

**Andrew Dubber:** Hello, Good morning and *välkommen* till Umeå, Sweden for the 2nd Social Progress Cities Summit, Empower Europe. My name is Andrew Dubber. I'm the director of MTF Labs and a steering board member of the Industry Commons Foundation. I'm here, as you can see, with Umeå deputy mayor, Janet Ågren, in the lavish and not just socially progressive, but also socially distanced Red Carpet Media studio. Janet, it's lovely to have you here. How you doing?

**Janet Ågren:** I'm good. Thank you very much. And Hello, and warm welcome to the 2nd Social Progress Cities Summit and welcome to Umeå. As Andrew said, my name is Janet Ågren and I'm deputy mayor in the city of Umeå. And last year in September, we had the honour of inviting you to the first Social Progress Cities Summit, where we tried to highlight the important role of cities as driver for social progress. And now this year in this digital way, we have the honour of inviting you to the second summit, where we will listen and learn and exchange the experience and have a discussion. And before we do that, I would like to start with the kick-off and a short looking back to September last year, when we actually had the honour of meeting in person. So, we will show a short movie.

[Short movie from 00:14:03]

**Female:** Ten European cities ranked top of the social progress index met for the very first time at a summit to exchange good examples of social inclusion and progress. The summit was held in Umeå, which is the biggest city in the region. Now leading the EU social progress index.

**Michael Green:** Well, the conference has been organised by the city of Umeå with a group of other cities to come together and talk about how the social progress index can help cities to really work together and develop strategies to improve the real quality of life of their citizens.

**Gotzone Sagardui:** We are used to talk about economic indicators, about economy indexes, about development, about research. But what about people?

**Moray Gilland:** The way we see it in the European Commission is, it's very much about a tool to facilitate cooperation, to facilitate exchanges and good practice and on different areas of social progress. And it's exactly that, that even the regions at the top of the list can say, well, that's something new, we haven't tried that. Maybe we should think about developing it for our city. So, this exchange facilitation and building and exchanging good practice is what we want to try and encourage with this type of work.

**Mohamed Ridouani:** It is important that cities with a progressive policy today in Europe join efforts to give a clear signal to Europe, who of course, makes up most of our regulations and has a big budget to spend. So, it is important that we put the social progress agenda on the table of Europe. And to me, it is a very powerful signal and I'm very happy that we could do this with all the partners and cities involved.

[End of video at 00:16:02]

**Janet Ågren:** And two weeks ago, the new version of the European social progress index was launched. And I'm proud that our region of Övre Norrland is ranked as the most socially progressive in Europe. We are of course aware of that. We have very good preconditions in Sweden and it's a highly developed

country with high GDP and that that of course correlates with high SPI. So those are starting points for us. But our region of Övre Norrland is not the region in Sweden with the highest GDP. And I believe we wouldn't be where we are today, if it wasn't for the hard work of many towards a more socially progressive society. And what we have learned is that by learning from others and sharing experience, bad and good is the way forward. So, I want to quote what we stated in the declaration we signed last year.

The battle for a fairer, healthier and balanced society that acknowledges its diversity will be won or lost in cities. Progressive, innovative cities embrace the young, the old, women, men, differing ethnicities and origins, abilities and lifestyles. We should therefore encourage those who lead the way by acknowledging and learning from them.

I'm therefore very glad that we get to be part of these discussions with other cities and leading the way together. So, with that, I want to once again, welcome you all to this second European Social Progress Cities Summit. Welcome.

**Andrew Dubber:** Thank you Janet. And congratulations on the achievement. I'm looking forward to picking up on some of these threads when we speak a little bit later on in the panel session. Now, as you can probably tell from my accent, I'm not originally from Sweden, I'm from New Zealand, which I was very pleased to see neck and neck with Sweden and a handful of other places at the top end of the global social progress index. A big hello to everyone around the world who is watching this on the Coveo platform, which was sustainably developed here in Umeå. And of course, the great thing about Coveo, if you're joining us, is that we have the opportunity to hear your thoughts as well, and you can get involved, you can discuss amongst yourselves, you can make plans and you can contribute right here.

Now, as Janet mentioned, this digital conference between the mayors of European cities that are leading on social progress indicators across the board is going to continue the discussion about how the EU social progress index can help cities work together and develop strategies to improve the real quality of life for their citizens, and also be a driver towards climate neutrality. And of course, this is something that is not going to be solved in a two-hour online conference. It's going to take a lot of committed work, and a lot of serious thinking and high-level research. So as a former research professor myself, I'm absolutely delighted to be joined now by Mr. Bernard Magenmann, who is the Deputy Director General of the European Commission's joint research centre, the JRC.

Now, if you're not familiar with the JRC, that's the organisation that provides the independent scientific research, advice and support needed for all levels of European policy. So their role is absolutely critical for issues such as sustainability, clean energy, community healthcare, innovation, and technology transfer, all of which are key drivers for social progress and climate action. Bernard, thank you so much for joining us. We'd love to hear from you. You have the floor.

**Bernard Magenmann:** Thank you so much dear deputy mayor Ågren and dear participants. At first, on behalf of Commissioner Gabriel, who sent sincere apologies, thank you for your kind invitation to open this very important summit on the challenges and social progress in cities. It's really my pleasure to be with you today. The commission as you know very much welcomes the regional initiatives that aim at

strengthening cooperation between the different regions and cities, as well as between governments, societies and businesses. In the commission, we strongly believe that such cooperation helps deepening the EU wide integration process.

The Second Social Progress City Summit today is an excellent example of this, especially during this very special crisis that we are going through. It's unquestionable that the coronavirus pandemic has traumatised the world. Impacts are sadly evident in all sectors of our life. In this context, as you all very well know how the European cities continue to face a number of important challenges. For instance, the economic inequalities have been due to the pandemic intensified and are particularly visible in cities where the risk of social discontent seems to be widening relatively high [00:20:58 inaudible]. The slowdown in economic activity due to COVID-19 and this expected social impact suggested that a number of persons at risk of poverty, of social exclusion will rise again.

This also shows that many workers particularly women perform their job in very difficult conditions, particularly in the light of new forms of work, including teleworking. People working in the informal economy and the short-term contracts have also been severely hit by the crisis. Homelessness is also on the rise and is bound to increase further as a consequence of the health crisis. All these issues including the ongoing demographic trends, such as aging, the population of migrations put additional pressure on regions and cities to adjust their services in areas such as healthcare, mobility, public infrastructure, housing, and social policy.

We have collectively shown a remarkable reaction to question the economic and social impact of the health crisis. But our latest Autumn Economic Forecast shows that many social fallouts of the crisis are still ahead of us. Unemployment will increase substantially, and poverty and inequality will very likely follow the same path. At the same time, our societies and our workforce are facing the challenges posed by the green and digital transition. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated existing trends, but today, we are not sufficiently equipped for tomorrow's labour market and society. Fortunately, these mega trends do not only carry risk for the European regions and cities, they also offer opportunities.

So when they go to recovery, and return to full social economic activity as rapidly as possible, we can reinforce our long term and forward looking perspective, innovate and continue building trust in our authority. Adopting the new forward-looking paradigm can enhance city's resilience and ease the way forward to tackle the challenges in a successful way. This new paradigm is based on an increase in the role of communities, including citizens, commuter, students in the reshaping the future of their city. As many of you may know as well, citizens input offer a unique understanding of societal concerns, desires and needs which help to better target for these interventions.

Strengthening local administration and empowering citizens. For example, the Citizens' Engagement Activities is vital for a bottom up transformation of European societies and is key for the design and implementation of actions that are two key policy goals. This also contributes to building the entire urban resilience to new challenges, and better protecting human economic and natural assets in cities and their surroundings. And these principles are already well embedded in the European Commission priorities, mainly the Green Deal and the digital transition. The European Pillar of Social Rights will also play a crucial role in this context, and the EU policy initiatives related to employment, skills and social rights

would help steer member states efforts towards the common objective underlying [00:25:06 audio gap]. The action [00:25:08 audio gap] and the European Pillar of Social Rights [00:25:12 audio gap] will be one of the main drivers to the transition of climate neutrality, digitalisation and democratic change, as well as recovery from COVID-19 pandemic are socially fair and just.

However, the action plan must spur action beyond the EU level. That is why the pillar should continue to be a key [00:25:40 inaudible] strength of employment, social and educational reforms at all governmental levels. The EU budgets under its multiannual financial framework and the financing instrument Next Generation EU will provide the needed instruments for implementing all these priorities via many, many different initiatives. We just need to ensure that this report will lead to a fair and inclusive recovery.

