

MUNICIPAL *times*. Magazine

A publication of the Urban Journalism Institute developed with UCLG, to leverage the knowledge mobilised by local and regional governments, as well as stakeholders, in key global events.

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**THE PACT FOR
THE FUTURE IN MOTION**

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The Municipal Times is an online publication of the Urban Journalism Institute (UJI), an initiative of OnCities2030, developed in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Excerpts from the *Municipal Times* may be used in other publications with appropriate citations. Electronic version of the *Municipal Times* can be found at urbanjournalism.institute

For information, comments or contributions regarding the *Municipal Times*, please contact municipaltimes@oncities.org

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Back cover image: logo of the Media for Cities campaign (Urban Journalism Institute) by *Andrea Posada*.

EDITORIAL

ON THE MOVE

The annual United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Retreat, held in Barcelona, Spain, from 20 to 24 February 2023, brought together over 300 participants from all over the world. Since its inception in 2015, this week-long gathering has provided a platform for the UCLG ecosystem, including its World Secretariat, Presidency, Sections, Committees, Working Groups, civil society, media, and other partners, to develop a unified work plan for the year ahead. Now, seven years later, the Retreat has become a must-attend event for political leaders and technical staff to brainstorm, share ideas, and advance towards recognising local perspectives and territorial development to face global challenges.

The UCLG Secretary-General, Emilia Saiz, refers to the Retreat as the “kitchen” of the organisation, where “recipes” and “menus” are discussed, and “friends” are invited to be part of the process.

The municipal movement’s origins date back to 1913, when the Union Internationale des Villes (UIV) was established in Ghent, Belgium. In 2004, the UCLG we know today was redefined with a clear vision of unifying the local movement. In 2013, UCLG took a step further by leading the creation of the Global Taskforce for Local and Regional Governments to maximise their influence and role in the global agendas being adopted between 2015–2016.

The Pact for the Future of Humanity, unanimously adopted by the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon, the Republic of Korea, in October 2022, outlines the collective commitment of the municipal movement towards a new cycle of multilateral processes and key decisions. It articulates the principles of the Power of We, which will guide the movement’s political direction towards the SDG Summit of 2023 and the United Nations Summit of the Future in 2024.

The Pact is a declaration deeply embedded in the complexity and urgency of the times. It is based on the reality that local and regional governments work daily, serving the people, caring for them, and ensuring service provision for everyone and in every place.

The Retreat showcased the strength of the feminist, human rights-based, green, peaceful, committed, and transformative global municipal movement. Participants worked together to unpack the Pact and propose high-impact partnerships, which marks the opening move of UCLG at the multilateral table in this crucial year of 2023.

THE UNIQUE VALUE OF COLLECTIVE POWER

The first two days of the UCLG Retreat focused on providing a co-creation space for all participants to explore the municipal movement's existing skills, tools, and capacities. The goal was to build future concrete collective actions to unpack the Pact for the Future of Humanity and to put the shared vision into action.

To facilitate interaction, exchange of views, and the diversity of proposals, a daily space called the **Factory of the Future** with interactive workshops was designed as part of the Retreat programme.

