AECOM

VAN
ALEN

INSTITUTE

FAIR
SHARE

URBAN**SOS**

An annual
student challenge to
transform our cities

*Project
Summary*

Different menu setup for contractors.

CONTRACTOR INTERFACE

Collectors sign up to the WELP database via smartphone app, government, or employment agency application.

Smartphone will be provided by WELP for collections and other operations.

GPS directions to the pickup locations.

Messaging platform for collector-customer communication.

The Waste-Help System (WELP) app connects people who want to dispose of waste with people who want to work hauling it away.

The First Class Meal project reimagines United States Postal Service buildings and trucks as infrastructure for storing and redistributing food to people in need.

FOREWORD

Compared with the speed at which apps and new technology are developed, the design, engineering, and construction of urban infrastructure is relatively slow. Yet, when technological innovation combines with popular demand, the framework for innovation at the city-scale can be radically hastened. Remember how quickly the city was reframed after the automobile became popular. Today, the sharing revolution is having a similar effect on how we move, consume, and live. With an increase in choice and efficiency, many would say the world has changed for the better; yet, the technology revolution has failed to address the most significant socioeconomic challenges of our time and there is an increasing divide between the haves and the have nots.

Thus, we posed this year's Urban SOS challenge: *Fair Share* to explore the nexus of the sharing economy and urban infrastructure to address acute equity issues in the world's cities: urban poverty, food deserts, job creation and the global refugee crisis. Their solutions are impressive and far reaching. We created the Urban SOS challenge to imagine solutions that can be delivered. As you review the students work, we hope you are inspired to get involved with our students, their universities, AECOM, Van Alen and 100 RC. These equity and infrastructure issues are great, but our collective ability to imagine and deliver together is greater.

Stephen Engblom
Senior Vice President/
Global Director of Cities, AECOM

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FOREWORD

In tackling some of our most critical societal issues — rapidly growing cities with fraying infrastructure, historic levels of migration, and climate change — design has much to offer. After all, designers are trained to analyze existing conditions and propose creative alternatives to the status quo. But those of us who work to improve our built environment know that we have to collaborate across disciplines, with experts from sociology, economics, public health, and many other fields, as well as with a wide range of stakeholders, in order to frame problems in new ways and find unconventional solutions.

A 2015 Van Alen survey on design competitions found students were more likely than professionals to seek out multidisciplinary teams[1]. Urban SOS gives students a chance to collaborate with peers from fields they might not encounter otherwise in their coursework on issues and sites of their own choosing. As one of the members of this year's winning team told us, that experience can be invaluable: "Because we all come to the table with different backgrounds and skill sets, we challenge each other's assumptions and test each other's knowledge." For tomorrow's emerging leaders, learning to work this way might be one of the most important lessons of all.
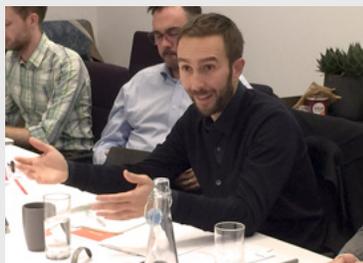
David van der Leer
Executive Director, Van Alen Institute

The Living City *team mapped levels of immigration through Athens to cities and countries throughout Europe.*

The En Común(a) *team sketched out how key stakeholders in Quito's communities using their online sharing platform could connect with each other.*

[1] 19% of students responding to the survey, compared to 9% of principals/directors of firms, said they were interested in collaborating with people outside of design.

Photo Credit: USAID, Niger

2010 Distressed Cities, Creative Responses

2011 Transformations

2012 Water

2013 Frontiers

2014 Towards a New Industry

2015 All Systems Go

INTRODUCTION

Cities around the world face difficult challenges providing and maintaining high-quality housing, parks, roads and transit, water systems, and many other kinds of urban infrastructure. These challenges will only become more urgent as the world's urban populations grow and confront rising sea levels, more severe droughts and storms, and other consequences of climate change. How can we design and build these systems so they perform multiple ecological, social, and economic functions? How can we convince key stakeholders of the value of investing in urban infrastructure, especially when government budgets and capacity are stretched thin?

Urban SOS

AECOM, the leading fully integrated infrastructure firm, launched Urban SOS in 2009 to challenge emerging leaders to develop outside-the-box strategies capable of addressing significant urban challenges. For the last two years, AECOM has partnered with Van Alen Institute, a design nonprofit with a 120-plus-year history of organizing innovative design competitions, and 100 Resilient Cities — Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation, an organization that helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges of the 21st century.

Each year, Urban SOS sets students a new challenge, asking them to work across disciplines to tackle urban issues from reclaiming abandoned industrial land to improving food, waste, and water systems. AECOM and Van Alen engage leading industry professionals to review and provide feedback to students' proposals. The winning team receives a cash prize and up to US$25,000 of in-kind support from AECOM to pilot their proposal.

URBAN SOS: FAIR SHARE

The so-called sharing economy has transformed the way we live, work, get around, take care of daily tasks, and interact with each other — especially in urban areas. But how many of our apps and devices help us address questions of social equity in cities, or improve their built environments? With so many cities struggling to provide vital infrastructure, can the next generation of urban leaders design new digital and physical solutions to these urgent problems?

