



UCLG
Committee

Social Inclusion
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights



UCLG
CGLU

2019

ACTION PLAN

*« The common voice
of local and regional
governments of UCLG
on social inclusion,
participatory democracy
and human rights, with
a view **to realize the
right to the city** »*



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OVERVIEW: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 01

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Since 2005, the **UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights** has been offering a meaningful space for local authorities from all over the world to take part in an open and global network that aims at promoting more inclusive, democratic, fair and sustainable cities, towns and territories. Through the exchange of knowledge and experiences, as well as by building common positions and shared analysis, local authorities are able to strengthen their own local action and, at the same time, better understand and make sense of the great challenges that our urban planet faces today.

At the present time, the Committee counts with more than one hundred member-local governments. However, given the open nature of the network, the number of municipalities that have participated and still participate in its activities and processes is much higher.

In 2016, the advocacy strategy set in motion by our Committee helped place the “**Right to the City**” at the heart of UCLG’s action agenda (adopted during the Bogotá Congress). From this moment onwards, this concept would be recognized by the organization as cornerstone of a renewed “local social contract” involving both citizens and governments. In times of profound urban transformations, this concept brings up once more the need to place citizens personal and collective development as a central element of any territorial project.

« Growing inequalities create new forms of poverty and exclusion. Local and regional governments face the daily responsibility of tackling socio-spatial exclusion and promoting social justice, integrating migrants, preventing discrimination and urban violence, and protecting social rights to ensure prosperity and well-being »

UCLG Bogotá Agenda on the Right to the City as pillar of urban governance (2016)

Our local approach to **human rights** is embodied in two key documents: The European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City and the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**. In parallel, the Committee has also given great importance to the defense and promotion of **social inclusion and participatory democracy**.

All these efforts have sought at raising awareness on the initiatives led by local authorities across the world that, inspired by the right to the city and human rights, aim to respond to some of the most urgent challenges of our time: increasing inequalities, discrimination and socio-spatial segregation, the destruction and privatization of common goods, etc.

The strategy of the Committee is therefore based in the following axis:

01 Supporting and raising awareness on member-led initiatives inspired by the right to the city and human rights, enabling knowledge exchange on cities and territories as common goods;

- 02 Consolidating and expanding** the network of local governments for the right to the city and human rights, reinforcing the messages and identifying the commitments they share;
- 03 Advocating for** the right to the city and human rights in spaces of debate between local governments, in UCLG or in fora facilitated by international agencies and UN bodies, with a view to achieve greater recognition for local government action and commitments;
- 04 Develop new alliances and partnerships** with civil society (Global Platform for the Right to the City); UN bodies (Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts, OHCHR, UN Habitat); and academia (University of Coimbra, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, CIDOB, etc).

In perspective, this strategy seeks at promoting dialogue, exchanging experiences and identify common problems and possible ways for cooperation: In short, **co-creating the Committee's network on the basis of local experiences** and responsive political advocacy strategies and capacities.

WHAT CHANGES IN 2019? 02

During the last two years, the Committee has actively participated in the **Waves of Action of UCLG** focused on the Right to Housing and Migration. After contributing to articulate a strong network in defense of the **Right to Housing and human rights universality when it comes to migration governance**, the Committee will now focus on two priorities: continuing to federate municipalities across the world around advocacy processes started in recent years (housing, migrations); as well as contributing to those debates that **focus on implementation** (Declaration "Cities for Adequate Housing", The Shift campaign, Global Compact for Migration, New Urban Agenda). To do so, the Committee will build upon the voice of municipalities and local practices that exist or that are in process of development.

2019 marks the beginning of a **renewed waves of action strategy by UCLG**, with focus topics to be defined during February's UCLG Retreat. The thematic approach of these waves of action will determine the organization's priorities for the next two years, opening spaces for cooperation between sections and different parts of the network (which will have to propose coordinated actions). The Committee intends to contribute to these waves of action through its focus on human rights and the right to the city.

Lastly, the Committee will **continue to reaffirm its key messages regarding human rights and the right to the city** within the framework of global agendas (**Agenda 2030**) as well as in regards to those reports produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**). Links developed between these different concepts and agendas will constitute an important line of work during this year.