Let me now share with you a few examples of the commission initiatives contributing to the social progress and of the European societies. The knowledge and innovation community supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology are one of the Commission's Success Initiative for empowering citizens and local community. It creates an innovation ecosystem that helps cities work together and develop strategies and solutions to improve citizens quality of life by making cities sustainable spaces for living. The research and innovation activity under Horizon Europe framework programme will bring solutions on how to protect the health and the well-being of citizens on socioeconomic and environment related risks and impacts.

The human centric approach used by these R&I [00:27:10 unclear] activities will facilitate faster development of new solutions in cities and regions and increase their social impact. Completely new tools for increasing the impact of research and innovation in cities and regions are of the Horizon Europe missions. In the context of today's summit, the most relevant is the mission on climate-neutral and smart cities. These missions aim to support European cities, in their systemic transformation towards climate neutrality to a multi-level and co-creative process. [00:27:50 audio gap] will play as political [00:27:54 audio gap] use of products [00:27:55 audio gap]. [00:27:59 audio gap] the European commission will [00:28:03 audio gap] member [00:28:05 audio gap] and the European Regional Development Fund.

The future InvestEU programme and its social skills window will allow supporting investment in social housing, and the company's service for vulnerable groups including people experiencing homelessness, or housing exclusion. A range of other EU programmes will support innovation in order to address energy poverty, and access to healthy housing. These programs include the recovery and resilience facility, but also the Just Transition Mechanism of Structural Reforms, life. And as I already mentioned, InvestEU and Horizon Europe.

Let me now finally turn the attention to one of the objectives of this Social Progress Cities Summit. And that is the discussion on the EU Social Progress Index. As you may recall and already mentioned, the Commission has just launched the new 2020 EU regional Social Progress Index, which is a measure contributing to the beyond gross domestic product agenda in the European regional context. I believe you would agree that this social progress index comes just in time. This index includes different components of social progress that feeds directly into integration [00:29:38 unclear] for decision making. It also contributes to the ongoing reflection on how to link EU investment policy priorities to citizens' future

well-being in our regions. We'll see the latest development of this regional index in the presentation from colleagues in a while.

Before concluding, I would like to express that monitoring social progress in cities is essential not only for evaluating cities across Europe that are overachieving in developing social benefits to their citizens. Monitoring social progress is needed also for highlighting trends and anticipating challenges. In this context, the commission is creating a new Urban Observatory on the future cities and urban strategies, which among other activities will provide useful methodological information to evaluate the social progress of European cities. I hope that these opening remarks gave you enough food for thought. And they will be useful in your further discussion on what it means to be socially progressive nowadays.

We can only learn from the regions of Umeå, Sweden, which is topping the EU Social Progress Index for the second time. You are truly an inspiration for many of us. Thank you very much.

**Andrew Dubber:** Thank you, Bernard. It's wonderful. And so great to hear about some of these important and very welcome initiatives for empowering citizens and creating sustainable, smart and Climate Neutral cities through innovation. I'm now going to pass over back to Janet who has with her here a declaration that's been co-signed by a whole lot of people. Janet, do you want to tell us a little bit about what it is you're going to be submitting now to the European Commission?

**Janet Ågren:** Absolutely because last year, all participating cities in the ICLEI network signed declaration, and it is a declaration highlighting the importance of cities as drivers for social progress. And I believe it's even more important, of course of the COVID-19 crisis. And [00:31:55 inaudible] this came from different European countries, and some of them are here with us today. And some were unfortunately unable to participate. But they are perhaps maybe listening instead. And the cities were Bilbao in Spain and Ljubljana in Slovenia, Bratislava in Slovakia, Prague in the Czech Republic, Groningen in the Netherlands, Leuven in Belgium, Mariehamn Aland Islands in Finland, and Nicosia in Cyprus and Umeå Sweden and also in ICLEI.

So the declaration calls on the European Union and its authorities to establish European Capital of Social Progress Awards to give an additional impetus to make urban environments more equal, healthier, and create opportunities to recognize and share best practices, and also strengthen social progress cooperation and capacity building within the European Union. So while in the declaration, we highlight that many of the complex challenges pointed out in the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as inequality, affordable housing prejudice, or climate change impacts that concentrates in our cities. So the changes needed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals require a comprehensive and integrated societal transformation, including social, cultural, economic, and technological challenges that will deeply impact our urban societies. So I wish I could have handed it over in person, but we will show it to you. It's a copy and it's been handed over to the European Commission. So thank you all to all the cities that have signed the Declaration. So thank you.

**Andrew Dubber:** Wonderful. Thanks so much. I'd like to pass now over to principal statistician, Paola Annoni and also head of unit for policy development and economic analysis, Moray Gilland from the

European Commission Directorate General for regional and urban policy, DG Regio. Paola and Moray, thank you so much for joining us. I believe Paola, you may be muted.

**Paola Annoni:** Sorry. I apologize.

**Andrew Dubber:** It's lovely to have you here.

**Paola Annoni:** Can you hear me now?

**Andrew Dubber:** Very well. Thank you.

**Paola Annoni:** Yeah. Okay, thank you. So thanks to you all, to those who organised this event. And to all of you who are watching. And I'm here for the third time in Umeå, even if unfortunately, only virtually. I was invited there already two times and I'm very honoured to be here again. So we are here presenting, shortly presenting the results of the 2020 EU regional social progress index together with my head of unit, Gilland Moray. So the index was launched very recently. It was launched on the 2nd of December by our Director General Marc Lemaître. And I would like to anticipate a few remarks on why we want to measure social progress in our regions.

So, first of all, we want to feed the discussion about the Beyond GDP agenda, because we are all aware that we need better and alternative indicators to reflect societal development. Why the regional level? Well, not only because we belong to the Directorate General on the Regional and Urban policy. There are other regions – reasons, sorry, which are crucial for, you know, for better understanding how investments, especially European investments are effective at the subnational level, and how they are aligned with the objectives of the European Union policies.

So, the European social progress index, similarly to the global social progress index, published every year by the social progress imperative, it includes purely social environmental aspects, and excludes on purpose, economic and monetary indicators. So, our purpose, our final aim is to facilitate region's benchmarking, by providing a tool which is comparable across all the European regions, which measures a wide range of criteria related to social environmental aspects in order to help and to give a tool to policymakers and stakeholders in order to identify their region's strengths and weaknesses. So, I would like to stress the fact that the geographical level we were able to reach is the regional one, the NUTS2 level in most of the cases, sometimes the NUTS1 level.

So it's not about cities because unfortunately not because we, we think they are not important. They are absolutely important, but due to data availability limitations, we could reach the NUTS2 level "only" because it was already a great challenge according to us. So, this is the framework of the index which is exactly the same, mostly the same apart from a name in one of the components. It is the same as the one followed and invented by, and designed by the global - by social progress imperative for their global social progress index. And you can see here we are trying to measure 12 different components of social progress, which are then regrouped into three dimensions. These three dimensions are, go from the basic to foundations of well-being to the opportunity one. And we see these three dimensions as nested in the sense that they entail different levels of social progress, which go from the basic enablers,

conditions of social progress and development and they go from the more sophisticated ones, which are all included in the opportunity dimension, which includes indicators related to trust, inclusiveness, active citizenships, job opportunities, and advanced education and lifelong learning.

So, the more sophisticated aspects are all in the opportunity dimension. And of course, what we did is to stick to the framework developed by the social progress imperative, but then, we developed our own methodology for the construction of the index. And also we adapted and then reached this framework by populating it with all possible indicators available at the regional level for the European Union territory related to social and environmental aspects. And here are the main results. Here you have on the right hand side of this slide, you have the distribution of social progress index across the EU regions. The purple colour indicates low performing regions and the green colour indicates high performing regions and the darker colour, the better the performance of the region.

So as you see here, you can see here unfortunately – well, unfortunately for my own country, but anyway, fortunately for Sweden, and for northern countries, you have this usual split of the European Union territory into approximately three areas. The central – the northern part where we find the best performers, the central part, and central and also north western part where we find intermediate performers. And then the south eastern part where we find the poor performers. And here in this box plots in this chart that you have on the left hand side, you have all the countries reordered from the best on the left hand side to the worst right hand side, according to their national level.

Then, you have all those blue dots indicate the performance, the scores of every single region in each country. And then you have indicated here the best region in each country. And you see here the orange dots indicate the capital regions. And you can immediately see that capital regions are not always the best performers in their own country. And you see here that apart from Helsinki, which is the capital region, of course of Finland, and it's also the best one, but you see the scores are very close to each other. In most of the best countries, it is not the capital region as the best one. And the winner is – but of course, this message was foiled [00:41:49 unclear] by multiple times at the opening of this event, because the winner is again, Upper Norrland. So the region who is asking us today, which is, tops table at the top of the rankings for the second time.