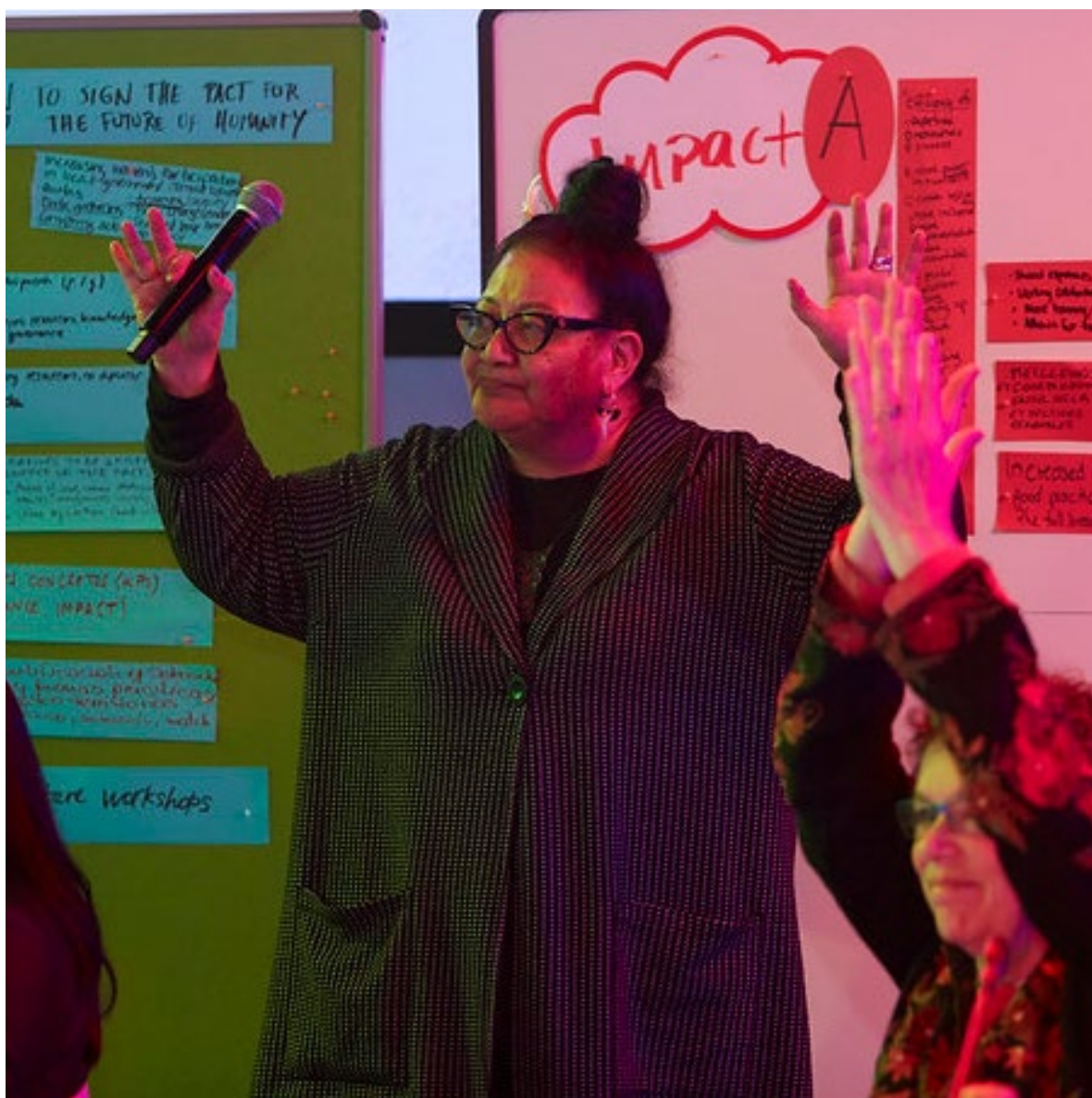
The main conclusions from the different groups and sessions consolidated that local and regional governments are central players in addressing the current polycrisis context. Hence, developing high-impact partnerships to advocate for the added value of local and regional governments, both at the multilateral level and among citizens, is crucial. Moreover, there is a need to focus on increasing trust as a critical foundation for the renewal of democracy and the transformation of the economy and governance structures at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

During the *Media for Cities* debate held on 23 February, one of the most pressing challenges discussed was the perception of local institutions and their relationship with the media, social media, and communities. The exercise to better explain the impact of local action and engage with journalists and media representatives will continue at the UCLG Executive Bureau, scheduled in Brussels in June 2023.

Part of the challenge is to work towards a world that acknowledges the multilateral system as a common good for humanity, and local and regional governments have an essential role to play. By complementing the traditional multilateral system and helping to transform it into a genuinely networked multilateralism, the municipal movement can lead the way and deliver its claimed added value.

Even in polarised times, the municipal movement's resilience and ability to advance through dialogue were also recognised as part of the added value. The different type of multilateralism proposed by the municipal movement is based on understanding and compromising, including and respecting individual approaches to the collective vision and action, and investing in a slow but robust peaceful transformation.

THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE





Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director

“I firmly believe that only the strong cooperation between national, regional, and local governments can we be more equitable, resilient and sustainable. I welcome and embrace the spirit of your recommendations of the Pact for the Future of Humanity.”

Carolina Cosse, mayor of Montevideo and UCLG President

“Amplifying the local voice in international fora is not an end but a means: to advance better public policy for the communities we serve and are a part of.”

María Fernanda Espinosa, former president of the United Nations General Assembly and UCLG Ubuntu Advisor

“The power and value of the municipal movement lies in how we transform policy-making and move forward for a multilateralism that speaks directly to the people’s needs.”

THE CARE REVOLUTION

CONQUERING THE NARRATIVE

Shaping the narrative is a crucial aspect of the advocacy work done by UCLG and its ecosystem. The most significant achievement has been the consolidation of the concept of **localisation** at all levels, giving a meaningful and transformative role to local action in achieving the 2030 Agenda, the climate agenda and the sustainable urban development envisaged in the New Urban Agenda. A solid and exponential monitoring exercise through the Voluntary Local Reviews and the Voluntary Subnational Reviews accompanies the territorial and spatial implementation.

A second concept introduced in the multilateral system's narrative by UCLG, Metropolis and the London School of Economics is that of **complex emergencies**. This is closely connected to the debate on the need to recognise and transform governance structures to deliver adequate responses to global health and climate crises, natural disasters, extreme and growing inequality, and the fragile global economy. The COVID-19 pandemic response demonstrated that local governments are at the forefront of dealing with the health crisis and at the same time continue to provide services to citizens.

The **care revolution** is the shared vision proposed by the Pact for the Future of Humanity. It is based on a need for a different relationship with resources, nature, and people. It goes beyond the competencies of local and regional governments until now and opens a space to reimagine systems and structures. The care revolution is the next generation of human rights. It is an equality and community-driven democratic movement proposed by feminist municipalism in which the diversity of voices, complexity, and contradiction is part of advancing together.

