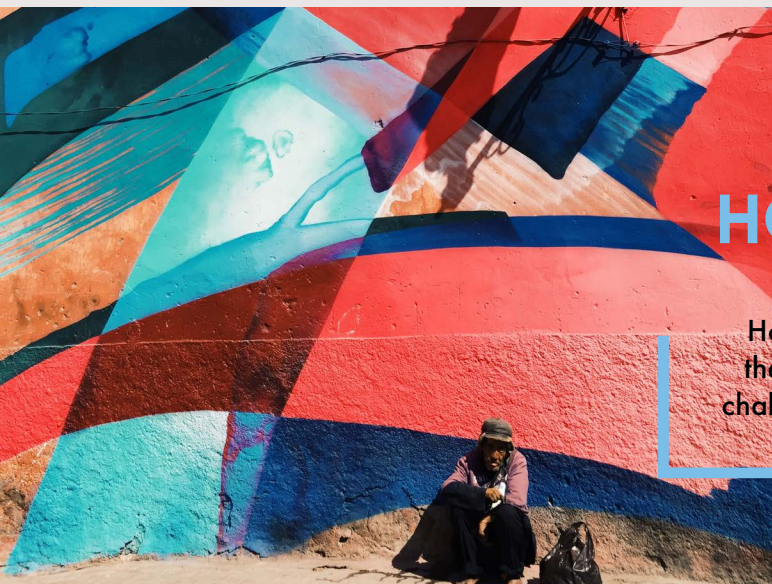


On a similar mission is Collective Point 6 from Barcelona, who have been trying to build equality into the city for a decade. Unlike other urban planners, their focus is on female 'visibility' and the impact it has on safety. This means much more than adding street lights. The collective work to improve the presence of women throughout a city; whether it be helping more women into prominent positions, or addressing the use of sexist imagery in advertising. The London mayor's attempt to ban the infamous 'Beach Body' campaign in 2016 chimes well with this, and serves as a reminder to brands to consider the unintended consequences of imagery in public space. Depictions of female objectification can create an unsafe atmosphere for women as they travel around a city.

### More women than ever are being consulted in planning developments and female-focussed organisations are popping up worldwide

The more that the urban environment is designed with women in mind – whether from insights collected in apps, or consultations with female-focussed city planners – the more women will feel safe, welcome and comfortable using public space. Of course, cultural differences come into play (in many places a woman is considered unvirtuous and a target for harassment if she even dares to appear in public by herself), and huge urban sprawls can't simply be bulldozed and rebuilt. But a number of steps can be taken by individuals and society alike to make streets feel safer – and the more women that feel secure and venture out, the busier, more diverse, and safer the streets will become for everyone.





## REDEFINING HOMELESS IDENTITIES

Homelessness happens for any number of reasons, but the term itself has become a loaded phrase. It's time to challenge convention and make room for individual stories

The definition of homelessness is 'to be without a home' – and you can apply that one dictionary entry to over 150 million people around the world. While some of them have shelter in makeshift towns in the middle of the desert, or deep in rural locations, a huge number of others are on the streets of our cities. In New York alone there are 65,000 homeless people; 54,000 in Mumbai, 10,000 in Sao Paulo, 7,500 in London and 5,000 in Tokyo.

While it's important to understand the scale of the problem, using singular definitions and mass figures like these can blanket over a vast number of people who have led very different lives with unique stories to tell. Fuelled by media depictions and stereotypes that refer to 'the homeless' as an entity, homelessness is often overly generalised. We attribute universal problems to those without a home, imagining collective causes such as crime, debt and drug abuse – instead of thinking about individual differences and nuanced needs. In an age where we're talking more positively about removing restrictive labels that harm our sense of self, the same applies to homelessness: we must shift our catch-all perspective.

**Singular definitions and mass figures blanket over a vast number of people who have led very different lives**

In some cities, that label is being pulled back. At London Pride in 2018, AMV-BBDO joined forces with The Outside Project to raise awareness that one in four homeless people are LGBTQ+, left without a place to live after coming out.

Filled with a sleeping bag and warm clothes, Coming Out Kits were handed to revellers, confronting them with the fact that not everyone at Pride could go home once the festivities ended. This scenario isn't always the first we think of when considering homelessness, but the kits are a jolting reminder that homeless people have diverse experiences and sexualities too.