THEMATIC PRIORITIES AND ACTION AGENDA

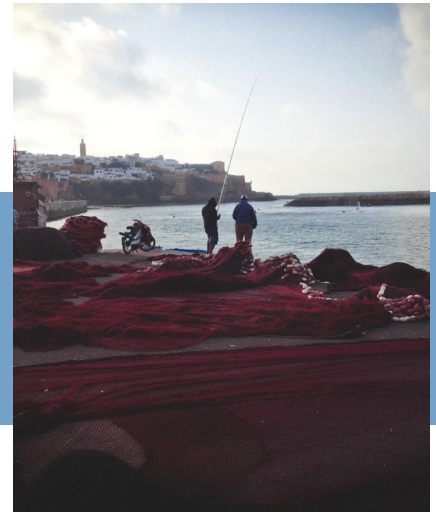
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CO-CREATING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES

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On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**; of the twentieth anniversary of the launching of **European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the city** process and of the **Asian Charter of Human Rights**; and of the celebration this 2018 of a new edition of **World Human Rights Cities Forum** (WHRCF) of Gwangju, of the **Vienna +25 Conference** and of the **International Conference “Cities for Rights”** of Barcelona, many local authorities across the world have reaffirmed their interest in supporting and articulating a **global movement of human rights cities** in the coming period (See Annual Report 2018).

In 2019, the Committee will focus on supporting those local authorities who wish to **reaffirm and promote the global movement of human rights cities**, in view of the **UCLG World Congress** (Durban - eThekweni, November 18-22, 2019).



Increasing competitiveness between cities in search of economic and financial attractiveness, rising racism and xenophobia, persistent discrimination against sexual and gender diversity. Many local authorities across the world aspire to provide cross-cutting responses to all these pressing challenges through firm, local commitments based on human rights values and by strengthening the development of democratic practices.

This strategy builds on **increasingly consolidated partnership relations with the OHCHR** - UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and a new stage in the process of recognition of local governments role in the protection and promotion of human rights.

Main challenges

Showing that human rights, often perceived in their international dimension, **also have a clear impact at the local level**. In embracing this approach, local authorities find relevant answers to improve citizens living conditions, realizing the concept of full citizenship and improving social cohesion. Many local policies already contribute, actively and concretely, to the implementation of human rights (oftentimes, without local governments awareness)

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*« Recognizing that **a human rights city** is an open and participatory process where all actors are engaged in the decision-making and implementation process to improve quality of life in the urban context and a framework to cultivate an inclusive and equitable city based on human rights standards »*

Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City (2014)

Expanding the field of action, with a view to develop a comprehensive, cross-cutting local approach to human rights, intertwined with issues such as participatory democracy, social inclusion of migrants, fighting against discrimination or the right to housing

Contributing to the recognition of the global movement of human rights cities and **strengthen cooperation among human rights cities and existing, related initiatives**.

Course of action

- 01 Co-organizing or supporting** regional meetings (Europe, Latin America, Asia, North America, Africa) around the topic of “Local governments and human rights”;
- 02 Supporting** local governments contributions to the OHCHR Report on the role of local governments in the promotion and the protection of human rights;
- 03 Promoting** messages and initiatives of existing regional networks (ADN21, INFID, National Human Rights Cities Alliance, Fearless Cities...);
- 04 Organizing** an annual meeting of the Committee on the occasion of the WHRCF of Gwangju on the subject of “Human Rights and the Right to the City” and organizing a local government delegation to the 2019 Forum;
- 05 Proposing** that the Policy Council on the Right to the City held in Durban – eThekweni (UCLG World Congress of 2019) focuses on human rights, and organizing a “Hub of Cities for Rights” with a view to foster debates and city-to-city cooperation;
- 06 Supporting** the initiatives of members in the field of the Right to Peace and the defense of global, municipal pacifist agendas;
- 07 Promoting** initiatives around the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City, the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City and the Guiding Principles of Gwangju for Human Rights Cities.

RIGHT TO THE CITY: DEFENDING SPATIAL JUSTICE AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Adopted as a pillar of UCLG action agenda in 2016 Bogotá Congress, the right to the city has been, for many years, a relevant approach on the basis of which to **analyze challenges related to urban development**: gentrification, housing financialization, territorial inequalities, criminalization of informal sectors... The right to the city also provides a meaningful framework to propose concrete action plans on thematic areas as housing cooperatives, territorial cooperation hubs or social and solidarity economy.

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Through the right to the city, member local authorities reaffirm their willingness to **place the needs of citizens at the heart of the city's production**, and to explore new ways for local action with a high potential for social transformation: *"Another world is possible, it starts in the city!"*. The right to the city helps to bring together different, local stakeholders – especially civil society and grassroots movements – around a shared goal: to **achieve fairer and more democratic cities**.

In a way, the right to the city also nourishes those debates that seek **to renew and build the human rights-based approach at the local level**. Faced to the individual approach to human rights, the right to the city provides a certain complementarity through process analysis and strengthening the links between the local and global scales.