This is a screenshot from our web page, which it's quite old. It refers to the negotiations of the current programming period, which is actually expiring now in a couple of weeks. And already at that time, this region was labelled by the commission as a sparsely populated by innovative region. And indeed, it shows, it proved to be exactly as very innovative in this case, in terms of its social and environmental progress.

But let's have a look at the three - at the performance of the different regions across the three dimensions that I already mentioned as being nested in each other. This is the same scatterplot but only for the – the same boxplot, sorry, but only for the Basic dimension. And you will see that when I scrolled from the Basic to the Foundation and to the Opportunity one, I will do it again. You will see what we define as the unfolding fun, meaning that the scores and the performances are more variable, both across countries but also within each country. And you'll also see that going from the basic conditions of, basic aspects of social progress to the more sophisticated ones, you will see the role of the capital

regions, which are those orange dots, which become more and more relevant. But then, if you want to explore some relationships, this is I will say the first and most important one. It's the relationship within SPIs social scores, social progress and the GDP per capita. And you will see here the general trend is the usual one. Meaning that yes, it's true that the richer the region, the territory, on average, the higher its score on the social progress index, but there are, of course, important differences.

See here, for example, these are two French regions. So the same country with almost exactly the same level of social progress, but completely different level of GDP per capita. This is Lore, this is Île-de-France, which is the region hosting Paris. And also from the other side, we have regions with almost the same GDP per capita but very different levels of social progress. This is Sud - Muntenia region in Romania. And this is called Łódzkie, a region in Poland. But what if we flip out the point of view? What do we mean? What if we think that actually social progress as a main driver of GDP per capita because as the American writer Stephen Covey claims, trust is the one thing that changes everything, both from the people's perspective, but also from the business perspective because the society.

And these are his words. Societies, which where people trust each other are also societies which run smoothly, they are more efficient. And as a consequence, they are more productive. And this is exactly, well, not exactly, but this is something that we also observe. Because if we plot for example, we fit the point of view, and we have the opportunity on the x axis, meaning that we consider it as a driver of GDP per capita, because GDP now is here. On the vertical axis, we have FDS, we have the regions with higher opportunity scores. They are also on average, richer. And of course, this is a very simple analysis, this is not a model, but then we run also a model, a statistical model to see when controlling for basic and foundation scores, if opportunity is still the one major driver of GDP per capita, and the answer is, yes, it is, definitely. It is the only one explaining GDP per capita.

So I think this is, we think this is a very interesting remark. And then another thing that we constantly noticed is that, the rounder the better. What do I mean? I mean that these are our spider charts, showing you the overall performance on the left hand side, the one of the three best performance regions. And on the right hand side, three of the most or poor performing regions, across the 12 components. And the dashed red line indicates the EU average scores. And you see here the best performers. Here we chose Helsinki, Upper Norrland and the mid Jutland region in - sorry for my pronunciation, region in Denmark. And you see that their shape, their performance is balanced across the 12 components.

So they have a round-shaped, a round type of performance, meaning that they are good in all the components, which are included in the SPI. While on the right hand side, you have - the performance is characterised by some spikes. And so it's irregular. And this means that yes, they can be good on some of the components, but not on all of them. And the way how we construct the index, we penalise a lot the fact. So we don't want then that one good performance in one component can balance a poor performance in another one because we're talking about social environmental issues. And all those aspects are of the same. They need to have the same relevance and importance in assessing the final score of the region.

And with this, I conclude, and I pass the floor to my head of unit, Gilland Moray, who will discuss with you very briefly the association between the SPI and the policy objectives of the EU.

**Gilland Moray:** Thank you, Paola. It's always very difficult speaking after Paola on the social progress index, because the level of expertise that she has, the work and effort that she's put into the creation of the EU social progress index, it always makes me wonder exactly what I can add to the discussion. So what can I add? Well, there's couple of things that I want to mention. Firstly, the social progress index, as we presented, as you've heard already referred to a couple of times this morning, is a tool. It's there to facilitate the work, the analysis that regions are doing on issues in and around social progress.

It enables regions to judge their performance. It enables them to address areas for improvement and one of the things that we've done a lot of work on with this latest version of the regional SPI is to make the competitive toolbox much more sophisticated. So you have now the possibility online to do a series of comparisons of your region with other regions, of a similar level of GDP with other regions with a similar level of population. And of course, it's always possible to make those comparisons at a national level as Paola showed with some of the graphs on box plots that she showed in the presentation.

And then what can the regions do once they've looked at this type of information? And the slide that Paola has left up for me is one of the indicators we wanted to leave you with on this point. Here, you have, on the right hand side, a number of the specific components that we have used in the creation of the regional SPI, this time around. On the left hand side, you have a number of the specific objective titles that form part of the new Cohesion Policy regulations for 2021 to 2027. And the Cohesion Policy regulations have just been the subject of political agreements between the council and the European Parliament over the last week or so.

So these elements are now stable. And by looking at how your region performs at the social progress index level, and connecting that to some of the priorities that you would be looking to support in the, under Cohesion Policy over the next 10 years, you have the chance to learn from that process, to compare where you stand with others. And perhaps as a result, retarget or reorient the types of objectives that you would be focusing on and the types of content that you want to support through your programs in the next programming period. So for us, this is one of the key areas that we want to see people using the regional SPI for, to be able to think a little bit differently, to build those links with what programs we'll contain and support over the next decade. And we'd be very much happy to discuss that with you either during today's meeting, or indeed especially during the program discussions that will be taking place between the regions and our colleagues who work on our geographic desks in the commission over the coming months. Thank you very much.

**Andrew Dubber:** Wonderful, thank you both Paola Annoni and Moray Gilland, and congratulations on the launch. It's exciting to be here, just over one week into this journey of the new social progress index for Europe. And it reminds me this, a popular twist on what's known as the Hawthorne effect, which you may have heard of, which says essentially that what is observed and measured increases. So I certainly hope that's the case here. But I also think that the intentions and actions of everyone present here will also have a tremendous impact on the results that we're going to see reflected in that index a year on from now.

Now someone who's already racing ahead is the mayor of Leuven. Mohamed Ridouani leads a city that stands for positive change. His ambition is to turn Leuven into one of the most caring, green and prosperous cities in Europe, in cooperation with the citizens, knowledge institutions, companies and organisations there. He inspired Leuven2030, which more than 300 companies, organisations and citizens got involved in, and are united to turn Leuven into a sustainable and CO2-neutral city by the year 2030. And that's something for which Leuven has received both the European Green Leaf Award from the European Commission and also big congratulations here. The title of European Innovation Capital for 2020. Welcome Mohamed Ridouani. It's a shame we can't have you here in person. It's wonderful to have you with us on the line. The floor is yours.

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Good morning to you all. Hope everyone is doing well. Thank you for providing me the floor. I am Mohamed Ridouani, the mayor of Leuven speaking from Belgium. So, once again, congratulations with this initiative. I was there last year and I hope to meet you again in the future. In Leuven, we try to implement what we call a very radical participatory approach when we do decision making. This is crucial to us because we believe that when we put more empathy in our decision making, people will feel comfortable, there will be more trust. And there will be a sense of belonging, which is so important in a century, where loneliness is so pertinent, and so present.

So to me, as a decision maker, as a representative of government, it's key to make sure that this happens in a structural and far going way. We have many instruments to do so when, when we take decisions. When we have new objectives, new projects, we have an entire network of what we call community managers spread all over the city to make sure that participation is happening. We have so many dialogues and information sessions going on. And we have also systems where we elect citizens' juries to decide upon the bigger projects in our city. Projects that go with planning, that go with city development, neighbourhood development, mobility, you name it. Well, the citizens are always in the loop.

When we've launched - when we started last year with the new legislation here, we've had really far going participation process where citizens who designed the multiple-year plan and also the budgeting. And they could do it online, offline, during meetings in many, many ways. We provide budgets to our neighbourhoods where people come together and where they in fact upgrade their neighbourhood, with installations, with meeting places, neighbourhood festivals, arts in the neighbourhood, name it. They get budgets, and what we see is that there where you have people that don't know each other, our neighbours come together, no matter their background, and are far beyond the projects that they do together. Of course, this creates a connectedness and a belonging in the neighbourhoods and this has really given good results in the last years.

When it comes to bigger developments in the city, like we have here at Karnal zone, which all buildings that belong to Stella Artois, the big brewery we have here. In the recent years, they pulled back from this building, so you had this Brownfield. Now it's a vibrant environment with a lot of creative people, with start-ups, with artists, etc. And we are redesigning also the public space and there, in fact, we had a lottery where we elected a jury from our citizens. In fact, with a good mix of background and in fact, it's interesting, because they will, they are now deciding upon the design and the development of this area and the city will go along that. So then what they pick, we'll have them.