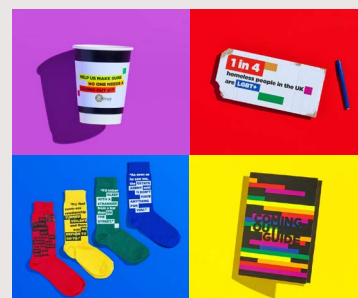
**In an age where we're talking more positively about removing restrictive labels, the same applies to homelessness**

Then, there are moves to help homeless people feel like they have real ties to their cities. In Austin, a very different approach is (literally) giving them back their identity. Last year, the city launched a project using blockchain technology, which aims to give a sense of permanence to those whose lives have little to root them. Physical ID documents can often be misplaced when there's no home in which to keep them, leading their owner to become a ghost in the system. Blockchain means that a person's info is incorruptible, safely stored and easy for authorities to access. Homeless people with mobile phones will also be able to verify their information through passwords, photos or biometric data (like Touch ID).

Tech provides practical identity-forming solutions, but creativity can deliver an alternative approach. One Voice is a charity that, during one week 'exchanges', teams up with global artists to form homeless choirs and bands in cities from Rio De Janeiro to Tokyo.

The training workshops, discussions and performances are all aimed at giving homeless people 'visibility and dignity' through music and art. The programmes are facilitated exclusively by mentors who were also once homeless, so that they can truly identify with those they are helping – no risk of generalist assumptions here.

Though PR activity, artistic thinking and early-stage innovation help go somehow in giving homeless people their identity back, we need more muscle power to rewrite social narratives and redefine our sweeping perceptions of homelessness. Fixing the issue itself is the main priority; but having a better understanding and greater awareness of the causes will allow us to create more effective solutions. If we can give more homeless people in our cities a voice, we can give them more autonomy. Then, we can look beyond the numbers and the stereotypes to the true stories sitting behind them.



Coming Out Kits from The Outside Project in London

# IN THE FACE OF GENTRIFICATION

From New York to Johannesburg, Berlin to Hong Kong – there are few corners of the world yet to experience gentrification in some form. The debate is well trodden: while rejuvenating an area often brings improvements – such as better transport and public services – the flipside comes in the form of rapid rent hikes, displacement of residents and erasure of grassroots culture. Cities large and small are battling to find a balance between these two extremes. Here are five ways cities are attempting to offset the negative effects of gentrification.

## 1.

### Buffalo, USA:

#### Changing how homes are bought and sold

Buffalo's Fruit Belt neighbourhood, a historically black community, has experienced an influx of development thanks to the nearby Medical Campus – resulting in rapidly increasing rents. Residents-turned-activists formed the city's first community land trust; with the city, in turn, agreeing to dedicate land to the trust. By owning both the land and buildings, the trust is able to ensure homes are put into the hands of low income families. It also enforces a cap on real estate profits; keeping the housing affordable for the next buyer.



Community organiser Dennice Barr fights for Fruit Belt residents

## 2.

### Tiong Bahru, Singapore:

#### A fusion of tradition and modernity

Spurred by Singapore's ambitious development plan, the neighbourhood of Tiong Bahru has seen an inpouring of young Singaporeans, expats and tourists. While the local economy is booming, the development has resulted in the loss of traditional businesses in favour of those catering to a younger, wealthier clientele. The city's response has been both legislative and creative, ensuring that any new ideas benefit all residents – new and old. One example is a twice yearly flea market designed to engage native and foreign, old and young residents, and facilitate connections between newcomers and existing businesses via stall sharing and menu swaps.



Admiring the 'horse-shoe' shaped flats at Moh Guan Terrace and Guan Chuan Street



3.

### Chicago, USA: Green villages

Naomi Davis, founder of Blacks In Green, sees the nurturing of 'green villages' as a way to counter gentrification through community empowerment and better urban planning. Her organisation creates orchards, gardens and root cellars across neighbourhoods to boost the long term stability of local communities. These green villages help by turning waste into wealth, boosting job opportunities and supporting local businesses; as well as rebuilding forgotten communities and securing a sustainable urban future via the green economy.



*Blacks In Green founder Naomi Davis*

4.