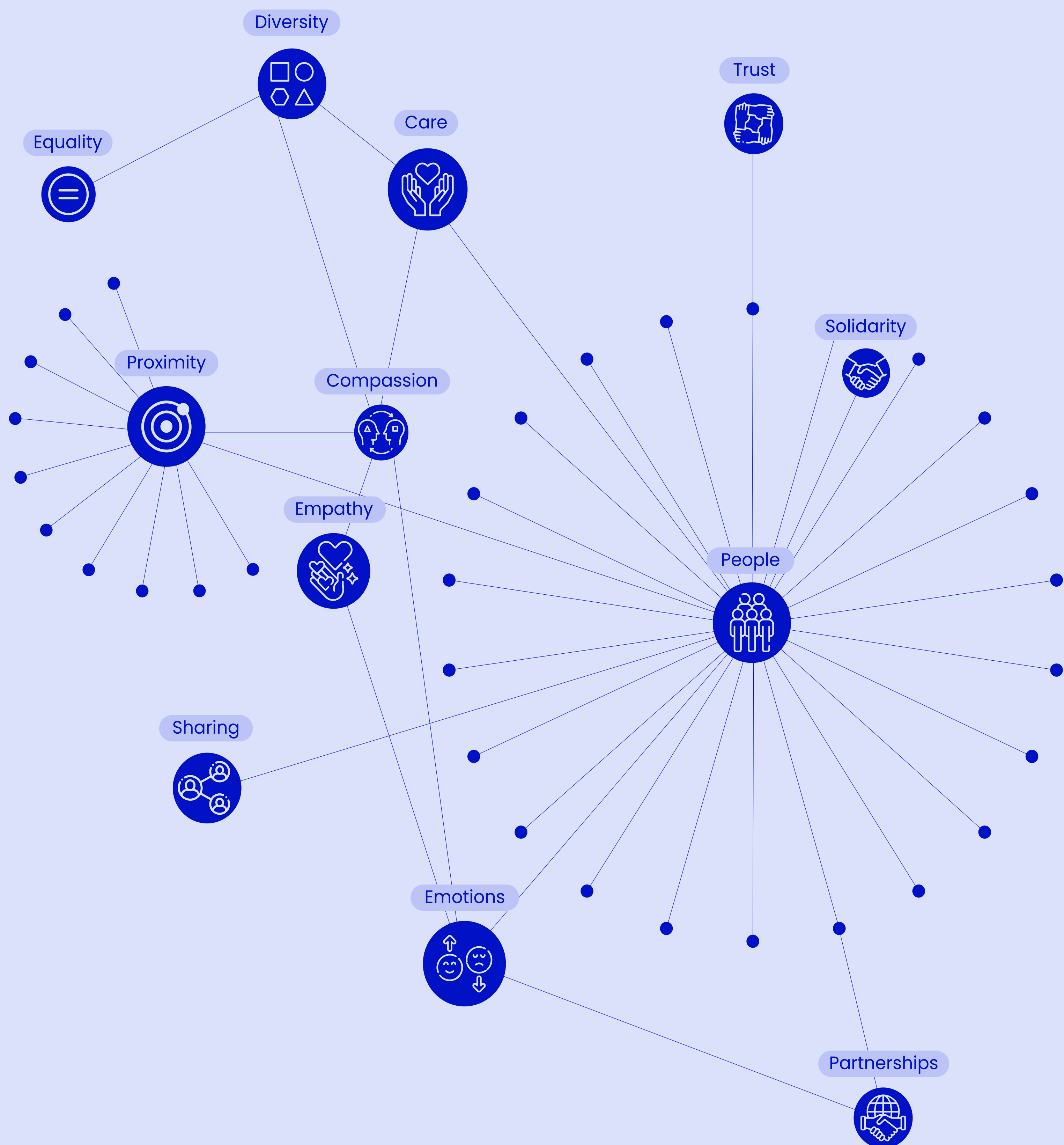
The **commons** are one of the four enablers of the Pact for the Future, alongside **finance, trust and governance architecture**. The commons are also at the core of the narrative and vision of the Pact. The concept refers to resources (material or immaterial) and social practices, which are too valuable and essential not to ensure equal access and be managed in a way that benefits the community. The legal and institutional arrangements to protect and foster the commons are priorities for local and global action. The Pact proposes strengthening public institutions to enhance the protection of the global commons and the provision of public goods.