Main challenges

Building and promoting debates regarding **social and spatial inequalities** as a way to foster the idea of **inclusive and solidarity-based metropolitan areas** (relationship between centers and peripheries). This debate is equally linked to a notion of broad territorial justice, intermediate cities and rural areas strongly impacted by processes of urban polarization

Consolidating and encouraging the development of practices of **participatory democracy and citizen participation**, as vectors of the right to the city and human rights protection.

Course of action

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- 01 Supporting and taking part** in the XIX IOPD Conference of Iztapalapa, Mexico, on participatory democracy contributions in the exercise of the right to the city;
- 02 Co-organizing** a conference in preparation for the Olympic Games of Paris 2024 – “Meeting for inclusive and supportive games”, under the impulse of the Committee’s co-presidency of Plaine Commune and Seine-Saint-Denis;
- 03 Taking part** in the SPATIAL project supported by the University of Coimbra and ten European cities. This action-research project aims to find innovative solutions on inclusive cities, in particular by providing indicators on urban inequalities;
- 04 Disseminating and enhancing** the LAVUE report on “Competitive metropolitan areas and prospects for spatial justice”;
- 05 Contributing** to the UCLG report on the localization of the SDGs on the subject of “egalitarian cities” (SDG 16), based on the experience of member-cities of the Committee and in association with the Global Platform for the Right to the City;
- 06 Participating** in the organization of the FALP Conference;
- 07 Supporting** the initiatives of members in the field of common goods and the public management of basic services such as water;
- 08 Articulating** processes of international advocacy for the right to the city in partnership with the Global Platform for the Right to the City.

RIGHT TO HOUSING: CONSOLIDATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WAVE OF ACTION

The Committee played a key role in UCLG’s launching and commitment towards the **Wave Action on the Right to Housing** (2016-2018). During this same period, our active participation in “The Shift”, a global campaign for the right to housing, has enabled a close collaboration with the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing**, Leilani Farha, has also been possible thanks the “The Shift” campaign. One of the main achievements of these two processes has been the elaboration of a declaration for the right to housing and the right to the city: “**Cities for Adequate Housing**” (presented in New York on July 2018).

Key political document

« Cities for Adequate Housing: Municipalist Declaration of Local Governments for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City (2018) »

This declaration has been a pioneer initiative worldwide: in an open call signed by almost 40 cities and regions from across the world, local authorities have come together to denounce the financialization of housing and its consequences for urban dwellers.

With UCLG's Action Wave coming to an end this 2019, our Committee **will continue to articulate member-led initiatives on the right to housing** and housing financialization. To do so, the Committee will take part in debates of the UCLG Community of Practice on Housing and will support members' initiatives in regards to the Declaration.

Main challenges

Continuing to federate cities' initiatives on the issue of housing in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Housing (Cities for Housing and The Shift);

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Giving more visibility to the actions carried out by the members on this subject and feed the debates on the **implementation of the right to housing**.



Course of action

- 01 Supporting** the participation of Committee members in the next meetings of the Community of Practice of UCLG on Housing and support its contents
- 02 Organizing** the contributions of local governments in the next annual report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing;
- 03 Raising awareness** on the initiatives led by cities on housing (events, meetings, policies, political initiatives...);
- 04 Taking part and inviting** local governments to the meeting organized by the ESCR Network, Special Rapporteur Farha and the Committee at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women (UN Women);
- 05 Following-up** civil society-led initiatives in the fields of social production of habitat and neighborhood improvement.

MIGRATIONS, DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RIGHT TO THE CITY

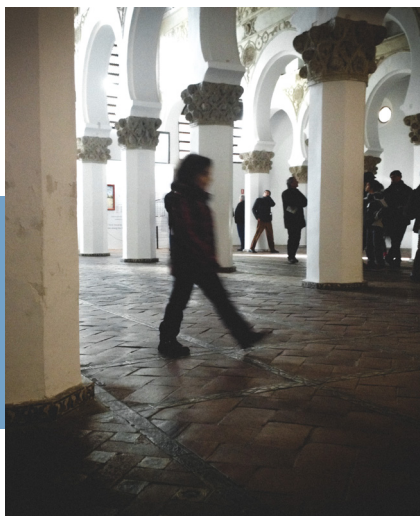
After the **Global Compact on Migration (GCM)** was finally adopted last December, and taking note of those significant difficulties met by local authorities in order to make their voice heard throughout this process – precisely on the need for global governance of migration to involve all stakeholders – the Committee will continue to participate in UCLG spaces where members appeal to defend the universality of human rights for migrants.