### Berlin, Germany: Grassroots coalitions

In the face of diminishing space for creativity, a Berlin alliance of nonprofit organisations, urban planners, architects and activists have formed a coalition called Initiative Haus Der Statistik. The group aims to prove how a diverse mix of minds can reach a model for development that solves problems, rather than creating them. Their signature project – the renovation of a federal office in Alexanderplatz – promises the creation of 300 affordable housing units, plus dedicated space for artists.

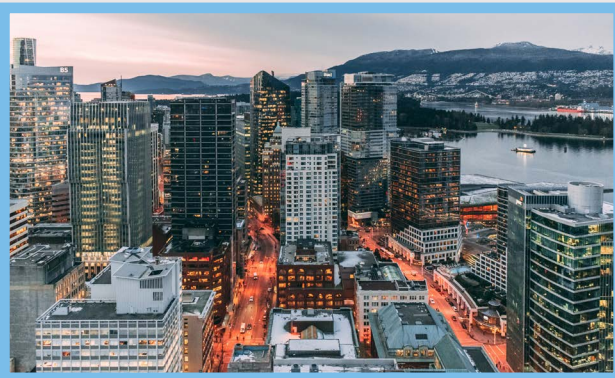


*Model project of the Haus der Statistik, in the middle of Berlin*

5.

### Vancouver, Canada: Taxing foreign buyers

As the global economy has become less stable, investors around the world have turned to property as a form of safe investment; adding fuel to the fire of rising housing prices. In response, the city of Vancouver has imposed a 15 percent tax on the purchase price of a home for all non-Canadian buyers. The average price of a detached home fell 16.7 percent following the imposition of the tax, dampening the out-of-control real estate market and keeping prices lower for locals.



*The lights come on in downtown Vancouver*



# MILLENNIAL VOLUNTEERS



What does the new generation of volunteer look like?

Volunteering is enjoying a resurgence in the UK, with research suggesting that 1.3 million new volunteers stepped up in 2018. Just as the landscape itself is constantly shifting – new social issues and funding cuts transpire all of the time – the volunteers themselves are also changing. Millennials are bringing a different set of generational values, attitudes and skills to the challenges at hand.

We spoke to one of the nonprofits that we support in London, the Hackney Winter Night Shelter (HWNS), about the changing face of their volunteers. An organisation helping to tackle homelessness in one of the most deprived boroughs in London, HWNS is a local organisation and neighbour to Crowd's London HQ. We were keen to couple our millennial insights with their inside view to help organisations and charities better connect with this next generation of volunteers.



**Q&A**  
**LUKE WALTERS**  
Volunteer at HWNS

**How do you volunteer your time?**

I help prepare the shelter dorms in the mornings before I go to work, which mainly involves setting up camp beds with bedding and towels for the guests.

**How did you get into volunteering in the first place?**

To be honest, I was looking for something to make the most of the shorter days in winter. It sounds arbitrary, but I could no longer run in the mornings with it being so dark and, because I have a short commute, I didn't have an excuse to get up before 8am anymore, which felt very lazy! I was looking for something with a bit more purpose, so started searching for volunteering opportunities.

**Sounds good to us! So what motivates you to get out of bed in those dark winter hours?**

For me, volunteering is all about trying to understand something I have very little knowledge about. We pass people on the streets everyday and know nothing about their background, who they are, or how they got into that situation. Homeless individuals just become another statistic on the news, and I wanted to learn more about the reality of it. Volunteering has really opened up my eyes – that's why I keep doing it.

**Why do you think other millennials choose to volunteer?**

I think there's a huge feeling of social responsibility amongst young adults – you can see it in the way we vote. We want to help and get involved with the world around us. Also, we have more time and less responsibility – renting for longer, having kids later etc – so it's a perfect time to get involved in society.

**How do you think volunteering benefits you?**

I think it's a good way to meet like-minded people. The coordinators are amazing and give so much energy without asking for anything in return; it's inspiring to work with people like that. (I'll also definitely add 'volunteer' to my CV next time I update it!).



**Q&A**  
**COURTNEE ARCHER**  
Volunteer and charity events coordinator

**What's your role at the shelter?**

I arrange all fundraising events – from our annual comedy night, Belter For The Shelter, to our participation in the Hackney Half Marathon. When volunteering, I'm either whipping up breakfast or chatting with the shelter guests over dinner.