COMMONS DEFINITION

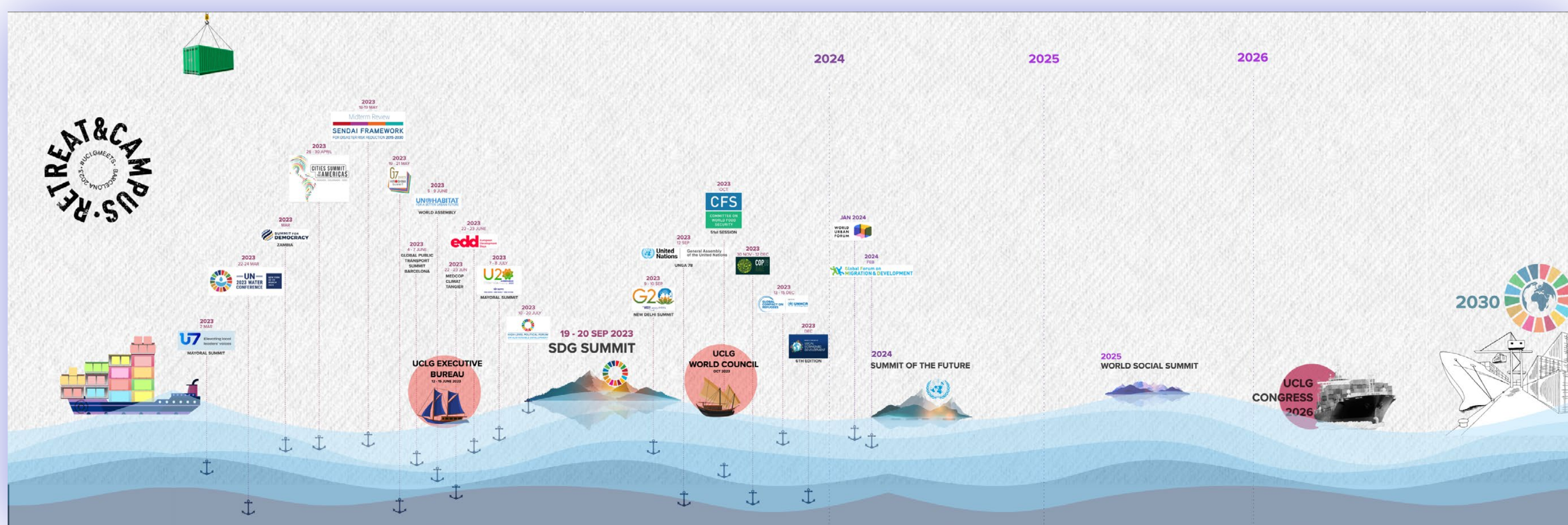
The commons are material and immaterial goods, resources, services and social practices considered fundamental for the reproduction of life, that therefore cannot be commodified but have to be taken care of and managed in a collective way under democratic principles of direct participation, radical inclusion, and intersectional equity and justice within a continuum of stewardship and commitment with past and future generations and all forms of life on Mother Earth.

(Global) Commons Policy Paper

https://www.right2city.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/TH_PP_GlobalCommons.pdf



A COMMON ROADMAP FOR LOCAL MULTILATERALISM



@UCLG-CGLU/Mark Schardan

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments held its annual meeting at a technical level during the 2023 UCLG Retreat to define a joint work plan and align strategies of the different organization members towards international policy processes.

In the lead-up to the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future, this year presents an unprecedented opportunity for local multilateralism to amplify its role and strengthen its position in reviewing the global financial and multilateral system. Despite the significance of local economic development, resource decentralisation, and the subsidiarity model, these topics still need to be addressed in most global processes.

During the annual meeting, participants identified important events in 2023 that will be crucial for unfolding the local Pact for the Future of Humanity. High-level representatives of United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations attended the meeting.

Global Taskforce key events in 2023

-  The World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments will convene at the second UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi in June 2023 and the SDG Summit in New York in September 2023.
-  The Local and Regional Government Forum is scheduled to meet at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2023 and the SDG Summit in New York in September 2023.
-  The second edition of the VLR and VSR days will take place in New York in July 2023.
-  The G20/ Urban 20 meeting is scheduled in Ahmedabad in July 2023.
-  The COP28 will be held in Dubai in November 2023, featuring a meeting of ministers of housing and planning.

A DECADE OF UNIFIED VOICE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

The 10th anniversary of the creation of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments was celebrated during its annual meeting held at the 2023 UCLG Retreat. This was an exceptional opportunity for the Taskforce's members to acknowledge the progress made over the past decade, especially in strengthening their political representation in the international policy processes.

Established in 2013, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments serves as a coordination and consultation mechanism for international networks of local governments. Over the past ten years, the Global Taskforce has played a critical role in amplifying the voices of local and regional governments on the global stage. This has been particularly evident in key policy areas such as the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, and the New Urban Agenda.

The Global Taskforce's efforts have changed how many international partners approach local and regional government associations and networks, which are globally recognised as a coordinated and unified voice group.



A Retrospective on Impact

- 1. Campaigned for the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on sustainable urbanisation in the 2030 Agenda, which resulted in the adoption of SDG11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities.*
- 2. Introduced and promoted the concept of localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including guidance for implementation and monitoring, leading to increased localisation strategies worldwide.*
- 3. Consolidated the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments after its official recognition in the New Urban Agenda. The World Assembly will convene during the UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023 and the United Nations General Assembly in September 2023.*
- 4. Created the Local and Regional Governments Forum within the framework of the High-Level Political Forum, with a new edition scheduled in New York for July 2023.*
- 5. Increased recognition of local and regional governments in Climate Change Agreements, particularly at the Conference of the Parties, showcasing the leadership of local and regional governments in addressing the urgent threat of climate change from bottom-up.*
- 6. An ongoing structural dialogue about the inclusion of local governments which has contributed to the creation of the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanisation by the President of the United Nations General Assembly in 2022 and to the agreement to set up a United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments.*

Emilia Saiz, Secretary-General, UCLG

“The voice of local and regional governments internationally is in a different place now than it was before. There are still quests to be made, and the place that we have at the global table is not the one our political leadership both deserves and aspires to have.”