In this year's competition, *Urban SOS: Fair Share,* we invited multidisciplinary teams to tackle this issue, challenging them to fuse physical design and the tools and technologies of the sharing economy to make urban infrastructure more resilient and equitable. This document describes the Urban SOS process and *Fair Share* finalist proposals, and outlines four key themes that emerged with the potential to change the way we think about urban infrastructure needs and opportunities.

We congratulate and thank all of the teams that participated for their hard work and unconventional thinking, and the many professional experts who helped guide the proposals.

Photo Credit: Luke Ekblad
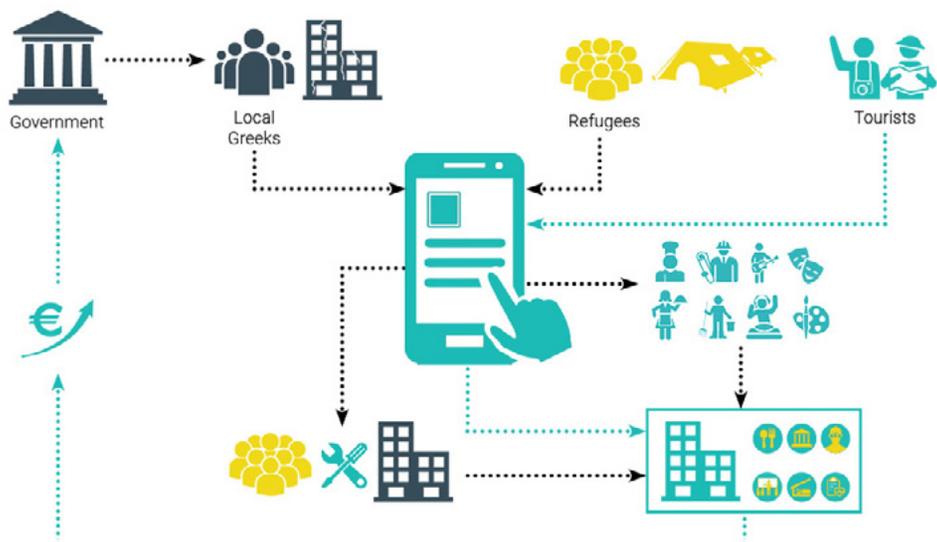
The Living City *team proposed a digital sharing platform that could bring together refugees, tourists, and long-time residents in Athens to re-use abandoned buildings and vacant lots.*

Post offices slated for closure in Los Angeles could remain as neighborhood institutions in the First Class Meal *team's proposal.*

KEY THEMES

1. Small scale can make a big impact where it's needed the most.

It's no accident that *Fair Share* teams focused on some of the world's most marginalized people — refugees and asylum seekers in Greece; street vendors in Luxor and informal transit riders in Nairobi; families living in the food deserts of New York and LA. The teams identified urgent needs, but also understood that design and digital sharing platforms can thrive where budgets are most severely limited, by pooling resources and imagining new ways to use them.

The teams proposed new physical and digital urban infrastructure at a human scale: for instance, apps that help vendors find unused spaces, paired with inexpensive mobile structures that help vendors store, display, and transport food and other goods; or new public spaces, strategically placed outside corner stores that promote healthy food and encourage residents to bring food waste to be composted. These interventions make the sometimes abstract concept of infrastructure immediate and meaningful in people's everyday lives. In places where large-scale investments may be economically or politically unrealistic, the teams' proposals can start small but be scaled to achieve bigger impacts.

KEY THEMES

2. Sometimes supply and demand need some help.

Income inequality continues to rise around the world, forcing designers to consider how they could impact economic dynamics. The *Fair Share* teams developed ingenious ways to bring together people who have services to offer with counterparts who have money to pay for them, helping local economies function more efficiently, inclusively, and humanely.

For example, working with residents in the communes of Quito, Ecuador, the *En Común(a)* team has launched a website that allows people living in relatively isolated communities to map their needs and resources, and connect to others with shared goals. The team hopes this online platform can help farmers to form a collective that will be more competitive at Quito's central market than if each farmer went to market alone.

In their research, the *WELP* teammates found that the City of Durban, South Africa, does not have systems in place to collect many kinds of waste, and informal waste collectors typically work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. The team proposed an app connecting households that have disposable waste with people who would earn income collecting this waste, as well as a series of physical hubs distributed throughout the city that would provide temporary housing, restrooms, and kitchens to waste collectors. The team even developed a preliminary business model, using modest fees to households disposing of waste to fund the entire system.