**In a nutshell, why do you volunteer?**

When I first moved to London, I realised how bad the homeless epidemic was and wanted to do something about it. My motto is 'be the change you want to see' and, when faced with homelessness on a daily basis, it's very hard to ignore. Everyday the guests inspire me with their stories and strength. You'd be surprised how many people face homelessness and how easy it is to end up on the streets – London is an expensive city! Volunteering helps me 'check in' and remind myself to be grateful for my own situation and support network.

**Do you think others share your motivation for change?**

I think millennials, in particular, are definitely more aware of the issues in their city and want to do something about it. They're the next generation of leaders and this is a way for them to shape their future. We actually have an abundance of young adults wanting to volunteer; I think they all want to be part of the change.

**That's a good thing, right?**

Sure – the good thing is that younger generations want to get involved. They're also able to bring a range of new skills to the charity. The bad thing is that they tend to only do it for a short amount of time, or as a one-off. Millennials are at a busy time in their lives and it's hard to find people who want to commit to volunteering long term.

**What 'new skills' spring to mind? How are millennials shaking up volunteering?**

We're in a world of portfolio careers where people constantly build on their experience, so millennial volunteers now offer a range of skills – everything from events management and marketing, to admin and medical knowledge (and that could all be one person!). Not only that, but millennials seem to be all about connections as well. Someone always knows someone who can get a venue to sponsor us, or a new restaurant to donate food. They're all about networking. And I'm not just talking about social media - volunteering is a great way of meeting like-minded people and I have made some great friends working at the HWNS.



**Q&A**  
**EMMA BANKS**  
Chief coordinator at HWNS

**What motivates you most in your role?**

I run one of the shelter nights – managing the rota, organising groceries, sorting the laundry – but, most importantly, I'm a point of contact should the volunteers need any support on the night. It's the energy of all the volunteers and the fact that we're making a difference together that I find most motivating.

**How do you think volunteering has changed over the years?**

For starters, issues like homelessness are more on people's minds now: there's more of it and it's more talked about. This means that more people want to help. The sheer amount of volunteers has increased – nowadays, it's a case of 'surprised face' if someone doesn't volunteer anywhere.

**Tell us more...**

Volunteering is just much more common these days – and issues like homelessness are very top of mind, so they attract more volunteers, and often younger people, too. Young adults, especially, are more likely to see their friends helping, so they want to help. I also think there's a lot of political and environmental pressure on millennials today, so they're keen to do their bit. Volunteering helps them feel that they're making a difference; it offers them validation and a chance to 'do good'.

**How do you think millennials are changing volunteering?**

For starters, they have more spare time and energy than other generations. But what's really exciting to watch is their huge collective mindset – there's a clear sense of 'together we can', which wasn't as powerful when I was growing up. These guys are more about working together than previous generations, and that togetherness can make a real difference.

*If you're interested in volunteering at Hackney Winter Night Shelter, please visit [www.hwns.org.uk](http://www.hwns.org.uk) for more information.*

**FOUR MILLENNIAL MOTIVATIONS**

(and how to turn them into a force for good)

**Conscious consumers**

It's well documented that millennials care about doing good in the world, and they're also ready to hold brands and institutions to account when they miss the mark. They look for opportunities to make a difference, however small, and organisations have the power to get behind causes millennials care about.

**Passion projects**

Keen not to be defined by their 9-5, millennials use their spare time for the things that make their hearts sing, be it side hustles, hobbies or worthy causes. But they're not here to mess around - they want to ensure they maximise their time and keep things moving forward. Facilitating spaces in which millennials can share their skills and impart knowledge will help them to feel like they're having a genuine impact.

**Lovers of local**

Millennials want to feel like they're contributing to their immediate communities, despite often being seen as responsible for their gentrification. Tap into this and ease tensions by helping to forge connections between millennials and the communities they live in – as long as it's authentic and sensitively done.

**Digital natives**

Born into the advent of the internet, their interconnectedness has granted them a global outlook and acute awareness of world issues, while also making them tech-savvy. Charities can take advantage of this and use millennials to help better their online presence and streamline processes through technology.





© AP Photo/New York City Municipal Archives, Department of Bridges, Plans & Structures, Eugene de Salazar  
Delancy Street in New York's Lower East Side, 1908.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT, NYC

Exploring Crowd DNA New York's  
local neighbourhood and the  
nonprofit that's always had its back...