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The Committee will promote **inclusive and welcoming policies towards migration** in which several cities participate. This will translate into areas such as promoting local citizenship, building inclusive neighborhoods, fighting against homelessness or non-discrimination in access to public services or fostering the economic inclusion of migrants.

Main challenges

Advocating for a **human rights-based global governance of migration** and **supporting those local governments that commit** to build inclusive and welcoming cities for all



Course of action

- 01 Participation** in the second phase of the MC2CM project (City to City Migration in the Mediterranean) based on the co-organization of several events (workshops, webinars, peer exchanges and calls for projects and contributions);
- 02 Co-organizing** a meeting on welcoming cities towards migrants on the occasion of the Biennial “Cities in Transition” of Grenoble;
- 03 Following-up** on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration

RAISING AWARENESS ON MEMBER-LED ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

The Committee has decided to **be as open as possible** and to allow all local authorities that wish to join the network to do so. There are no access requirements and becoming a member is free; local government can decide which topics are they most interested in; and participation is completely open in many of the events. This approach has allowed the Committee to be responsive and to accommodate the changing priorities of its members. However, it has also made less visible the participation of active cities over the years, which are essential to maintain the activity of the Committee. This is why **the Committee wants to be more and better available** to the initiatives of active members of the network.

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Course of action

- 01** Apart from the members of the co-presidency, a clearer role will be proposed for active local governments of the network and for those who provide financial support
- 02** Incorporate these local governments into the organization chart of the Committee
- 03** Articulate and develop formal agreements and courses of action with member-local governments around precise courses of action in line with their thematic priorities



STRENGTHENING EXCHANGE AMONG MEMBERS

During 2018, several working visits have been developed between members of the Committee (delegation of 5 cities to Gwangju; delegation of 3 French local authorities in Granollers; delegation of Gwangju's co-presidency to Barcelona). After receiving positive feedback, the Committee has decided to facilitate more meetings of this kind between members.

Course of action

- 01** Organizing field visits and exchanges between cities, either around a specific experience (gender equality, right to housing, Olympic games), in order to better understand how another local authority works or to develop narrower partnerships.

RE-LAUNCHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACADEMIA

Working together with academia and civil society is a key feature of our Committee, which has always supported dialogue between these actors and local authorities.

Course of action

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- 01 Re-launching a “Knowledge Hub” and an Inclusive Cities Observatory
- 02 Identifying possible collaborations in projects with academia and civil society

A COMMITTEE’S PULSE: SHOWCASING LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

When deciding to take part in activities and debates organized by the Committee for the first time, local governments tend to start by showcasing **their own local practices and initiatives for human rights, the right to the city, social inclusion or participatory democracy**. By taking their local experience to the network, members co-create knowledge and learn from each other. In similar terms, Committee-led international advocacy processes tend to be inspired and reflect on local policies and practices of members.

Accordingly, the Committee is planning to provide spaces and opportunities **for members to be better able to present their local initiatives**. Since 2017, the Committee’s Secretariat has already published several interviews and reports on members’ local initiatives. In the next period, our goal will be to consolidate the model implemented in 2017 and 2018, widening the scope by developing new “focus” reports and improving the capacity to report on local members’ initiatives in line with an enhanced communication strategy.

Course of action

- 01 Carry out reports and interviews on actions led by members in line with the course of action defined by the action plan, and publish them in a dedicated section of our website (Pulse)
- 02 Identify members and partners’ thematic priorities in regards to the Committee



REFORMING THE COMMITTEE'S WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

In 2018, visits to the Committee's website increased considerably: the number of year-to-year visits almost doubled, with a growth rate of around 160% in the last quarter of the year. This trend reflects the visibility gained by the Committee on recent years, reaching a capacity to generate an impact that extends now to a wider public. In part, this is due to the efforts made in social networks and to curate and enhance our website contents.

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Course of action

- 01** Complete the restructuring of the website, enhancing its contents, and propose a new visual identity
- 02** Improve the online presence of the Committee and its political messages in other spaces, discussion fora and media
- 03** Renew and consolidate communication channels both to the general public as well as towards members and active local governments (articles, bulletins, circulars)

Communication channels

www.uclg-cisd.org (website)
[@uclg_cisd](https://twitter.com/uclg_cisd) (Twitter)
[@uclgcisd](https://www.facebook.com/uclgcisd) (Facebook)
cisd1@uclg.org (Send an email for registering to our newsletter or receiving more information on the Committee)

Co-presidency and active members of the Committee