Lucy Slack, Secretary-General, CLGF

“We must recognize how far we have come in terms of being much clearer and more targeted with our messaging. We have achieved a decade of collaboration and changed the way many of our international partners look at local and regional governments. Now, we need to get into the room with the decision-makers from national governments which are maybe not so aware of what we’re doing.”

Gino Van Begin, Secretary-General, ICLEI

“Where we were and where we are now, we have made tremendous steps forward. Many agendas started to include local and regional governments because we advocated for that. We have that step in the door everywhere, in some cases, perhaps the step is larger or the door is more open, but we should all congratulate for these last ten years.”

THE MARKETPLACE

CAMPAIGNS

SDG ACTION CAMPAIGN

Objective: To unite individuals from around the globe to achieve the SDGs and hold decision-makers accountable for their progress.

Value: Collaborating and ensuring a better future for all is more crucial now than ever. The SDGs Summit in September 2023 presents an opportunity to reinforce the commitment to action.

Opportunities for local and regional governments:

Apply for the 2023 UN SDG Action Awards, which recognise and celebrate initiatives and individuals that #FlipTheScript by mobilising, inspiring, and connecting people to work towards a better world.

More information:

<https://www.sdgactioncampaign.org/>

10, 100, 1000 HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES AND TERRITORIES

Objective: To make visible and organise the global movement of cities and territories committed to human rights, with a target of reaching 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030.

Value: To foster solidarity, cooperation, and dialogue among human rights cities and territories from different regions of the world and to expand local human rights actions to encourage the involvement of local and regional governments in human rights global agendas and mechanisms at the international level.

Opportunities for local and regional governments:

The campaign is open to local and regional governments worldwide, regardless of size or type of jurisdiction, who are willing to commit to human rights and have prior experience.

More information: cisdpl@uclg.org

CALL TO LOCAL ACTION ON MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Objective: To increase the number of local and regional governments endorsing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

Value: To highlight local actions that have achieved or exceeded the Compacts' objectives, encouraging cross-fertilisation, peer learning, and replicability.

Opportunities for local and regional governments:

The Call for Action allows the submission of local-level initiatives. A MOOC on "Localizing the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees – Territorial Action on Human Mobility" is also available.

More information:

<http://localaction.mayorsmechanism.org/>

EVENTS

FORUM ON INTERMEDIARY CITIES AS TALENT TERRITORIES

Event: The forum will focus on intermediary cities as talent territories, particularly on the future of employment, digital transformation, and healthy nutrition.