**H**ousing has long been one of New York's biggest issues. The largest city in the US, it has consistently outgrown solutions put forward to meet the needs of its population. Henry Street Settlement – one of our office neighbours in the Lower East Side and our regular volunteering haunt – was founded 125 years ago to help ease the problem and is one of New York's longest-standing institutions of its kind. Today, it makes a difference to local, low-income residents and homeless people with a wide and wonderful range of free services. Here's a (very brief) history of how it came about – and why we're such big fans.

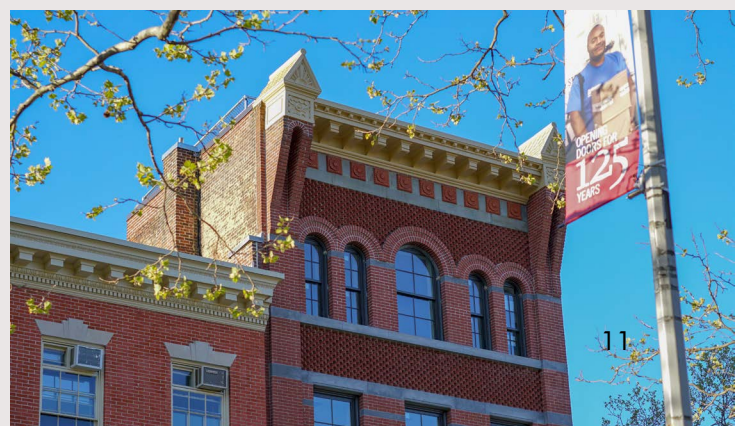
The area covering Manhattan's Lower East Side was once the first home to thousands of immigrants. Between the years of 1810 and 1840, the population of New York rose from a hundred thousand to half a million and, in efforts to house the newcomers, tenements were built in the LES. Later, in 1935, the neighbourhood also opened the first publicly funded low income housing project in the US. These units were initially coveted and difficult to obtain but, by the 1960s, the criteria for gaining access was loosened, making them much more accessible.

Both tenements and public housing efforts started off with good intentions, but fell short when the city lacked funds to care for people. Tenements became overcrowded and squalid, and public housing fell victim to drugs and vandalism. Luckily, in 1893, Henry Street Settlement emerged from within a tenement itself guided by fierce leader, Lilian Wald. Where government projects lacked resources and helped only from an arm's length, Henry Street worked to assist tenement residents from within the very heart of their community. At first, this took the form of forging ties between low income families and wealthy philanthropists but, over the years, Henry Street has opened centers to help those in public housing. Today, 125 years later, the nonprofit provides everything from arts programs and child services to health care.

Henry Street has evolved to meet the needs of modern New York's low income population, providing a range of updated tools to get people on their feet. From nurturing local kids' passions for street dance to providing seniors with digital medical assistance. As the area's demographic has shifted, Henry Street has adapted too, making services available in English, Spanish and Chinese. Another example is their career-readiness program, which helps those in need attend job fairs and mock interviews, visit corporate offices and work with volunteers to improve their CVs and gain relevant work experience for the modern workplace.

In the constant chaos that comes with city life, Henry Street takes the pulse of its residents lives and connects with people in the here and now. We often draw examples from consumer brands, but as new (and old) urban issues present themselves, nonprofits have just as much of a role to play in solving them. Henry Street is a powerful reminder that nonprofits need to change with the times to remain culturally relevant.

*If you're in the New York City area and would like to get involved at Henry Street, they're easily contactable at [info@henrystreet.org](mailto:info@henrystreet.org).*





# MEGACITIES

*Enormous urban sprawls with ten million plus inhabitants are taking over – but there's no need to freak out. Here, we swap the impending doom usually associated with megacities for a more positive spin, as we explore how the world's largest cities are becoming fit for the future...*



'Sprawling', 'mushrooming', 'overcrowded', 'destined for chaos' – all words often associated with the 21st century's biggest manmade phenomena: megacities. As defined by the United Nations, a megacity is a condensed urban area with a population of over ten million people. There are currently 29 megacities around the world that fit that criteria; up from just two in 1950. China, for example, has experienced a constant birthing of megacities to deal with its rapid growth – Shenzhen, Beijing and Guangzhou are all in the 15 million+ club. Shanghai, meanwhile, racks up a population of over 30 million people.