When it comes to bigger societal challenges like climate change, we go a step further. Now, a couple of years ago, we have even implemented what we call a new governance model to tackle climate change amongst other things. And what we've done is what you see here, is really include all layers of society. And that's where we've created what we call Leuven2030, which is a new layer, a governance model, where we do whole decision making between city, knowledge institutions, citizens, organisations and also entrepreneurs and companies. And this organisation has a strict and formalised way of decision making. And they are, in fact, coordinating all the action plans that we have in city for climate change. And it gives big results, big results, not only within the city.

We have changed our mobility totally. We are doing it because in this organisation, you also have social organisations, for example, just to make sure that the transition towards the Climate Neutral future is a just transition. Which means for example, when you invest in insulation of buildings, you don't do it only for the middle class, but you also do it in social housing, so that everyone can benefit from the good things that come with that. And this is important, this is very important and it has become some kind of community approach, a part of our DNA where we co-create, where we collaborate to tackle these challenges in climate change, [00:59:38 inaudible] being exclusion, or problems we have with education of minority children. We collaborate and we bring all the leaders and organisations in the city together behind one ambition and we do it in a very structural way.

In many ways, in many cases, the city is bringing you like 50% of the budget to the table. And the other partners also bring 50%. And this involvement is bringing good things. Even though the city is growing in numbers of inhabitants, in numbers of employment, in numbers of students, the CO2 emissions go down, because we're tackling it in the right way and everyone feels involved. Same thing when it comes to education, we have what we call making education together, where from the kindergarten, up to university, all these institutions are working together to tackle, you know, dropouts in schools, to tackle poverty that families face, to tackle discrimination, etc. Like now in the COVID period, we had 1000s of laptops, ICT material distributed towards deprived families and this is due to this collaboration.

We have large scale tutoring projects, where 1000s of children are being coached by students, by volunteers to make them believe in their own future to make sure that no child is left behind. And in the recent months, the European Commission has named us the European Capital of Innovation, because of these results that we have on these different domains, but in the first place because we've created this sense of belonging, where we involve our entire community in what's happening in the city. And I'm happy when we have this, when we ask our inhabitants how they feel, do they feel comfortable? Do they feel trust in each other and the government and their institutions, it's increasing, and it's very high if you compare it with other cities, in Belgium and that makes me of course, very happy and very proud. Thank you.

**Andrew Dubber:** Wonderful, thank you so much, Mayor Ridouani. I'm looking forward to talking more with you about some of these initiatives and achievements as we go into the panel session a little bit later on. Now, of course, this is the second Social Progress Cities Summit, and it comes in an entirely different context than the first one that happened a year ago.

Our next speaker is an economist by training. He's the co-author of *Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World*, and *The Road from Ruin: A New Capitalism for a Big Society*. He's also worked as a senior official in the UK government's Department for International Development. Michael Green is now CEO of social progress initiative, and is here to discuss the ways in which the EU social progress index can support an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID crisis. Michael, welcome. It's great to have you with us. It's wonderful to see you again. I believe the last time we spoke was at a conference in Brussels. And I'm very much looking forward to what you have to say as always. So the floor is very much yours, Michael Green?

**Michael Green:** Thank you so much. And it's a great pleasure to be with you all today with so many friends. And let me add double congratulations. Congratulations, first of all, to Janet in the city of Umeå and the region of Övre Norrland for topping the EU social progress index again, and also to Paola and Moray and all the team at DG Regio on the creation of the new EU regional SPI. I know how much work goes into this and it's a fantastic product, full of richness and insight. So congratulations on that as well.

I want to just quickly share some insights about, you know, the challenges we face in this COVID world and post-COVID world, and how that fits into the broader challenges we face around sustainable development moving forward, and how the social progress index can support an inclusive and sustainable recovery from this period of crisis. And what I want to do is use a little bit of information from the global social progress index, which we've been doing for a number of years now and this year, it covers 163 countries. So we've got about 95% plus of the world's population covered with the global social progress index. Then we have data going back 10 years.

So we've got a good sense of the trajectory that the world is on. And I'm a positive chap. So let's start with the good news. And the good news is, the world has been getting a bit better. We've seen in the last decade the world has made progress by what we say is 3.61 points. And the majority of countries, 155 countries have actually managed to get a bit better over that period. So that's the good news. We do see that up until the COVID crisis at least, the world was improving. That's a good news.

The bad news is that sadly, this is nowhere near fast enough for our ambitions. Projecting against the Sustainable Development Goals, what we see is that on its current track, the world would not hit the SDG targets for 2030 until 2082. So way, way, way off track for the SDGs. And if we've tried to factor in some of these impacts of COVID that Bernard was talking about earlier, then we see that actually, the target date for hitting the SDGs could drift a further decade to 2092. Obviously, that's not good enough. So what are we gonna do about it? Now, maybe let's look at specifically what this means for the EU. And I have to say the EU is not on track for the SDGs. The world being off track is not about poor countries. It's about every country in the world not being on track.

So what's the EU – where does the EU stand and where's it heading? What you need to do? Well, first of all, if we look at the 2020 global social progress index rankings, actually, the EU is doing pretty well. You know, Denmark is the best performing EU country just behind top of the table Norway. Most of the top tier of countries are in the EU. And then we see a range round to Romania in 45th as the lowest performing, but the EU countries generally dominate the rankings. And eventually, the EU is doing better than some countries that are richer. And I'll note in particular, the United States comes in at 28. So the

US has been more dynamic than the EU economically over the last couple of decades. But the EU has done much better in terms of social progress. So the EU broadly is doing well.

The EU is also showing some signs of positive movement. All I've done here is taken the EU member states and said, have they changed over the last 10 years. And with one exception, they've all improved. The one country that hasn't improved over the last decade is Hungary. Indeed, only three countries in the world have gone backwards on social progress since 2011, Hungary, Brazil and the United States. So with the exception of Hungary, we've broadly seen progress. Progress has been slower in countries like Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, Germany, top performing countries as you might expect.

Then, we have seen countries like Cyprus, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Croatia, as being some of the fastest improvers. So we are again, seeing some signs of convergence. So we know that there's positive movement, but we need to figure out how to accelerate that change for the EU as a whole, for its member states, and down to regions and cities. Now, the overarching policy framework for this is quite clearly set out by the EU with a European Green Deal, European Pillar of Social Rights, the recovery and resilience facility, all with the umbrella of The European Semester 2020. So a lot of the policy tools at the macro level are in place. The challenge is really gonna be around implementation and driving it down to the regions.

Paola said very powerfully, and as did Moray about how the EU regional SPI can really support and drive those efforts for regions. I just wanted to show you a little bit about how SPI can help in even more local level for cities. And I'm gonna take a case study from my city of London and the work that we've done with a London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. And indeed, I think I see on the participants of this call, our friend and partner PA [01:08:14 inaudible] from Barking and Dagenham. So, if you want to know more about this case study, I suggest you use the Excellent conference platform to connect with PA and learn more about this.

Essentially what we've done in Barking and Dagenham was built a regional social progress index for the wards of the borough. So this is communities of about 5000 or 6000 people. So much more granular on local level than the EU regional SPI. It was able to highlight key regional differences across the borough, not just in aggregate social progress, but also around specific issue areas. Domestic violence, homelessness, fuel poverty. And what the team of Barking and Dagenham have done is, they've taken this data and used it to focus services and reallocate resources. But what they've seen from using this is that this has delivered improved outcomes. And those improved outcomes have then also delivered cash savings in excess of 3 million pounds over this period already counted.

This is really important that by having this kind of localised actionable data, the Barking and Dagenham team have been able to deliver better outcomes for citizens and also save money, which is critical in this time period. And they've also done some really innovative work that they'd love to talk about I'm sure around how you can use social progress index as a tool of public procurement to actually use the local government's purchasing power as a way of driving social progress directly. So social progress index is a powerful tool that can help city administrations, local administrations to really drive change to improve outcomes and make better use of scarce resources. And this is something we're doing across a whole

host of regions. We've work stock [01:09:58 unclear] in Italy and Slovakia, but we'd be delighted to talk to any other cities that want to use this tool and develop it.

And what we've layered on top of this in recent months, is a further tool to actually look at how to respond to COVID. What we've called is the Integrated Risk and Response Tool. Because COVID presents a range of challenges. There's obviously the health challenges, there's also the economic challenges, but then also I think as we've talked about, the fact that the different choices we make in how we respond to COVID could have huge distributional equity implications. So we've got to put the social agenda at the core of our response to COVID. So the Integrated Risk and Response Tool is something we've developed with some of our city and national partners, as a way to help governments nationally, locally, regionally, to actually respond to this. And this is again something that we can do for any city or region around the world.