New Commercialization & Production Chains
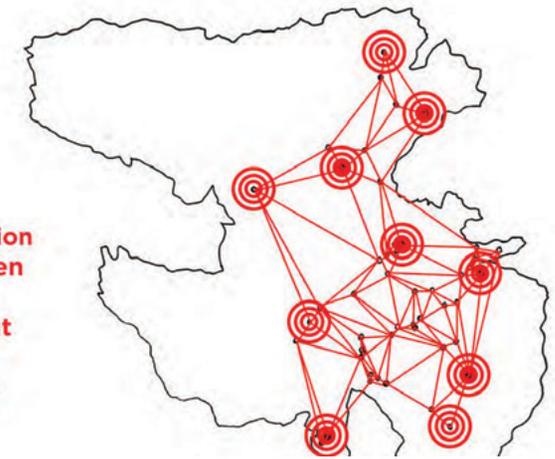
Creating new commercialization and production chains between them not only will help to strengthen their relations but will provide them with the economic self-sufficiency to satisfy their needs.

The En Común(a) *team launched a website to help local residents pool their resources – for instance, selling crops collectively at Quito's central market.*
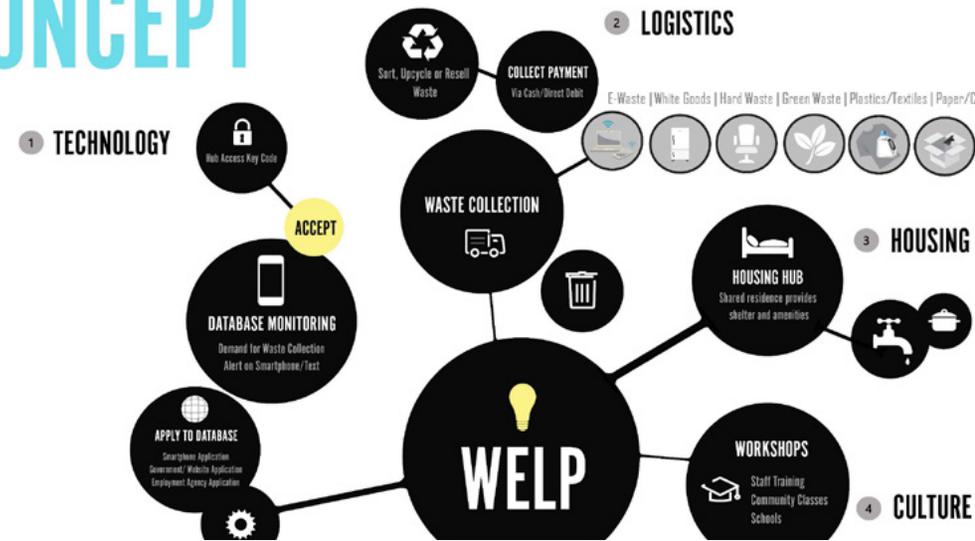
The WELP *team's proposal creates opportunities for people to earn income and access vital services, while improving Durban's waste infrastructure system.*

The Living City proposed mobile infrastructure to support temporary restaurants, markets, and other activities in abandoned buildings.

The First Class Meal team found that food banks in LA often lack storage capacity – a resource that the USPS could provide in their underused post offices.

KEY THEMES

3. To tackle difficult infrastructure issues, look for solutions in the most unlikely places.

Sometimes it feels like cities will never have the funding, capacity, or political will needed to ensure that infrastructure can be productive and resilient for everyone. However, making unexpected connections among stakeholders or between seemingly unrelated issues can point to new solutions. Some of the most innovative *Fair Share* proposals linked three existing conditions — unmet need, unused infrastructure, and untapped resources — to address multiple urban issues.

For instance, *The Living City* team saw that Athens, Greece, is struggling to adapt to the mass migration to Europe and is still recovering from an economic crisis — evident in the city's many underemployed refugees and abandoned buildings and lots. The team proposed engaging refugees to help launch pop-up restaurants, markets, and other uses that help reclaim abandoned spaces. These temporary activities could appeal to tourists looking for unique experiences, and bring refugees together with long-time residents to improve their neighborhoods.

The *First Class Meal* team found that one in every six residents in Los Angeles are impacted by food insecurity, and the region's food banks are chronically short of storage space and delivery capacity — even though downtown LA alone wastes enough food each week to fill two Olympic-sized swimming pools. Meanwhile, the United States Postal Service (USPS) is closing or reducing hours at thousands of post offices nationwide, including 12 in LA. The team proposed retrofitting USPS post office boxes, trucks, and buildings to ship, store, and redistribute food that would have been wasted, getting it instead to people in need.
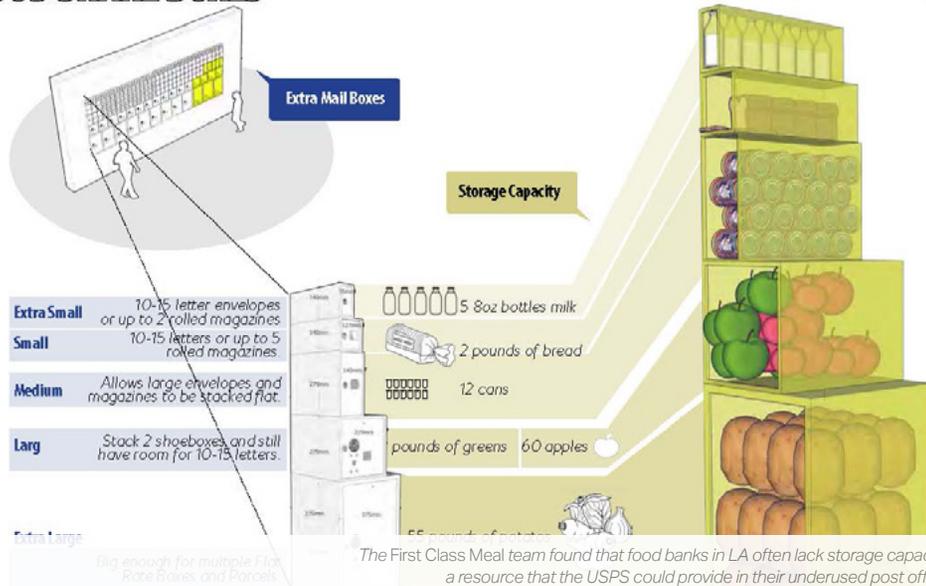
KEY THEMES