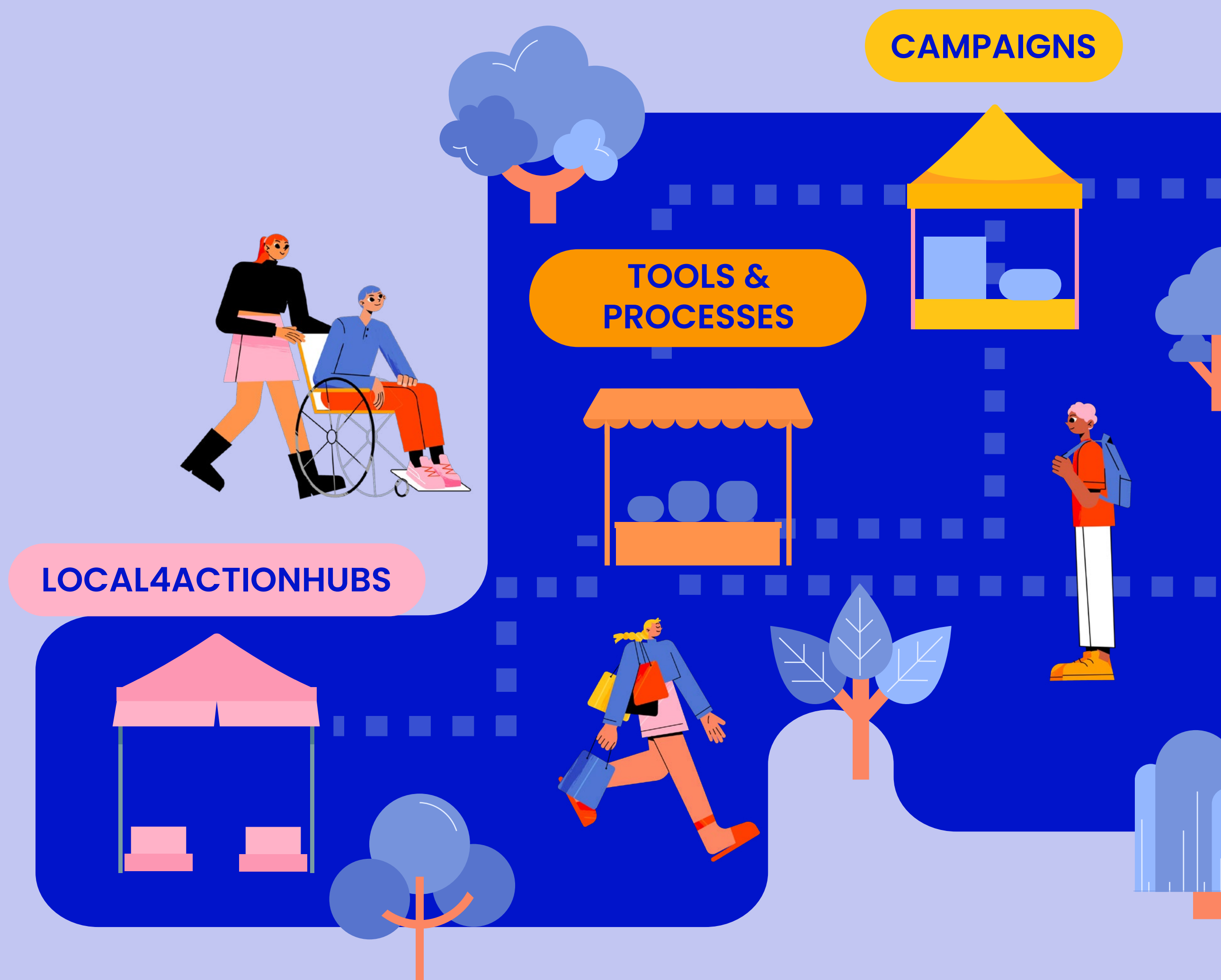
Location: Tandil, Argentina

Dates: 29-30 May 2023

More information:

<https://intermediarycities.uclg.org/>

The nearly one-week 2023 UCLG Retreat concluded with a unique marketplace where participants could symbolically "purchase" the tools and projects presented to them. This marketplace was conceptualised as an interactive space for partners to deliver an "elevator pitch" of their organization, initiative, or event. Partners showcased over 19 projects, divided into three categories: campaigns and events, tools and processes, and local4action hubs.



FIRST CONGRESS ON ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Event: Promoted by Mercociudades and its South-South Cooperation programme, this event aims to promote the right for everyone to enjoy the city.

Location: Canelones, Uruguay

Dates: 8-9 June 2023

More information:

<https://sursurmercociudades.org/>

WORLD FORUM ON CITIES AND TERRITORIES OF PEACE

Event: The forum is a multi-stakeholder, multi-level platform highlighting the importance of building coexistence and peace within cities and territories and encouraging joint efforts on policies and programmes that contribute to building a peace culture.

Location: Bogotá, Colombia

Dates: 27-28 June 2023

More information:

<https://www.ciudadesdepaz.com/>

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Event: The IOPD holds an annual international conference to discuss and reflect on the state of participatory democracy worldwide. The event brings together local, regional, and national politicians, academics, and political activists.

Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Dates: 16-18 October 2023

More information:

<https://oidp.net/en/conference.php>

AWARDS

UCLG PEACE PRIZE

The Municipality of Palmira in Colombia won the UCLG Peace Prize in 2022. It awards successful initiatives undertaken by local governments for conflict prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction. Applications for the next edition will open on 1 January 2024.

More information: <https://peaceprize.uclg.org/>



GUANGZHOU AWARD

It recognises innovation in improving social, economic, and environmental sustainability and promoting good urban governance in cities and regions, ultimately advancing their citizens' prosperity and quality of life. The award is open to all cities and regions worldwide, and the Call for Submissions for the 6th Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation will be open until 31 August 2023.

More information:
<http://www.guangzhouaward.org/>

TOOLS & PROCESSES

FINANCE YOUR CITIES – GLOBAL FUND FOR CITIES DEVELOPMENT

This initiative provides tools for strategies and operational solutions to finance urban development projects for emerging and developing local authorities. It has mobilised more than 1,500 local governments from 110 countries, 60 Local Government Financing Institutions (LFIs), and 250 companies and investors, resulting in over USD 1 billion of mobilised funds in the past five years.

More information: <https://www.fmdv.net/>

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS LOCAL INITIATIVE

This initiative promotes tools for open government based on the values of transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusion. **More information:** <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-local/>

GENDER HUB – CAPACITY AND INSTITUTION BUILDING (CIB)

It aims to act as a global collaborative platform to strengthen the feminist municipal movement by offering resources and tools and a space for dialogue and collaboration.

More information:
<https://cib-uclg.org/gender-hub>

EXECUTIVE MASTER IN AFRICAN CITIES MANAGEMENT

It is designed to enhance the capacity of professionals such as city managers and financial, technical, and human resources directors working in local African governments. The first cohort of students, comprised of twenty-one students, comes from French-speaking countries, while the second cohort will focus on English-speaking countries.

More information:
<https://uclgafrica-alga.org/en/training-offer/executive-master-in-city-management/>

GOLD VI REPORT

It was published in 2022 under the title "Pathways to Urban and Territorial Equality: Addressing inequalities through local transformation strategies". UCLG, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and Tomorrow's CITIES propose a peer-to-peer learning event to capitalise on the learnings of the Gold VI Report in July 2023.

More information: <https://www.goldvi.uclg.org/en>

LOCAL4ACTIONHUBS

A map showcasing all the Local4Action hubs is available at <https://local4actionhubs.uclg.org/global-map>

YOUTH EDUCATION AND CULTURE – XI'AN CITY COUNCIL

It promotes exchanges and interactions among youth from various cultural backgrounds, focusing on training and capacity-building related to urban governance in collaboration with the university.