Just to finish, I want to say, the agenda around inclusive and sustainable development is not about a moral cause. It's actually around self-interest. We know that if we do not protect ourselves from social environmental risks, there are huge threats to our future well-being. And citizens get this. Earlier this year, we partnered with Ipsos and did some polling across 13 countries and said, okay, during this crisis, where should governments be prioritising? Is it health? Or is it GDP? And people came back very clearly saying, it's got to be around the health and well-being of the population is a priority. And then we said, okay, when the pandemic is over, where should the priority be? Is it back to business as usual and just economic growth? Or is it about something else? And we all really struggled. Across every country, we've got a very balanced response. Yes, the economy matters, it does matter. But it's not enough. People want social progress outcomes, as well.

We need a balanced, sustainable, inclusive future for our societies, for our cities, for our countries. And this is what citizens want. And this is what city leaders are going to be expected to deliver on. So I congratulate everyone on this excellent conference, looking forward to continuing collaboration to drive this agenda for more inclusive and sustainable future. Thank you very much.

**Andrew Dubber:** Thank you, Michael. It's so great to hear optimism in the context of climate and social issues at a policy level. And also lovely and maybe even a little bit nostalgic to have Britain represented at a European conference like this. Okay, so I believe we are running very much to time, which is non-traditional for this sort of event. So in the interests of health and well-being, it's important to get up and stretch from time to time, look away from the screen, maybe stand outside and take a deep breath, grab a coffee or similar and we will see you back here in five minutes. I will time you. See you very soon. Thank you.

[01:12:56 Break till

**Andrew Dubber:** Welcome back. It's lovely to have you with us again and hope you're feeling suitably refreshed. And I hope you're ready to meet with some leaders of some of the most socially progressive cities in Europe on the importance of leading the way to more climate neutral, socially progressive cities. Janet Ågren from Umeå and Mohamed Ridouani of Leuven, you've already met. Welcome back both and Dejan Crnek from Slovenia is the Deputy Mayor of the beautiful city of Ljubljana, where I was lucky

enough to be invited to host our festival at the beautiful Cankarjev dom in 2015. Actually the same year that we hosted it here in Umeå, when I moved here.

It's also home to the European culture and creative synergies conference, which is going on this very afternoon which our MTF Labs founder and foundation chair Michela Magas is also very much a part of. And also Goedemiddag to Isabelle Diks from Groningen, home to some of my favourite people in the world, a group of entrepreneurship pioneers, and incredibly talented musicians. It's also home to Europe's biggest showcase festival, the Eurosonic Noorderslag.

Isabelle is the deputy mayor of Groningen. Thank you all so much for joining us. It's lovely to have you here. Janet, can we start with you since you're actually in the room. These are all cities with a really strong track record, and social progress. How can you bring other maybe less socially progressive regions and cities along with you on that journey? Is that important to you?

**Janet Ågren:** It is important and I think one way is, always trying to put social progress high on the political agenda, and also be a good role model so that you can show that if you put effort into social progress, you can also see a change when it comes to outcomes. So I think that's very important, not only on the local level, but also to other cities, that you can see that if you put the effort in, you can hopefully also see some results when it comes to outcomes.

**Andrew Dubber:** Mohamed, is this something that you go along with? Is Leuven your sole focus or is taking other people from other regions with you part of the deal?

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Now, we are – I mean, we're constantly in interaction with other cities, other regions, so we can share good practices and learn from each other. I think that today, it's impossible to go along in an isolated way. And the good thing is that cities are so much connected with each other locally, but also at an international level. So I think for us, it's a way of working.

**Andrew Dubber:** Okay. Well, one of the things that is really important in this discussion, is this idea of inclusion. Accessibility, gender equity. Isabel, can you tell us, walk us through maybe some of the initiatives that are going on in your region that contribute to these sorts of things?

**Isabelle Diks:** Yeah, when we talk about gender equality and inclusion, we have a program that's working towards that. And what we see in my city that is the healthiest city of the Netherlands. You probably have heard that. But when we look at this particular prize or award, if you might put it in these words, is that we are actually a very healthy city, but not for everybody. So what concerns me most is that people that live in poverty, and one in every 10 adults and one in every six children in Groningen lives in poverty. And this distinction, this gap between the haves and the have nots is not something from the south only, but it's also in my city. And therefore, we want to, really want to work towards a more inclusive region, an inclusive city, that is social and green and happy. That's the core of our coalition, that we are trying to work and make this happen for all our inhabitants and not just for a happy few.

**Andrew Dubber:** Dejan, I wonder if I can ask you because I was so impressed with Cankarjev dom when I was there. And it makes me think. What is the relationship between say culture and creativity and social progress in a city?

**Dejan Crnek:** Thank you very much. First, I would like to say hello to all, to you, to Umeå. I'm sorry that we couldn't go there. But I was there for four times now I think including the CIVITAS projects that was going on in Umeå and also with social progress. So it's very nice city for me and I'm sorry that we have to meet over the camera. But let's be positive, or let's be not positive but good thinking that we will meet again in Umeå. And I would like to congratulate also for the organisation of this event. I know it's not very easy, but it's going very smoothly, very well and we got a lot of new information.

Regarding your question, I would like to say that in Ljubljana, first rule is that we live together and respected all the differences. That it means that everybody is welcome to Ljubljana to do something good for the citizens that only what they want to tell is goodwill. And this is something that is a basic pillar in our thinking, and everybody, everything what's going on from this one is, is our connection to one area through the other. And also the Buildings for the European Culture per capital [01:26:10 unclear] is also very much connected to the social programs, because the culture, we try to open it for all the citizens, even for those who doesn't have enough resources to do some visits to the theatres or some other's institution. So the connection is very strong. And I hope that also this will be one of the good points for our building for the cultural capital of Europe.

**Andrew Dubber:** Here's something I want to ask all of you because you'll all hopefully have very different answers to this. Is there something unique about where you are, that is being done very well, that you wish other places could learn from that, that you would share as best practice in your study? Mohamed, let's start with you. What are you especially proud of in terms of social progress?

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Well to me, it comes down when you feel that in your city community, as I told in the presentation, that people no matter their background, they feel they are part of the whole. They've to have a stake in it, they've to have a voice. And I go to neighbourhoods where you have, let's say, social housing with less opportunities, etc. And people have a way of speaking to me and they dare to speak to me, and they pronounce their worries and their dreams. And I think that's a big step forward. So for me, it's really measuring the way that people have this sense of belonging, and not being, this sense of being cast away from the middle. I think this is so much so important today in the Europe on all levels of what we do. And I think that because we have this focus on the small scale initiatives we do in the neighbourhoods. The larger initiatives like, our larger programs to include people, to listen to people, and at the same time have an effective decision making. I think it contributes to the well-being of people ... I'm proud of that.

**Andrew Dubber:** As you should be. Isabelle, what about Groningen and what sorts of unique initiatives do you think would stand as best practice?

**Isabelle Diks:** Now I really have to choose, obviously, because I think we have quite a lot of well, perhaps not really unique, but we focus on so many things. So what I might want to add to this discussion is that I try to work towards a more comprehensive approach when it comes to ending poverty, because

poverty is one of the main things that we focus on in my city. And poverty is not just lack of money, but what we see in our city. And that's well, not - you can put it in these words, that if you travel from the northern part of my city to the southern part, people within this region are probably six to seven, have the possibility to become less older six or seven years than the people in the south. And if you come to think of this, this is a horrible thought. It is a true gap in my community. And we're now working towards, as I said, a comprehensive approach when it comes to ending poverty, when it comes to health problems. People that live in poverty have less health, have less well-being, have a lifestyle that doesn't help them when it comes to becoming more healthy. And of course, what we see most of all, I would say, those people mostly live in debt. And when you live in debt, this brings a horrible and stressful situation to your family that, not always but it could easily lead to domestic violence that could lead to other horrible things like child abuse we see also in my community.

So when we try to end poverty, we start with working on ending debt, or at least try to put in a pause button, so that we as a community can work on taking away these debts or trying to help people to pay them, but not organised that day as we see now in my community, that they wait and are so ashamed that they don't dare to ask that they lived for more than five years in this situation, and have so much debt that they can hardly get out of this. And then they go bankrupt and oh, god, I don't have to explain what happens then. So what we tried to do is really tried to end this living in debt situation really early, so that there is much more well-being in family. So there is less, a better situation in families and so that we don't have to put in our youth care [01:31:33 unclear] as we do now, 14 million extra. So every year, we get 14 million less from our state than we need to organize better use care. So this is for me all a comprehensive, part of a comprehensive approach. And I'm proud of that.