4. What does the future look like? Ask a student.

Architects, landscape architects, and urban planners do not usually incorporate digital sharing platforms in their designs for a new building, park, or district. Technologists and coders often overlook how interventions in the built environment could enhance their digital tools. Who better than students to marry these ways of working together? Students are already using digital tools and technologies in ways never seen before, and they are eager to work across disciplines.

Digital sharing platforms can be incredibly effective at connecting people who might not otherwise have found each other, enabling them to work together toward a common goal. Physical design can transform the spaces and objects around us in almost any way imaginable. We hope *Fair Share* will inspire a new wave of hackathons, incubators, and other public and private initiatives that bring together student designers of digital and physical worlds to address our most pressing societal challenges.
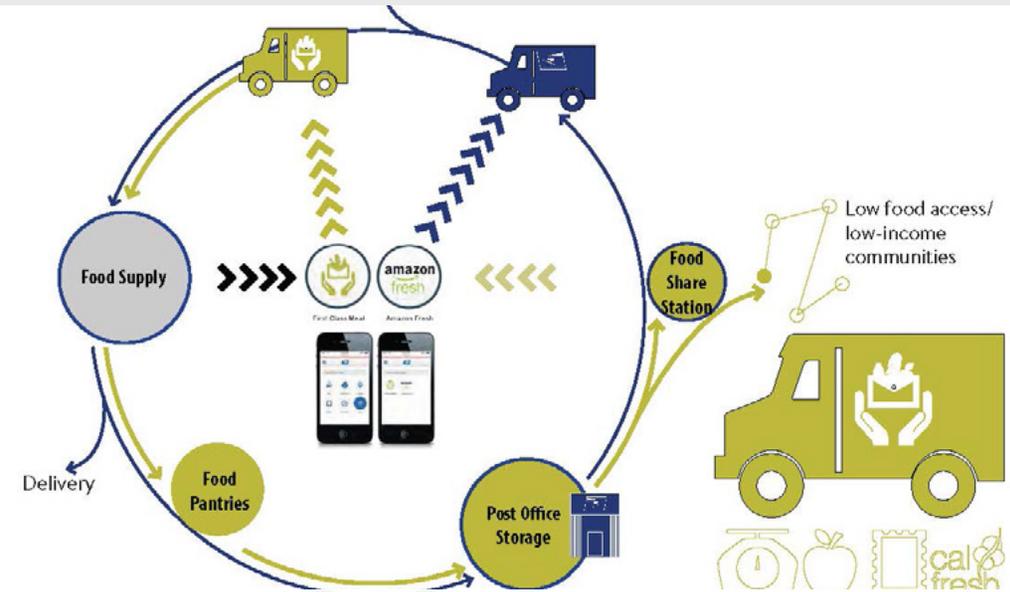
The Fair Share *team's proposed app would connect local residents, food pantries, private-sector delivery services, and post offices to improve food distribution in LA.*
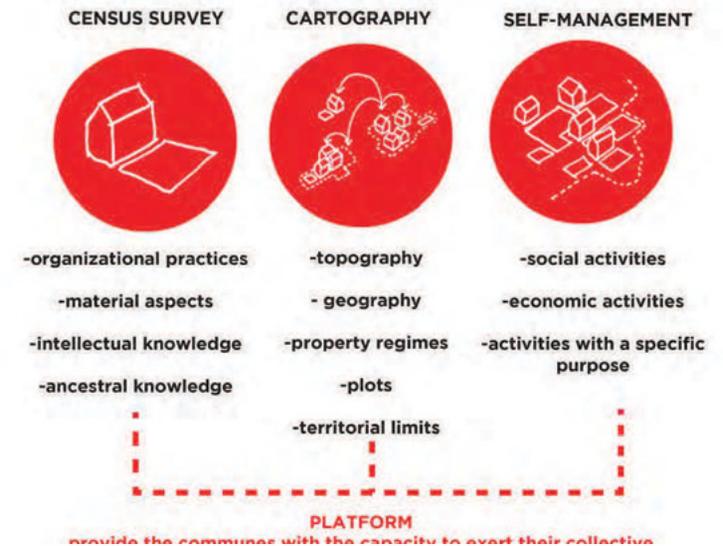
This diagram outlines the data collection, mapping, and community organizing functions of the En Común(a) *team's website.*

