

GOLD VI

**Case-Based Contribution
to Chapter 5: Caring**
*GOLD VI Report on Pathways
to urban and territorial equality*

Missing Pieces: Three

Metropolis Break Down

Barriers for Everyone

In partnership with:

Produced by:



Missing Pieces: Three Metropolis Break Down Barriers for Everyone

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ORGANISATION NAME

World Enabled and UCLG

CITIES/COUNTRIES IT COVERS

Mersin (Turkey), Banjarmasin (Indonesia), São Paulo (Brazil)

CHAPTER

5: Caring

SUMMARY

Should scarce funds and a low level of awareness stop local leaders from making their cities accessible for all? **Mersin** (Turkey), the city of **Banjarmasin** (Indonesia), and **São Paulo** (Brazil) face these problems. Unlike many cities worldwide, their solutions to some of their toughest problems are like no other. This Case-Based Contribution explores their work, how they work with others, and what works well for everyone and people in the margins, like older persons and persons with disabilities. Read how São Paulo makes it possible for the deaf and persons who are blind to enjoy watching in theatres. Sail a thousand rivers in Banjarmasin to learn how dialogues with the community improve their city plans, policies, and programmes. Dock the harbour of Mersin to know how they have opened their shores to everyone, even to older persons and migrants with disabilities. See how you, as a local leader and with so little, could still care so much for your city and your people.

Missing Pieces: How Three Metropolis Break Down Barriers for Everyone

Buildings that are designed to be used by everyone are cheaper¹ to make.² But why do many cities keep building homes, workplaces, parks, or hospitals designed for many but not for all?

And why are some cities like **Mersin** (Turkey), **Banjarmasin** (Indonesia) and **São Paulo** (Brazil) able to foster change? They make sure everyone, including people with disabilities and older persons, can go to schools, workplaces, hospitals, or move around the city.

Suppose you get sick or have an accident and have a disability as a result, and you happen to live in **Mersin**; the government will redesign your home based on your needs. If you need a toilet with wider doors, they will do it for you. If you need a ramp, they will make one for you. And you do not have to worry; it is for free.

Suppose you are a student in **Banjarmasin**, and you have an idea to reach more students, including those with disabilities; you can have



the chance to meet with public officials and present this idea to them. They will implement it for you.

Suppose you are deaf or a person who is blind, and you happen to visit a theatre in **São Paulo**. You will not have a problem following along because theatres have available sign language interpretation and audio that describes the scenes of what you are watching.

Participatory Data for Disability-Inclusive Banjarmasin
Source: Kota Kita Foundation

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and its partners have been campaigning for a city for all.³

This campaign has six basic principles:⁴

- cities and local governments must **serve everyone without any distinction** of age, race, ability, sex or gender identities, or migration status;
- they must **give more support to those who need more**, like people with disabilities and older persons;
- they must **remove anything that prevents** anyone from reaching their services;
- they must **increase the capacity of everyone** to make sure that they can participate in community activities;
- they must **use global and national laws and policies** within their local context;
- they must **use robust data** and break them down into smaller pieces like age, sex, income, disability, or migration status. This data will help them adjust programmes or make new ones.

1. New constructions that are accessible require an additional one per cent of their original cost according to the "World Report on Disability."

2. World Health Organization and World Bank, "World Report on Disability," p. 173.

3. This campaign is also known as the "Cities for All Campaign."

4. Partners of the "Cities for All Campaign" sign an agreement called the "Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities." The compact has six principles or pillars, namely: 1) non-discrimination, 2) participation, 3) accessibility, 4) inclusive urban policies and programs, 5) capacity building, and 6) data for development. Details of the campaign and the compact are available at <https://cities4all.org/compact/>.

Here are examples of how Mersin, the city of Banjarmasin, and São Paulo put these principles into practice.

Mersin

Mersin, the largest harbour south of Turkey, is home to 2.2 million people.⁵ More than 13 per cent or about 300,000 of these are displaced migrants.

The government has programmes for students who have recently arrived in the municipality. It helps them adjust in schools.

Mersin helps everyone stay healthy. There are centres for women to keep fit, do yoga, or get health advice. Older persons are also welcome in these centres; they can read newspapers, hang out with others, or get expert advice from professional therapists.

Anyone can reach these services, even from home. An older person or a person with a disability who lives alone can request nursing care. Mersin sends a care provider who can do household chores regularly or when needed.

In health emergencies, like a pandemic, people with disabilities and older persons receive hygiene boxes and food packages.

To keep Mersin accessible, a team of experts⁶ goes around to check for problems that people with disabilities, older persons, or pregnant encounter.⁷ The team checks public buildings and websites.

Mersin works with everyone.

“It is like a chief in an orchestra,” explains Ibrahim Evrim, advisor to the Mayor.⁸ Mersin, for example, works with an organisation of the blind. When a person who is blind needs to go to the hospital, Mersin provides transportation. **Organisations help the Mersin City Council by identifying people who need support the most. They link Mersin to the people.**

City of Banjarmasin

Banjarmasin is an old city but new in its ways. It is five-century old, but it leads its people with an open mind.⁹ For example, it once had a problem keeping schools safe. After a dialogue with students, the city started implementing safe school zones.¹⁰ It also asked for a budget from the national government to implement the programme.

Dialogues with community members drive the city’s plans and budget for programmes and policies. It worked with organisations in the city, both public and private when it designed the city’s policy roadmap. Through dialogues, more people with disabilities found jobs, and the city knows more about them.