**Andrew Dubber:** Again, as you very much should be. Dejan, can I ask you what Ljubljana has up its sleeve as something that could teach the rest of the world about how to do social progress well?

**Dejan Crnek:** Thank you. Yes, when I am listening to this, it's very hard because we have a very similar project I think, although because we cooperate for many years now. But I'm also proud – want to say that I'm proud of our collaboration with our NGOs in different fields of social area. We support you through the tender with financial support. They cover some area that we couldn't do it alone. Then of course, in our housing, we try to do every year as much new facilities for young people or for one other people. This year, I think we will add – we got number 300 new places. And then also, I'm very proud of the one which is not so common. It is, we called [01:33:12 unclear] open days of the mayor because mayor has every first Thursday in the week, in the month have open doors, and people can come to him and tell him all about they want to develop in. And there's a lot of, lot of social – [01:33:34 cross talk]

And he really helps or try to help in his way directly maybe or our department for social, but he got a message from the people directly. So it can be solved easier – not easier but the faster that all the procedure that come from the other parts of that. So I think that this is part of the unique or not used much way to help also decide on our problem that we have in that. So maybe this is the one [01:34:22 inaudible]

**Andrew Dubber:** Fantastic. So Janet, I moved here from Britain in 2014. And one of the main reasons that we did that was because of the social progress that was going on here. And particularly noticeable

were things about gender inclusion, which was really important to us. Is that sort of the, is that the crown jewel of social progress in Umeå do you think?

**Janet Ågren:** Yeah, I think it's definitely one of them because I think what I am most proud of is that we have tried to stay truthful to our values in Umeå when we are growing and when we are developing in the city, we tried to put gender equality very high on the agenda, and we have done so for more than 30 years. So it takes time to see results. But I think we can see that now. But also that other politicians before me, they have also tried to put culture high on the agenda and how to build a holistic society. So I think it's the value when it comes to inclusiveness, gender equality, participation. And that's sort of values that have been very high on our agenda. And so I think that's one of the reasons why we're here that we are today. So we're always trying to develop, of course, the administration, but also our dialogue with other stakeholders, the academia and the NGOs that was also mentioned.

So I think Umeå is similar to many other European cities, because we're not unique when it comes to size, but we have tried to be very focused on what's the value that are important for us and that has built our city strong. And those core values we try to belong and all the time develop. So even though we are a growing city, which means more people are coming to our city every year. And so it's a challenge for us to grow in a sustainable way and since the population is growing, you are always at a risk that you can develop severe social difficulties. So all the time when we try and test and develop new methods, we try to go backwards to what are the core values and how do we want our city to be in the future.

**Andrew Dubber:** Okay. So one of the things that is obviously very high on the agenda for everybody at the moment is the pandemic and COVID-19. And I'm kind of interested in what the intersection is between social progress and community health, for instance. Should we be solving the health problem before we look at other issues? Or can we do those things together? Isabelle, should we start with you? Is there a kind of a holistic way of addressing social progress and healthcare at the same time? Or is this an emergency? We have to drop everything, ignore some measures and focus exclusively on the healthcare?

**Isabelle Diks:** Now, well, of course, we have to focus first, of course, on healthcare, because so many people are sick and dying also in our country, and in our region. This evening, we will have a press conference with, of the Prime Minister and everybody's really scared because I'm thinking, I think we are going to a lockdown again. And it's needed because we see the amounts of people that are sick, growing every day. So it's not good in the Netherlands momentarily, but the background of your question, of course, is that you cannot just focus on vaccination programs and on keeping people healthy. That is also needed that we work towards the social progress, of course.

And one of the things that we, as I speak for myself, as we saw in the first lockdown in March, we had the idea. Perhaps all of us had the idea that this pandemic, how awful as it is, could also be a driver to really try to, to get to another world and to get to a greener world and to get to a more social, inclusive world. And in the first few months that really worked that way, I think and now that we see that this situation is here to stay sort of, I think that we, yeah, that we see that people just fall back in their own old habits, and that there's still much energy put in to saving companies like KLM, for instance, and trying to save fossil industries, for instance.

So that greener future is not really getting closer when you look at this pandemic. It also helps in my community, really good when it comes to a more social to diminish the gap between people because we see so many people that stand up for each other that work on NORMA's Hub [01:39:43 Foreign word]. I don't know the words in English, but it's really being involved with each other when it comes to community building. And we also focus in our community on a neighbourhood development and in that strategy, COVID could actually be of any help. But, of course, it's a terrible situation throughout the world and also in Europe. So yeah, we have to get this pandemic, we have to get control of this pandemic because it hurts so many people and I'm really afraid that if we're not quick enough to control this, this might damage us and the development of our community and of Europe or the world perhaps for years or perhaps even decades to come. Because so much is devastated with this pandemic. So we have to be really alert to keep being involved with each other also in a European level.

**Andrew Dubber:** Okay. Mohamed, in Leuven, how are you balancing this push towards saving lives, and the push towards improving lives? How are those things balanced out?

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Well, from the beginning, we've had a very proactive approach of - the beginning in March, we were the first city to implement the kind of lock down before the national one. We were the first city to hand out all our inhabitants at the door mouth masks. We've had quite strict measurements, but our population went along the way. But this proactiveness, we did combine it with also forgoing, let's say, a caring approach, where, in fact, we have a team of people. They call everyone that is infected, you will be called to ask, are you okay? Can we provide you with some help? Do you need advice?

We've had a platform, which is called Leuven Helps immediately in March, where we bring together people that are in need of help. And we connect them with people that can provide help. Providing help means to do shopping for people, to have [01:42:18 audio gap] to see if something can be done. And this had, you know, it led to an explosion of solidarity in our city. It's really amazing. And because of this proactiveness in strict measures, and the caring approach, well today, Leuven has the lowest infection rate of Belgium, of the Belgian cities. And we were even able in this summer to combine these low rates with some social program, with some cultural activities, but always in a very cautious way and a very, very caring way. So I think it's possible to cope with this crisis until we have good vaccines at large scale by keeping these infections low, but you have to include people. You have to take them along the way with the story and then they will accept, accept the measures and also behave as it should be.

**Andrew Dubber:** Dejan, for you in Ljubljana, the idea of including people but also separating them and isolating them. How do you juggle those things?

**Dejan Crnek:** I guess, I just want to say it's really interesting. We will just want to put a sample, one project together with the Red Cross about the solidarity. [01:43:47 inaudible] to do this solidarity between the people in Ljubljana. So it's one of the - I think that we are going the, the right step over the cities we are talking today. But otherwise, to your question, I think that we somehow feel that promotion of the measures, including to help to save a healthy life or to save the people is not very good because we have other areas. When we realise, there is more problems. It is like social problems. It's also the

family molesting their little kids [01:44:43 unclear], we don't see because people needed to [01:44:45 inaudible] in one apartment in one room and there is four, five or six people inside. The children don't go to the schools. The parents don't go to the work. They're together all the day. They have to do the sports on the video. How to do this? It's really a hard time. And that's what we see, that's what we feel. [01:45:12 inaudible] deal also with our NGOs who have a lot of work to do. And I think that it's not very good that we have to think about 75% of other peoples who are still 30, 40, able to work, how to manage it like it's not easy but we cannot just say, Okay, let's keep our lives, you know, keep the life of the older people, but how about the young people? How about the children? You know, we have one, very long time, there is some measurement in the schools. I think it's four to five grade and it's the same for every population, and that is going on for a lot of years. And this year in the fourth lockdown, it was [01:46:13 inaudible] and it stopped. But we opened the school for the three weeks, and the teacher of the [01:46:21 inaudible], they used this to do this measurement. And only in two months, we found very, very alarming information because all the population on an average lost 70% of their life [01:46:50 inaudible], they lost 30% - 13% of the locomotory system, the first in two months, 30%. And then they lost, half of them increased the fat in their bodies. Half of the population in two months. And also they got this 70%, I would say they got with this breath symptoms [01:47:19 unclear] when they're going, running or something like this, in only two months.

Now we are seven or eight months. We didn't make the measures because the schools are closed. But this is one thing that [01:47:32 inaudible] the generation. When they will grow up, they have no ability, how they work in this world, how they can put with it all the difficulties that will come according to the work. So that's really the thing that we have to be - we have to think about it and look forward to the measurement. We have to see how to do this because people are worrisome [01:48:04 unclear] we will have a lot of problems in the future.