WINNER

FIRST CLASS MEAL

Anu Samarajiva
Architecture and Urban Design
Washington University
St. Louis, MO, USA

Irum Javed
Public Health
Washington University
St. Louis, MO, USA

Lanxi Zhang
Landscape Architecture and Urban Design
Washington University
St. Louis, MO, USA

WINNER

FIRST CLASS MEAL

It was perhaps the most striking provocation from the year's competition: Could the United States Postal Service (USPS) use its vast transportation infrastructure and inventory of underused buildings to alleviate food insecurity in Los Angeles? The team behind *First Class Meal* did not just settle for a catchy one-liner, but visualized data and synthesized research on existing food justice initiatives to inform their vision of the USPS as a new hub for the collection, storage, and redistribution of surplus food to neighborhoods with little access to healthy food.

First Class Meal would use technology to connect need with supply, proposing that USPS's current package tracking system be evolved so food suppliers can notify USPS drivers when food items are ready for pick-up. With companies such as FedEx and Amazon already using USPS infrastructure to help boost their operating capacity, *First Class Meal* envisions food banks, restaurants and households doing the same to increase food access in areas of need.

Post Office boxes repurposed as food storage and pick-up units.

SECOND PLACE

EN COMÚN(A)

Mateo Fernandez-Muro
ETSAM
University Politecnica de Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Francisco Aguilar
Theory and Urban Practices
The New School
New York, NY, USA
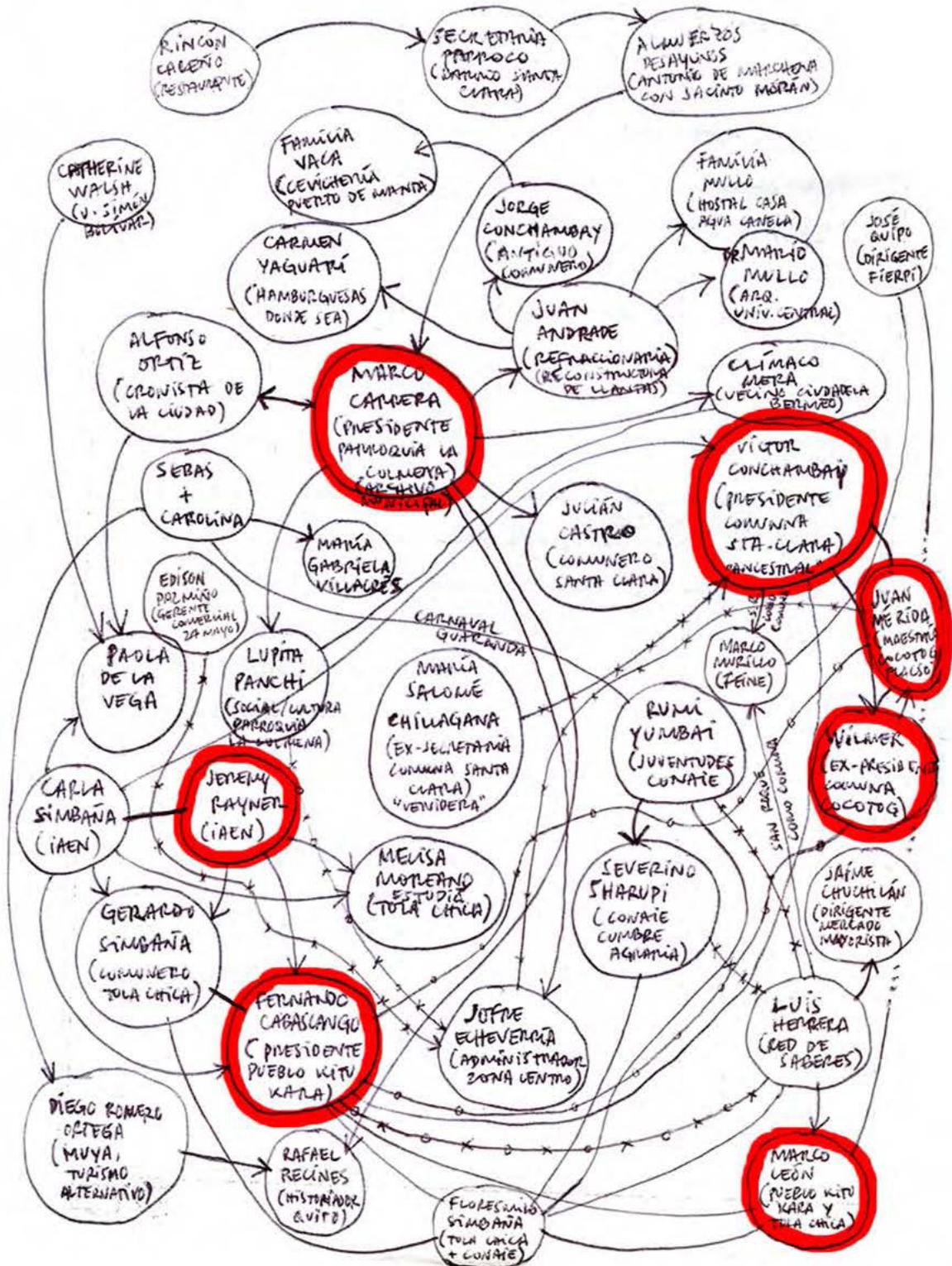
EN COMÚN(A)
Designing self-governance tools
for an emancipatory urban production

