

## Sustainable cities: The future is around the corner

We must think of consumption alternatives and energies that guarantee a future for next generations

Congregación Mariana Trinitaria (CMT) contributes to the creation of self-employment opportunities for families who decide not to emigrate through the expansion of goals with savings groups.

Since 1994, right after the approval of the “Charter of European Sustainable Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability” in Aalborg, Denmark; governments were urged to develop long-term action plans towards sustainability in European cities. This way, the idea became stronger and more cities in the world joined these actions with the objective of improving quality of life for its inhabitants.

A sustainable city is a city that provides good quality of life to its inhabitants without putting resources in risk. Concerns about welfare of future humanity are also considered, as well as the encouragement of conditions for social justice. It is important to mention that this information is aligned with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the last decades, overpopulation, wasteful consumption of natural resources like water, pollution and social inequality, among others; caused the rise of “sustainable cities”.

### DATA

The Aalborg Charter was initially signed by 80 local authorities in Europe and 253 representatives of international organizations, national governments, scientific institutions, consultants, and individuals

### Why are sustainable cities urgent?

Due to the increase in migration to the biggest metropolis, the governments demonstrated that they were not able to manage the resources to satisfy basic needs of millions of citizens. For this reason, the objective of sustainable cities is to reaffirm the commitment to preserve the environment and welfare of its inhabitants in order to guarantee that in the future, they might count on basic services, natural resources and a prudent consumption of them.

Sustainability is a concept that was positioned over the last years. It is an evidence of the concern of people to be aware of the way we consume resources, the way the world economy works, and the way to preserve our environment. With this concept, people want to reorientate human and productive activities in such a way that ecosystem elements find a balance so they may be regenerated right after being taken.

What are the objectives of a sustainable city? According to the text “Sustainable cities in Mexico: a conceptual and operational proposal”, they are designed to decrease rates on poverty and inequality, promote a proper use of resources, encourage economies based on low consumption of carbon, and to increase opportunities for urban development. In order to do so, it is necessary to have inclusive politics, better control over the use of land, solid finances and an urban-metropolitan normativity.

- Rapid urbanization is causing impact on drink water suppliers, wastewaters, the environment and public health

- Cities in the world represent only 3% of Earth’s surface, but they demand between 60% to 80% of energy consumption, and they cause 75% of carbon emissions



### CMT contributions to sustainable cities

To consider a city as a sustainable city, it must meet specific requirements, such as:

- Access to basic public resources: guarantee quality education for its inhabitants, appropriate health centers, accessible and inclusive transportation, garbage collection service, security, and good air quality.
- Urban renovation: streets, plazas, parks, and urban spaces in general need to be adapted to preserve cultural patrimony and their incorporation to the modern side of the city.



- Reduction of CO2 emissions: use of renewable energies, alternative means of transportation (bicycles, electric trains and buses, etc.) and adapt houses to promote water and energy saving.
- Benefit fair trade: fair trade models must be promoted to encourage local commerce and the networks of producers who respect the environmental policies.
- Triple formula: It means reduce, reuse and recycle; to make people aware of the importance of recycling and make responsible consumption so as to avoid overuse of natural resources, and also to create solidarity networks between the inhabitants.

Congregación Mariana Trinitaria (CMT) promotes actions that may contribute to develop sustainable cities, for example, through the “Energy Network”, which is part of the CMT Welfare Ecosystem, we promote the use of ecotechnologies like solar heaters and panels. The use of those, contributes to the family economy, but it also makes a direct impact to decrease CO2 emissions. The United Nations reported that heating water causes 30% of those emissions so, the use of solar heaters may reduce more than 20% of CO2 emissions.

Additionally, through “Water Network” we promote implementation of systems to collect rainwater. In big cities such as Mexico City, these systems contribute to decrease floods, recover aquifers, and to reduce the use of energy and water for periods of about 6 months.

Likewise, CMT promotes trade through the “Productive and Financial Inclusion Network” by implementing backyard gardens or urban gardens to boost a conscious consumption of healthy food. It also encourages local commerce to make stronger communities and to strengthen community economies.

We may infer that sustainable cities aim at inclusive urbanization, capacities to plan and manage participation, and integration of human settlements. It is time to intensify efforts to protect and safeguard cultural and natural patrimonies in order to give universal access to green areas and safe public spaces, especially to women, children, elderly people, and handicapped people. It is also important to support economic, social, and environmental alliances to foster national and regional development.

### The most sustainable cities in the world

According to the Sustainable Cities Index (SCI) 2019, Acadis rated the 10 most sustainable cities, considering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which respond to social, environmental and economic items

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|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. London, England           | 6. New York City, USA |
| 2. Stockholm, Sweden         | 7. Madrid, Spain      |
| 3. Edinburgh, Scotland       | 8. Vancouver, Canada  |
| 4. Singapore City, Singapore | 9. Barcelona, Spain   |
| 5. Viena, Austria            | 10. Tokyo, Japan      |