**Andrew Dubber:** Thank you Dejan. How are we doing here in Umeå at the moment?

**Janet Ågren:** Well, it's a big challenge when it comes to the COVID-19 crisis. At the beginning, we had not so many infected in our region. And now we see that the spreading is taking off and the more people are getting infected. So we have to stay focused and stay apart and stay safe. So I think that's very important if we look at the elderly care or what it is. So we have to be responsible but I think that was mentioned from the Paolo and that's, it's very important that we, even though we try to do everything we can to handle the corona crisis, we also must try to do the things we can when it comes to public health, because otherwise we'll end up having a lost generation when it comes to public health. And we don't want that. So we must do what we can. Also I think it was very good that was mentioned when it comes to child poverty. That has also been a focus for us for many years. And we saw because in 2010, we put up a high target that we wanted to reduce child poverty by half. And we were close reaching our goals. But now we see due to the corona crisis that we will get new social problems that we have to address. So we have to handle the crisis. Yes, but we also have to address all the other issues that comes with the crisis so that we can - when we have endured and we pass it, we can be and take off at a better place hopefully.

**Andrew Dubber:** Well, there's another global pandemic that we should be thinking about, which is this increasingly divisive political climate that we're in where people are just having radically different

experiences of the world. And of course, in that environment, you have people who don't think that social progress is relevant or important. Or even they aggressively resisted. How do you bring those people on board with you on this journey?

**Janet Ågren:** Well, it's not always easy but I think, with dialogue and information and having a conversation, that's the only way forward. And as mentioned by Mayor Ridouani, I think we as well from the city tries to develop our new ways of having a conversation with our citizens so that they feel included and part of the discussion of our city's future. And so we try that we did it when we had our city district dialogue that we did last year. So we went out to all our city districts to have a dialogue to talk with our citizens, how they feel about the city. So I think having focused on social progress is important, because that will create the Legatissimo [01:51:07 foreign word] or sort of the change we need in order to combat the climate crisis, because we need to increase our pace when it comes to becoming climate neutral city. But we are fortunate to be part of our strategic network in Sweden, that's called Viable Cities. So we are one of nine cities that are talking how to address the question on becoming a Climate Neutral city in 2030. So we'll say that the city should be a forerunner, and the entire municipality should be climate neutral till 2040. So I think social progress and social sustainability is a method for us to tackle also the climate crisis. Yeah.

**Andrew Dubber:** Yeah because this might sound like the stupid question. And it's a sort of the question that I came in here with, which is that relationship between social progress and climate change is not immediately obvious. How do you communicate that connection? Mohamed, perhaps you could come in here. This idea of making a Climate Neutral city by 2030, how is that part of the social progress agenda?

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Well, to tackle that challenges, I told that we have created what we call a new governance model, where we include all layers of our society in a structural way, in a way that there is a shared decision making. But if you do not actively work on it, of course, you will attract those who are a bit higher educated and interested in the theme, etc. So to avoid that, and to avoid that people feel disconnected with what's happening and what's being decided for them, we really went into neighbourhoods. We produced also a narrative around it in the way that – in fact what we are doing with this climate neutrality is, we make the city better. We increase the health of everyone, we increase the living standards for everyone. And everyone also can contribute. So you isolate and insulate your home, it means it's good for the climate and it's also good for your energy bill.

So that's why I want this to be a just transition. That's why we include poverty organisations. That's why we include social housing companies. That's why we make it popular. So you saw this picture of this soccer player. Now, we have a very good football team. There's three now in Belgium, but they just put it on the shirt. So it makes it really very broad accessible and it's like kind of movement. So to make sure that everyone feels involved. And I think what has been said before, we live in challenging times with a lot of polarisation and extremism. And to face of that, I think there is this, again this connectedness. People feel disconnected from their leaders, from their neighbourhoods, from the things that happen around them, and they don't see this progress, social progress or other forms of progress as being relevant to them.

They feel that they're not part of this progress. So this is what needs to be tackled and one way to move forward is to have empathetic leaders that on all levels, be it in politics, in entrepreneurship, in administrations, in NGOs that really show a willingness or collaboration, or share dreams and involve people as much as you can. This is the way forward in an openness and with respect to each other, but also in a way that you are moving forward. It's not easy but I believe that this is the way that we should, we should go.

**Andrew Dubber:** It feels like there's a technological dimension to this as well. Isabelle, maybe you could come in a little bit here on the role of data and innovation and technology in addressing all of these sorts of grand challenges.

**Isabelle Diks:** Yes, one of the, well, there is not really a benefit, of course of the COVID pandemic, but there are positive effects, perhaps. And one of the positive effects, of course, is that almost everybody now is working digitally. And so as a community, we can easily reach our inhabitants more easily. And one of the things that we did, of course, is that not all our families have already access to iPads, or laptops, or whatever. So we provide them. And most families now have a digital information, digital possibilities to gather information and also be a member of the new normal society in or during COVID.

What we in the Netherlands do, in Groningen are doing is that, we have an almost 30-year on program that follows more than 150,000 people in the northern part of the Netherlands. And we have so much information, data when it comes to health, and all that data that comes with it. So we could easily help with trying to find more. And one of the speaker's brought this up to help on working on a comparative toolbox. And that's one of the things that we perhaps could be of assistance to other regions, because we have already this information. But it's not only necessary that we have this information. We should also be more interested, I would say in how to use this information because I don't know how it is with you. But we see in my region with also [01:57:23 Foreign word] the University of Groningen.

We have so much research, we have so much interesting information. But still for us, it's really difficult to use that information on a daily level. And so thinking about within this group about how to bring this any further and how to digest, if I can say this in these words, that information to – that data to information that works on a local level, that would be for us really interesting and we would really be interested in helping this group working towards that.

**Andrew Dubber:** I want to sort of end this by going back the other way. Dejan, one of the things that really struck me in Ljubljana was the kind of feeling of history that the place has, that it's connected to its heritage. It's possibly to do with the lack of corporate signage in the city centre. But it really feels like something that is connected to its past. Is that important in bringing the people with you on the sort of goal of social progress, the idea that they belong to a shared history?

**Dejan Crnek:** Yes, of course. And when our mayor and his team began [01:58:42 inaudible] in 2006, we said, we got lucky that we got deputy mayor who is perfect for [01:58:54 inaudible] And when we are talking about renewing the Ljubljana, it was like the guidelines to the world is that when you - because Ljubljana is a historical city also. And when you prepare to renew that kind of city, you'll have to do it from the centre to the outside. And we did this and also few measure like closing city centre for the

traffic game funding as well, 120,000 square meters of pedestrian [01:59:34 inaudible] and things like this, measurement like this, of course because we said that we want Ljubljana Centre to be like our living room and the surrounding [01:59:47 inaudible] like our playground. And it comes that the people begin again to go to the city centre to live there, to enjoy there. Of course, this is one part of how to make together the history and the new things. You have to make your city green, beautiful, and then the people is coming. And also the [02:00:17 inaudible] and also take out of this the ability to clean, that we are staying clean. But [02:00:28 inaudible] what I want to say about this people that we are talking about, not only maybe also for this, but this culture thing, this, how to be a one with Ljubljana, we tried to put it on our strategy to the preschool program only because when you teach the children in Kindergarten how to do, how to manage waste, how to do the [02:00:57 inaudible] how to help each other, how to respect each other. In 10 years, they will know how to do it.

So we started all those programs in 14 years ago also in the kindergarten in the schools. And now those people are in the faculty. Maybe we have some as workers. So they got this insights, this cohesion, we got all the stakeholders, all the citizens. So I think this is one of the good part of this, also in this crisis time. And also we have to do with the young people and teach them how to do. But there are some, some gap between because a few years ago, if I will pick up a debris, we don't have to tell about plastic bottle, not to disturb the planet with a plastic. Let's keep the children out of the computers, computer is not good for the children. They have to do exercises outside. But now it's opposite. We all use as many plastic as we need. We all used as we said before, the current report, from [02:02:13 inaudible] I calling the computer. Everybody's on the computer. Anybody still didn't have so. It's a little bit confusing now what's the best. What we –

**Andrew Dubber:** Dejan, can I ask you in one sentence how, what would be your key takeaway for people watching this conference that you wish they would take away with them from this?