FRANCISCO MIRANDA

SECOND PLACE

EN COMÚN(A)

En Común(a) is helping residents of indigenous communes (self-governing territories) in Quito, Ecuador to share resources, improve the social and economic infrastructure of their communities, and — perhaps most radically — to strengthen their political clout. Concurrently with submitting a proposal for *Urban SOS: Fair Share*, the team has been working with residents in 18 of Quito's communes to develop a pilot website that maps their needs and resources, as well as property boundaries and other information about land ownership. The website makes it easier for people to connect and work collectively, and also gives people access to information that can help them lobby for greater recognition from local and federal government.

80,000 inhabitants approx. = **3,7%** of DMQ population
60% in URBAN areas
20% in RURAL areas

NATIVE URBAN INDIGENOUS
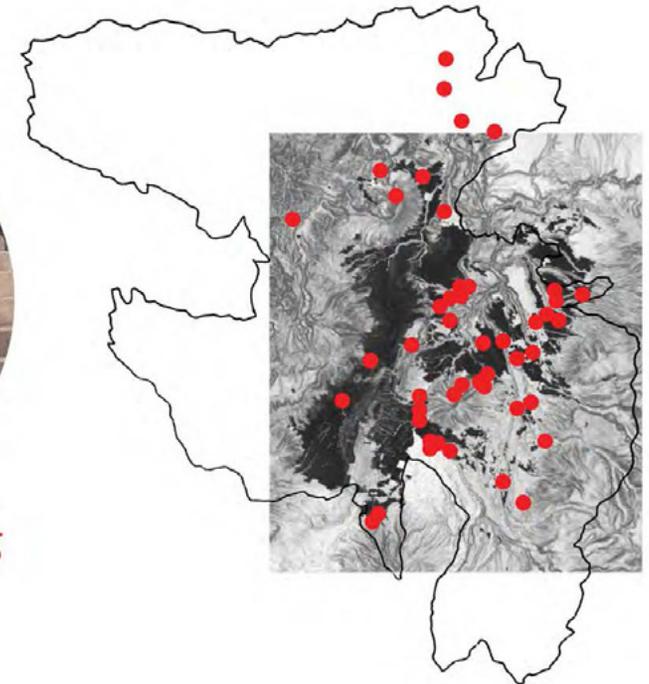
THIRD PLACE

WELP

(Waste-Help System)

Mari Smith
Civil Engineering and Architectural Design
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

Vivian Ly
Commerce and Civil Engineering
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

Lixin Wang
Civil Engineering and Arts
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

Kate Maxfield
Medicine and Global Politics
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

NOLOG

2 **LOGISTICS**

Sort, Upcycle or Resell Waste

COLLECT PAYMENT
Via Cash/Direct Debit

E-Waste | White Goods | Hard Waste | Green Waste | Plastics/Textiles | Pape

WASTE COLLECTION

3 **HOUSIN**

HOUSING HUB
Shared residence provides shelter and amenities

APPLY TO DATABASE
Smartphone Application
Government/ Website Application
Employment Agency Application

WELP

WORKSHOPS
Staff Training
Community Classes
Schools

4 **CULTUR**

Fostering a culture!

THIRD PLACE

WELP

(Waste-Help System)

When the Waste-Help System — or *WELP* — team sought to improve the waste disposal infrastructure in Durban, South Africa, they tackled the challenge holistically to improve local residents' social, environmental, and economic conditions. The team's proposal includes a new app and text messaging service that connects households with waste to collectors who earn income for disposing of it; a series of physical hubs providing waste collectors with temporary housing, bathrooms, and kitchens; and a municipal campaign to foster a culture of recycling. Together, these initiatives empower residents to collectively improve the city's waste infrastructure system, while improving people's quality of life — particularly for some of the city's poorest residents.

EXPLODED PROGRAM VIEW

HUB DESIGN

Modular, prefabricated 40x27m² hubs are constructed from ArmorCore® fibreglass panels, concrete, corrugated roofing and steel beams. The hubs are designed to be self-sustaining, fire and burglary resistant.

Implementing solar power, passive temperature and ventilation control design, reducing both costs and environmental impact.

SOLAR PANELS

WASTE STORAGE

TRANSPORT
Access point for waste drop off. Each hub houses two vehicles.

3 X BEDROOMS

LIVING
Kitchen & Dining

Ventilation Skylights permit natural light and coastal easterly breezes for latent cooling and lighting

WORKSHOP

RETAIL FRONT
Public access point and admin office

AMENITIES
2 Public Toilets & Laundry

WASH ROOM
4 Private Toilets & 4 Showers

Passive advertising panels

Houses up to 6: either families with two able bodied workers or 4 individual workers, including permanent admin staff.