Megacities themselves are multiplying, too. The UN projects that the number of megacities will rise from 33 in 2018 to 43 in 2030, with most of those being in Asia and Africa. This mass migration of people to urban environments shows no signs of slowing and, with rapid urbanisation, comes complicated (and potentially devastating) new problems. After all, who will shelter, feed and ensure the survival of the millions who flock to megacities? No wonder the adjectives used are often seeped in fear.

But it's important to remember that from urbanisation and dramatic human density comes innovation and opportunity – not to forget new cultural springboards, too. Megacities must, of course, adapt and innovate to meet the challenges residents face, but it's time to look past the overwhelming stats and scary rumours to the forward-facing solutions that could make megacities greener, more efficient and more pleasant places to be.

## Making space for the masses

Megacities are full of promise and opportunity, drawing people in with the hope of better jobs and brighter futures. But as these urban sprawls morph into bigger beasts, they also need to house their growing populations. Dhaka in Bangladesh, for example, is the fastest growing megacity in the world (home to 44,500 people per square kilometre), literally bursting at the seams and struggling to cope.

However, in Lagos, entrepreneurs are thinking outside the box and reclaiming land from the Atlantic to build an entirely new city suburb called Eko Atlantic on the shores of Victoria Island. It will house over 500,000 people (the same amount that move to the city each year), have its own shops and offices and dedicated power and water supply. Some have perceived the overcrowding solution as an island for the rich, though developers are trying to shake this off. Meanwhile, in Shanghai, brands are getting involved: the MINI Living building transformed a disused industrial complex into apartments, offices and leisure spaces for some of its 26.3 million inhabitants. Bringing MINI's automobile know-how to housing, the building also provides shared vehicles and is 'rethinking the idea of living space in the city and developing needs-oriented living concepts.'



### Keeping things moving

Commuting can be one of the most painful parts of living in a city, especially when travelling alongside 9,999,999 others. Key to a megacity's success is a smooth-running transport system that can move people and goods quickly, reliably and easily every day. In the future we could see everything from skyline pedestrian walkways, to high-speed subways helping to make things more frictionless.

Brazil is upping its megacity subway game already. In São Paulo, the Metro's Line 4-Yellow is South America's only driverless subway line; while in Rio people can travel to the iconic Ipanema Beach by railway, with video-monitored bicycle stands at stops along the route. Tokyo has trialled on-demand buses that dynamically route pick-ups and drop-offs based on user demand, to eliminate carbon emissions from unnecessary stops. The city also has plans for a 3D Express Coach concept: an elevated bus, which hovers over traffic - yes, really.

### And breathe...

Major industrial output means that many of the world's megacities are swathed in smog – and nowhere is this truer than in China. Ranked one of the deadliest countries for outdoor air pollution, the Chinese government has vowed to 'make our skies blue again' by investing in renewable energy. The government has even announced controversial population restrictions in Beijing and Shanghai.

A more popular solution has been designed by architect Stefano Boeri, whose plan is to fill Chinese megacities with biophilic tower blocks, covered in greenery. As well as looking good, the plants would absorb

carbon dioxide, making the air cleaner for humans on the ground. In Xi'an, a giant air-purifying tower has been built to clean pollutants from the air across the city. While on a smaller scale in Delhi, white goods brand Honeywell has been advertising its air purifiers as sleep aids – because when you breathe more cleanly, you get more shut eye.



### Creativity fights back

Instead of just becoming industrial powerhouses and homes of 'the masses', megacities are multifaceted hubs of colourful people. And, as often happens against the backdrop of problematic urbanisation, creativity thrives in response. In many cases, extreme urban density can inspire artistic exploration. Hema Upadhyay, an artist from Mumbai, for example, has explored the claustrophobia of Dharavi, one of the city's biggest slums. Titled 8x12, the name refers to the size of most of the local dwellings, while the imagery itself juxtaposes the slum against the giant towers of the city, illustrating the stark differences in the landscape.

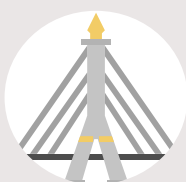
Similarly, Korean artist Choi Jeong Hwa takes inspiration from Seoul's glitzy mall culture and includes a rotating chandelier in all of his work. Then, from Shanghai, Hu Xiangchend uses windows and doors he has salvaged from old houses to create art that mourns the loss of traditional architecture, replaced by city skyscrapers and modern buildings. It seems that, even

as megacities take over our landscape from every corner of the globe, human creativity will still find space to grow.