The city works with organisations like the Kota Kita Foundation to collect, understand, and assess this data; the city knows who needs jobs, who needs to study, who needs help to vote in elections, who needs health support, or who needs technology required for daily living. **In a way, by bringing the data into pieces, all the pieces of the community are brought together as one.**

São Paulo

In São Paulo, technology moves the city while the people move technology. “We talk a lot about cities, but we talk a little about the people who inhabit cities, and we need to change that concept,” says the Secretariat on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹¹

São Paulo has been changing this concept using technology. And when it talks about technology¹² in the city, it talks about everyone in São Paulo, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

5. European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, “Turkey: Statistics.”

6. The team is also known as the “Accessibility Detection and Inspection Commission.”

7. Mersin Kent Konseyi and Mersin Büyükşehir Belediyesi, “Current Situation Report of Mersin.”

8. Poitier and Cruz, “Interview with Mr. Ibrahim Evrim and Mr. Ufuk Sahingoklu of the Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin.”

9. United Nations Educational and Kota Kita Foundation, “Banjarmasin City: A Disability-Inclusive City Profile.”

10. Poitier and Cruz, “Interview with Ms. Nina Asterina, Ms. Fildzah Husna Amalina, and Vanesha Manuturi of Kota Kita Foundation.”

11. Poitier, “Correspondence with São Paulo Secretariat on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SEDPcD).”

12. Digital Reality, “São Paulo Data Centres Solutions.”

It is not uncommon, for example, for people who are blind to browse public websites: they are accessible. People who have broken wheelchairs, walkers, or canes can bring these to São Paulo's centres for repair, free of charge. The city has a centre that brings together the hearing with people who are deaf or hard of hearing: the Brazilian Sign Language Services Centre. The Centre is available in any of the city's public services.

The city supports non-governmental organisation working on projects for people with disabilities. São Paulo provides support for funding, training, and technical assistance.

The city maps out students with disabilities in universities in its internship programme. The map helps identify possible interns for the city government.

The city has another map for people with disabilities. It is available online and gives anyone who visits it all the information they need to move around with ease. You can find information on accessible places and their key contact details using the map.

The city provides dental services to persons with disabilities living in institutions to keep everyone safe and healthy. During health emergencies, those living on the streets and the poorest receive food packs, hygiene kits, and accessible guides on hygiene and safety.

São Paulo keeps making the city accessible. From public buildings¹³ and websites to schools, restaurants, streets, banks, and theatres, and the list keeps growing. With city leaders, businesses, NGOs, and people with disabilities, the Secretariat gives seals of excellence for the most accessible places¹⁴ and websites.¹⁵

Piecing everything together

These three are special. Not because they have huge funds or everyone in their communities knows about disability and their needs. They do not. They have scarce funds, and many still do not see the value of making cities accessible.

Most of **Mersin's** funds are now in health emergency programmes. Not everyone in the city of **Banjarmasin** gets the city's services. They are away from the city, and rivers separate them. Awareness is still a problem in **São Paulo** and the city of **Banjarmasin**. **One of their biggest problems is changing people's minds about the fact that cities have to be open, safe, and accessible to everyone.**

Mersin, Banjarmasin, and **São Paulo** have a few traits in common. They hold dialogues and listen to communities. And when they do, they work with everyone in the community. They are open to changes and use data to implement them. They are making these changes because they respect everyone in the city, including persons with disabilities and older persons. They are doing their best to make their services and public spaces accessible. They are special because of these traits, and they are doing all these because, yes, they care.

Their message for local leaders is simple: it is not how much they have but how much they care that matters the most.

13. According to the Secretariat of São Paulo on Disability, about five per cent of public housing of the City Hall is guaranteed to be accessible for persons with disabilities. All units in housing estates can be adjusted for accessibility needs.

14. São Paulo has the Permanent Accessibility Commission (CPA) which awards the Architectural Accessibility Seal to buildings in the city that are accessible for persons with disabilities. This is regulated under the Decree n° 45.552 / 2004.

15. São Paulo awards the Digital Accessibility Seal to websites in the city that ensure their content is accessible for persons with disabilities and older persons.

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CARING

This paper has been produced as a Case-Based Contribution to the sixth Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD VI): the flagship publication of the organized constituency of local and regional governments represented in United Cities and Local Governments. The GOLD VI report has been produced in partnership with the Development Planning Unit (University College London), through the programme Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW). GOLD VI focuses on how local and regional governments can address the local manifestations of growing inequalities and contribute to create “Pathways to urban and territorial equality”. The GOLD VI report has been produced through a large-scale international co-production process, bringing together over a hundred representatives of local and regional governments, academics and civil society organizations. This paper is an outcome of this process and is part of the *Pathways to Equality Cases Repository*, which collects the over 60 Case-Based Contributions produced as part of the GOLD VI report.

In particular, the present paper has contributed to Chapter 5 on “Caring”, which focuses on the multiple actions that promote the care of diverse groups within society through safety nets and solidarity bonds, and the ways in which local and regional governments can promote caring practices that support structurally discriminated and/or vulnerable groups, as well as those that have historically “taken care” of others.

Supported by:



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of UCLG and UCL and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



This document was produced with the financial support of the Barcelona Provincial Council. Its contents are the sole responsibility of UCLG and UCL and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Barcelona Provincial Council.



This document has been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its content rests entirely with the authors.



This document was produced by UCLG and the “Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality” (KNOW) programme. KNOW is funded by UKRI through the Global Challenges Research Fund GROW Call, and led by The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL. Grant Ref: ES/P011225/1