This diagram illustrates one of the WELP team's proposed hubs that allow waste collectors to access housing, kitchens, and bathrooms.

Ho-Ting Liu
Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, MA, USA

Faranak Khas Ahmadi
Landscape Architecture
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA, USA

Andurina Espinoza
Migration Studies
Oxford University
Oxford, England, United Kingdom

Jenny Kyung Jin Lee
Public Administration in Development Practice
Columbia University
New York, NY, USA

VIENNA

HUNGARY
2000
REFUGEES
DAILY ARRIVALS

BUDAPEST

BELGRADE

SERBIA
2000–2,500
REFUGEES
DAILY ARRIVALS

ISTANBUL

MACEDONIA
2000–2,500
REFUGEES
DAILY ARRIVALS

TURKEY
1939,000
REFUGEES

GREECE
3000
REFUGEES
DAILY ARRIVALS

ALEPPO

SYRIA

HOMS

ATHENS
TRANSIT CITY

LEBANON
1114,000

DAMASCUS

JORDAN
629,200
REFUGEES

As of June 2015

HONORABLE MENTION

THE LIVING CITY

The influx of migrants into Europe is typically viewed as a crisis. Members of *The Living City* team, however, saw the potential for refugees to work alongside long-time residents to improve their local communities.

In Athens, where the recent global recession devastated the city's economy, *The Living City* team proposed mobile infrastructure (kitchen units with modules for seating or displaying goods for sale) that could help people reclaim abandoned buildings and vacant lots with micro-enterprise. An app would help refugees to self-identify interests and skill sets, and to see where help is needed — beginning with the Exarcheia neighborhood, where the team envisioned a hub focused on a rich diversity of cultures and food production.

DIGITAL DESIGN

Main Page

Log in as Guest to search for unique experiences

Connect with Yelp

Log in as Member to list/find spaces + skills for small businesses

The Living City *team's digital platform would help people share skills and underused spaces with each other.*

IMPLEMENTATION

AECOM offers in-kind support to the winning Urban SOS teams to develop a pilot of their proposal.

For example, in 2011, the winning Urban SOS team built the waterfront public space they had proposed along the Andai River in Banjarmasin, a delta city on the Indonesian island of Kalimantan. The team's proposal, *Firm Foundation*, sought to reduce environmental vulnerability in riverfront settlements in Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Built in partnership with PNPM Mandri, Indonesia's national program for slum upgrading and community empowerment, *Firm Foundation* positioned Banjarmasin's rivers as an asset for sustainable development and as a catalyst for future investments in basic services.

The design restored an abandoned pier, recovering important daily economic activities allowing residents to purchase vegetables from boat vendors. The new public space steps down to the water and creates multiple ways to engage the river through fishing and other activities, while also providing seating for an adjacent food stall.

Discussions are now underway with the *First Class Meal* team on implementation.

Local residents in Banjarmasin, Indonesia enjoy the implemented waterfront project, Firm Foundation, that won the 2011 Urban SOS competition.

PROCESS

May 2016

AECOM and Van Alen Institute along with 100 Resilient Cities launched *Urban SOS: Fair Share.*

September 2016

Teams submitted proposals by the competition deadline; 15 AECOM offices around the world reviewed initial proposals, selecting 16 semifinalists.

October 2016

Over four weeks, Van Alen worked with semifinalists to refine their projects by asking the right questions: Who does the proposal serve and how does it engage them? What do we need to understand about the existing context to create a strong proposal? How can your design and digital strategies best support your goals?

October–November 2016

Regional juries comprised of leaders from design, government, tech, business, and other sectors convened in four cities (Hong Kong, London, New York, and Sydney) to review semifinalist proposals and select four finalists.

December 2016-January 2017

Over six weeks, Van Alen worked with the four finalists to strengthen and focus their proposals, and refine visual representation, narrative, and digital and design solutions.

January 2017

The final jury in Los Angeles selected the winning proposal.
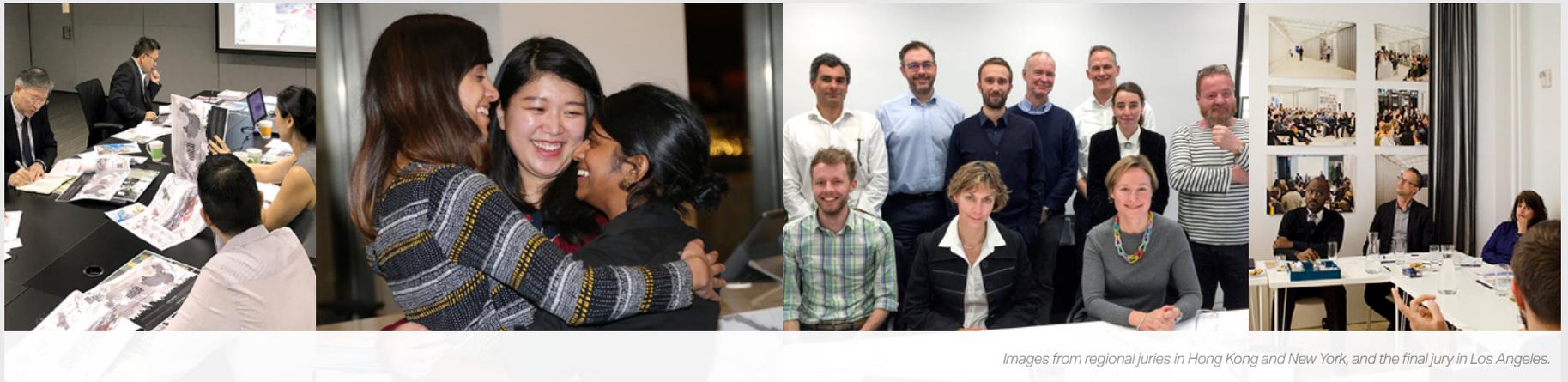
Images from regional juries in Hong Kong and New York, and the final jury in Los Angeles.