## MEGACITIES IN NUMBERS



Tokyo is currently the world's biggest megacity, with a population of 37.5 million people.



Lagos is predicted to be the most populated city in the world by 2100, with a whopping 88 million inhabitants.



Delhi is India's second biggest city after Mumbai, but the world's fastest growing megacity in terms of GDP.



There are currently 29 megacities around the world, up from just two in 1950: Tokyo and New York.



# CROWD SNAPSHOTS

Where we've been and what we've seen in cities around the world.



Peddalling straight into the sharing economy. Crowd DNA in Sydney



A welcoming sign for those sailing past. Crowd DNA in Berlin



A supermarket highlights problems in the local area, offering a chance for passers by to help out. Crowd DNA in London



A lonely help phone shines bright in a quiet street. Crowd DNA in Toronto



Community workers offer hot food, a safe space and a smile for people on the streets. Crowd DNA in Philadelphia



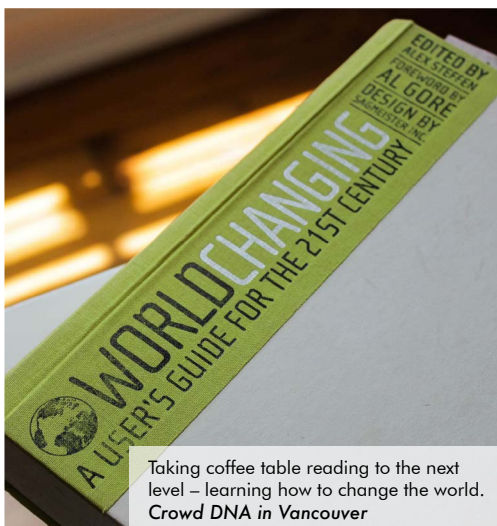
The banner says it all. Crowd DNA in Belfast



Communities come together to collect plastic waste in a beach cleanup. Crowd DNA in Bridgetown, Barbados



Romantic declarations brighten up the streets of Peckham, south London. Crowd DNA in London



Taking coffee table reading to the next level – learning how to change the world. Crowd DNA in Vancouver



Peace... and free bananas on the streets of Kampala. Crowd DNA in Kampala



Giving nature a helping hand (literally). Crowd DNA in Singapore



## CROWD DNA LONDON



*Opened in 2008*

Interesting fact: meeting room names are Kraftwerk-themed

## CROWD DNA AMSTERDAM



*Opened in 2015*

Interesting fact: best for transport-avoiding short strolls to client offices

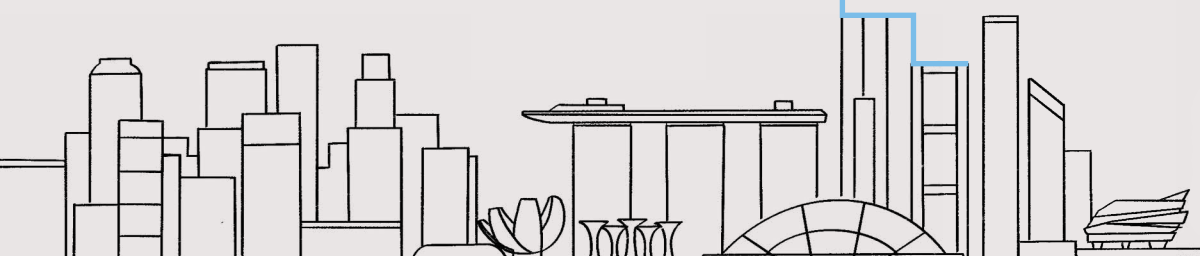
## CROWD DNA NEW YORK



*Opened in 2017*

Interesting fact: only Crowd DNA office with a dog (must change that)

## CROWD DNA SINGAPORE



*Opened in 2018*

Interesting fact: wins the award for best food options on our doorstep

## CROWD DNA SYDNEY



*Opens in July 2019*

Interesting fact: we'll let you know soon!

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# Thanks for reading.

Crowd DNA is a cultural insights and strategy consultancy with offices in London, Amsterdam, New York, Singapore and Sydney.

Formed in 2008, operating in 60+ markets, we bring together trends specialists, researchers, strategists, writers, designers and film-makers, creating culturally charged commercial advantage for the world's most exciting brands.

## CROWD.DNA

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