More information:
https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/local4action_hu_b_xian_launching_concept_note.pdf

METROPOLITAN FOREST – MADRID CITY COUNCIL

It promotes collaboration among different actors to develop nature-based solutions for advancing climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Metropolitan Forest will consolidate a 32,000-hectare forest belt in the city, spanning 75 kilometres, and contributing to promoting citizens' health, improving the landscape and air quality, and enhancing urban biodiversity.

More information:
<https://bosquemetropolitano.madrid.es/>

EQUALMED – BARCELONA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

It is a decentralised cooperation project between municipalities of the province of Barcelona and Morocco. It promotes the political participation of locally elected women and gender equality in local governments. It aims to support elected women, particularly young women, in implementing impactful and gender-sensitive policies at the local level.

More information:
<https://www.imadel.org/equalmed/>

RESILIENCE HUB – ESTEBAN ECHEVERRÍA

Promotes the exchange of experiences and best practices to make resilience processes visible and foster cooperation between cities, focusing on intermediate and peripheral cities. It emphasises tools for climate action from the Latin American perspective.

More information:
<https://www.estebanecheverria.gob.ar/local4action-hub/>

POST-RETREAT TO-DO LIST

Whether you attended the UCLG Retreat in Barcelona or were unable to travel, these are some of the homework assignments to complete:



Visit the new UCLG website, the Power of We, and become familiar with it:
powerofwe.uclg.org



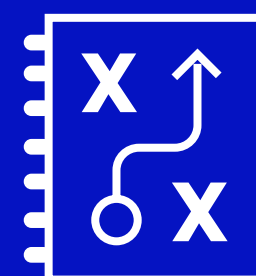
Follow-up on the initiatives, campaigns and events launched in the marketplace, stay tuned to the call for Local4Action applications that is now open and keep up with the UCLG newsletter.
powerofwe.uclg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/EN-Flyer-Call-for-Local4Action-HUBs-1.pdf



Participate in the 7th Report of Local and Regional Governments to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum by completing a survey on the Platform of High-Impact Localisation Policies:
localizingpolicies.global-taskforce.org/
www.survey.uclg.org/en/



Start getting ready for the Brussels Urban Summit and the UCLG Executive Bureau. See the draft agenda at:
docs.uclg.org/circulars/2023/9/eng_executive_bureau_brussels2023_agenda.pdf



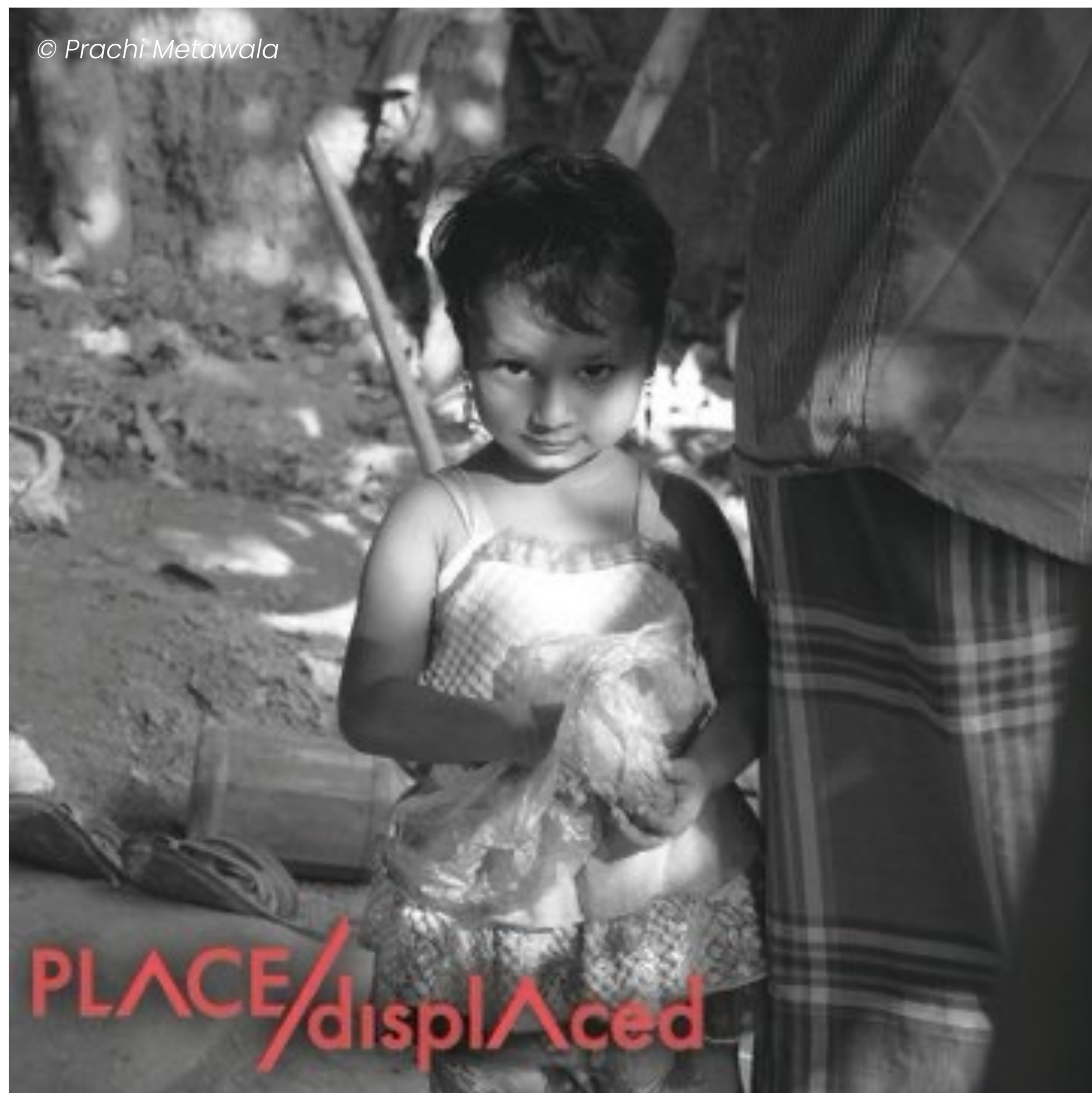
Keep an eye on the Future Envisioning Exercises to unfold the Pact for the Future of Humanity that UCLG is organising in May 2023.
powerofwe.uclg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Future-Envisioning-Exercises_Overview.pdf