REGIONAL JURIES

Hong Kong

Aric Chen
Curator of Design and Architecture, M+

Nelson Chen
Director, School of Architecture, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Marisa Yiu
Founding Partner, eskyiu

Jessica Lax
Associate Director of Competitions, Van Alen Institute

Len Ren Lee
Vice President, Director of Master Planning, Asia, AECOM

London

Heather Cheesbrough
Director of Planning and Strategic Transport,
London Borough of Croydon

Joe Dignan
Global Channel Partner Lead, Future Cities Catapult

Stephen Engblom
Senior Vice President/Global Director of Cities, AECOM

Felipe Hernandez
Director M.Phil in Architecture and Urban Studies; Chair,
Cities South of Cancer, University of Cambridge

Andrew Jones
Cities Director, EMIA, AECOM

David van der Leer
Executive Director, Van Alen Institute

Maria Nicanor
Director, The Norman Foster Foundation

Alan Penn
Dean, The Bartlett UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment

Louise Wyman
Head of Garden Villages, Towns and Cities, UK
Department of Communities and Local Government
(DCLG)/Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

New York

Frank Hebbert
Digital Product Director, Motivate International

David van der Leer
Executive Director, Van Alen Institute

Elaine Molinar
Director, Snøhetta

Otis Rolley
Regional Director, North America Region & Africa Region
100 Resilient Cities

Jeff Shumaker
Chief Urban Designer, NYC Department of City Planning

Chris Ward
Chief Executive/Senior Vice President, Metro New York, AECOM

Sydney

Chris Bosse
Director, LAVA Asia Pacific

Beck Dawson
Chief Resilience Officer, Sydney

Melissa Edwards
Senior Lecturer, University of Technology Sydney Business School

Jessica Lax
Associate Director of Competitions, Van Alen Institute

Helen Lochhead
Dean of the Faculty of Built Environment,
University of New South Wales

Anita Morandini
Design Excellence Manager, City of Sydney

James Rosenwax
Cities Director, ANZ, AECOM

Images from the final jury in Los Angeles.

FINAL JURY: LOS ANGELES

Marissa Aho
Chief Resilience Officer, City of Los Angeles

Vince Bertoni
Planning Director, City of Los Angeles

Josh Emig
Head of Research & Development, WeWork

Stephen Engblom
Senior Vice President/Global Director of Cities, AECOM

Leah Hanes
Executive Director, Two Bit Circus

Bill Hanway
Executive Vice President/Global Director of Sports
Mega Events, AECOM

David van der Leer
Executive Director, Van Alen Institute

Greg Lindsay
Senior Fellow, New Cities Foundation

Shahram Mehraban
Marketing Director, Intel

Skylar Olsen
Senior Economist, Zillow

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100 Resilient Cities — Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation

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Chief Resilience Officer, Los Angeles

Michael Berkowitz
President

Beck Dawson
Chief Resilience Officer, Sydney

Otis Rolley
Regional Director, North America Region
& Africa Region

About AECOM

AECOM is built to deliver a better world. We design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets for governments, businesses and organizations in more than 150 countries. As a fully integrated firm, we connect knowledge and experience across our global network of experts to help clients solve their most complex challenges. From high-performance buildings and infrastructure, to resilient communities and environments, to stable and secure nations, our work is transformative, differentiated and vital. A Fortune 500 firm, AECOM had revenue of approximately $17.4 billion during fiscal year 2016. See how we deliver what others can only imagine at aecom.com and @AECOM.

About Van Alen Institute

At Van Alen Institute, we believe design can transform cities, landscapes, and regions to improve people's lives. We collaborate with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of tomorrow. Building on more than a century of experience, we develop cross-disciplinary research, provocative public programs, and inventive design competitions.
vanalen.org
@Van_Alen

About 100 Resilient Cities — Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation

100 Resilient Cities — Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation (100RC) helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. 100RC provides this assistance through: funding for a Chief Resilience Officer in each member city who will lead the resilience efforts; resources for drafting a resilience strategy; access to private sector, public sector, academic, and NGO resilience tools; and membership in a global network of peer cities to share best practices and challenges.
http://www.100resilientcities.org
@100ResCities

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