**Dejan Crnek:** That it's hard because we had someone above us who tell us what to do, our government to do some measurement. And we really don't know if all these measurements are really good for all of us. So, I would like to say that it is possible, people should go out as much as possible to the woods, to the nature because there are also some positive things [02:03:08 inaudible] who provides you a good system to find the colleague [02:03:18 unclear]. And –

**Andrew Dubber:** Absolutely. The positive benefits of going outside –

**Dejan Crnek:** It's very hard. What I want to say, it's very hard because it's opposite [unclear 02:03:28] but everybody thought that we should do. Of course we have [02:03:33 inaudible] of course, the COVID virus is very, very hard and very strong for someone but not for everybody. So let's do something that we can do. Maybe I just want to say that we unlighted the city for the New Year [02:03:52 inaudible] and people, we don't invite people to go and try, but they come anyway. And they're happy. They need the social. So let's do something that we could make this social gathering together. People can talk to each other, that people can see that. How? I don't have –

**Andrew Dubber:** A key takeaway. Mohamed, for you, a sentence that you wish people would take away with them as a key takeaway from this discussion?

**Mohamed Ridouani:** Well, for me, it was very inspiring and interesting to hear all the speakers and I think we take different angles. But for me, it comes down that even though we go through a harsh time now through COVID but I believe that out of this, good things will erupt. Good things will erupt and they will erupt locally in our cities where people feel now the need to connect with each other because it's human. It's always have been that way. And we've been able to tackle the biggest challenges by connecting and collaborating. I hope that in order to have more social progress in Europe, I hope that after COVID, we will connect evermore and before and collaborate even more also between the cities and between each [02:05:25 unclear] events. Thank you.

**Andrew Dubber:** Isabelle, from Groningen, your big takeaway?

**Isabelle Diks:** My big takeaway would be that we should have a third conference like this. I think that would be really helpful. And that's the first thing and I don't know. I don't want to interrupt the program. But I really think that it would be very helpful to have a third one. Andrew Haldeman [02:05:51] would also like to play a part in that or try to organize that or whatever. We really like to be helpful, because I think that this way of exchanging information and being connected, as Mohamed said, being connected with each other, try to help each other to organise just what we in Groningen call Norwich? Hub [02:06:13 foreign word] the community building. Also on a European level, I think that would be very helpful to do so. So that also, we not try to start from scratch all over again, every time again.

So when there is something helpful in our region that could help other regions, or that we could help each other, of course, we should do that. So working together and learn from each other and spill that information and expertise over Europe, or perhaps the world, that should be really helpful. And Groningen would be really happy to play a part in that.

**Andrew Dubber:** Wonderful, wonderful. Yeah, a quick sentence from you before we wrap up this four-way conversation.

**Janet Ågren:** I can only agree that the social progress is important and that we have to continue to put that high on the agenda. And I think we've had very nice examples, good examples for different cities. And so I bring with me a lot of good examples. Yeah, I think it's been a great discussion.

**Andrew Dubber:** Fantastic. Well, thank you so much, everyone. There is certainly a lot to think about here and lots of discussion also going on in the online chat. I believe, which is great to see. Hopefully, this has provided lots of food for thought and to take a step back and consider what this all means at a grand scale. I'm delighted to welcome the brilliant Charles Landry, author, advisor and international authority on the use of imagination and creativity in Urban Change. Charles was absolutely instrumental in the first of these sessions last year, back in the time where we could all meet together in the same place.

Welcome, Charles. How would you characterize and sum up what we've been discussing today? And more importantly, maybe, what should we do from here?

**Charles Landry:** Thank you for being here. And it's a pleasure. And it's really enriching to hear what everybody's doing. You're real pioneers in tappings, the deeper yearnings namely for care, social connectedness and togetherness. I just know that we obviously talk about Beyond GDP. But I see that the OECD normally says, GDP and beyond. And I think there's a big distinction there. I think we want Beyond GDP. And of course, this has been a long debate for 30 years, and Sweden has been a leader. And it reminds us that this is really a long haul. And I think we've all recognised that our civilisation is a thin film of order, we build around the chaos of events. And the danger is that the old normal that was the problem and still the problem is seen as an exotic destination. And I'm always remembering a quote from the Turin doctor in the midst of the pandemic, who said, I want to remember this moment, because then I know what really matters. And clearly, this crisis is a pivot point. It reinforces one of the big issues we will know about, which is the difference between authority and legitimacy.

Clearly states have the legitimacy to drive some of the overall regime of regulations etc. But cities have the legitimacy to act because they're nearer and closer to citizens. And what I believe looking at what's been happening is, there is a silver lining. Mohamed mentioned that or implied it a minute ago, because so many impossible things became possible, which was seemingly unbelievable, but in a very short time. And what I think we all know and all the Global Agenda say that the business as usual does not work anymore. And if we've got an economic order, which we do have which is materially expansive, socially divisive and environmentally hostile, I think we really need to ask, what are the obstacles to the social progress issues we're talking about and making that the norm of behaviour and the way we run the world. And that is to me the big challenge, how to get into the mindset of those who disagree. And clearly, this is a systemic issue to do with the economic order that we're operating in. And whether we can create in a sense a sort of post capitalist or some sort of order that embeds social progress as the key factor, because what I find surprising when you take a helicopter view of the situation in the cities, many represented here, you see that so many problems have been solved. But why can't it all be in one place? I've always asked myself for 30 years. And I think somehow this to gathering together could perhaps make that possible as we get mutually inspired by each other. And I think here, there was a word that I loved, which I think Mohamed mentioned, which was empathy, because a lot of what I'm doing, my own stuff is very much look at the psychological dimensions of how you change, how you feel at ease with yourself. And this question of emotional intelligence that feels so soft, is really one of the main drivers of behavioural change if one actually implements it.

That reminds me of a sentence, which is, the soft is the hard. The hard is easy. You know, building a road is easy, we know how that works. But the soft is the hard and so much of what we're talking about is the soft. So for example, that is of course, culture as well, because transformation, the transformation we're talking about, essentially is a cultural project, because it's about values, choices, and ultimately politics. But here just a few little more points, is I think, concepts matter. For example, if I say what is capital, and I immediately know that capital also means social capital, heritage capital, creative capital, and so on. I behave, I think, plan and act differently. So sometimes if you just change a word, if you call urban planning, healthy urban planning, that every time you plan anything, you were saying, Is it gonna be healthy? Not just is it planning. Is it making me healthy, that shifts thing or reframing things.

So for example, knife crime in Glasgow was the biggest in Britain, horrible. They reframed that less than a crime as a disease. And once they just framed it as a disease, that reframing, it brought different

resources in. It reduced crime most dramatically in the UK. Another reframing, of course, is the distinction between urban development and placemaking. Placemaking means we have to be holistic, we are integrated in our thinking, we're looking at public space. Of course, issues that are very important. So social progress itself is a reframing device. And I hope it becomes more powerful. Just one final egotistical point, because I'm sort of obsessed by the creative bureaucracy is, how can you really - a lot of what we're talking about implies changing the regulations and incentives regime. And there's so much interesting stuff going on in bureaucracies. There are very interesting bureaucrats. My life's aim for the moment, although I'm not a bureaucrat is to revalue the civil servant in the world. So I ultimately agree, of course, with Isabelle. You know, this is a potential engine. Whatever we do next should be at an even bigger scale. And you know, there are some leaders in this room who will help us do that. So that's all I've got to say, my dear friends.

**Andrew Dubber:** Thank you so much, Charles, and I absolutely agree with everything. I would google creative bureaucracy. I believe this is a very fine conference that takes place annually that is definitely worth checking out. And as Isabelle Diks said, To be continued, hopefully, once again, in the same room next year. Janet, as this is your city, and Umeå is the host of this summit, I'll give the last word to you. Any final thoughts or ambitions?

**Janet Ågren:** No, I want to thank everybody, and everyone that has participated and listened and asked questions during the seminar. So I think today, it's been a great experience and I'm so happy that all of you took part of it and for us being able to, to discuss, share knowledge. And as Isabelle said, I was very happy about your comments. So I hope that maybe Groningen can arrange the next Social Progress Cities Summit next year. So we'll continue our dialogue and discuss the practical things with that. So that would be perfect. I am very happy about you reaching out your hands. And also I want to say a big thank you to all of the excellent speakers for all the inspiring words and knowledge. And also big thank you to you Charles. Charles Landry, you've inspired us and gave a lot of thoughtful words about cities of tomorrow. So but last not least, I want to thank you too, as well, Andrew that you have moderated this day and also trying to moderate a fruitful discussion between mayors. Maybe not always the easiest task but thank you very much. And with that, once again, a big thank you to everyone that has participated and taken the time to be part of this seminar today. So I hope to see you soon again.

**Andrew Dubber:** Absolutely. Well, thank you so much, everyone for joining us. I'm Andrew Dubber. Special thanks to Red Carpet Media, to Linda Gustafson, Suzanne Turin and Annika Darlin for organising everything. To Coveo for an exceptional online conference platform and to you for spending your time with us and your thoughts. Stay safe, stay well, and I hope you enjoy end of year break however you might be enjoying that. Take care. Thank you.