Read the Municipal Forecast 2023, which was launched at the Retreat:
urbanjournalism.institute/forecast/

PLACE/DISPLACED EXHIBITION

by *Prachi Metawala*



Metawala uses her camera to capture the daily experiences of individuals who have migrated, been displaced, or are refugees. As an Indian architect who identifies as a “migrant architect in migration,” she presently works as human mobility project officer at UCLG. During the organization’s annual retreat, she showcased a portion of her “PLACE/displaced” project at Palo Alto. This marks her second exhibition in Barcelona, where she previously exhibited a series of photographic narratives entitled “Living on the Move” at La Cervesera Artesana in December 2022.

FROM THE JOURNALISTS

Journalists and representatives of local and regional governments engaged in a thought-provoking conversation to foster communication about urban development processes and how to convey positive messages about urban changes to local communities effectively.

The conversation delved into the pressing concerns of fake news and misinformation in today's media landscape. It explored the urgency to support citizens in filtering false information and promoting media literacy. The sources, quality, accuracy, and reliability of information were also hotly debated topics.



The debate marked the beginning of a series of public discussions as part of the **Media for Cities** campaign, which was launched by the Urban Journalism Institute and OnCities2030 in collaboration with UCLG during the 7th World Congress and Summit of Local and Regional Leaders in Daejeon, Republic of Korea, in October 2022.

Achieving sustainable cities and territories requires commitment at the government level and a fundamental shift in reshaping urban narratives and investing in building an informed society that understands the intricacies of sustainable urban development.

The media plays a pivotal role in promoting urban debates at all levels. The Pact for the Future of Humanity reaffirms the significance of "free media, freedom of expression, agency, and critical thinking in ensuring well-informed and empowered citizens."

The Media for Cities campaign is a global initiative that aims to bring urban journalism and city-related topics to newsrooms around worldwide. It advocates for research and elaboration of effective urban policies and strategies within the media sector while promoting and strengthening the media's presence in dialogues on sustainable urban development.

The campaign endeavours to inform and reinforce sustainable urban development strategies through these efforts, elevating the topic to the forefront of networking meetings and public debates involving influential media representatives, international organizations, and local authorities.

Media outlets focusing on urban issues provide a platform for discussing and revisiting urban topics over time to track progress and actions taken.



Jessica Bridger, urbanist and journalist

“We desperately need to support professional journalists telling well-researched fact-check stories about the things that we all care about and that advance sustainable development.”

Carlota Rebelo, senior producer and presenter, Monocle

“For us, local government is where most of the important decisions happen, and that’s how we cater a lot of our coverage (...) There’s nothing more valuable than hearing from the people who have the local knowledge.”

Quynh Tran, journalist and author

“Something you need to keep in mind is how you want to educate people to know where they get information from and also on who you want to talk to as representatives of your governments and of your cities.”



You want to know more about what happened at the Retreat?

Visit the *Municipal Times Journal* for daily coverage of the Retreat at



———— urbanjournalism.institute/municipaltimes/ ————

The screenshot shows the website for Municipal Times. At the top left is the UJI (Urban Journalism Institute) logo. Navigation links for 'JOURNAL' and 'MAGAZINE' are in the center, and language options 'EN', 'ES', 'FR' are on the right. The main heading reads 'MUNICIPAL times.'. Below this, a 'Current edition:' dropdown menu is set to '24 Feb 2023 - UCLG Retreat Barcelona', with a 'Download' button to its right. The main content area features a large image of a conference room with the hashtag #UCLGMeets and the text 'WELL-INFORMED CITIZENS AS THE ENGINE OF THE'. To the right, there are three article teasers: 1) 'MEDIA AS PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS' with a photo of a speaker and text about the Mayor of Montevideo and UCLG President. 2) 'THE MUNICIPAL FORECAST 2023 IS OUT!' with a photo of a forecast document and text about its launch on Thursday, 23 February. 3) 'THE MARKETPLACE' with a photo of an interactive space and text about its purpose as an interactive space for partners.

MEDIA forCITIES

A campaign led by



In collaboration with



urbanjournalism.institute/media-for-cities