

WORLD

DESIGN ORGANIZATION

Design for a better world



FEATURE

SERIES

#Coliving

SPOTLIGHT

#Designer

DESIGNFOR

#SDG11

**HY WILLIAM CHAN:
DESIGNING CITIES FOR
CO-LIVING**

28 August 2018

wdo.org

HY WILLIAM CHAN: DESIGNING CITIES FOR CO-LIVING

28 August 2018

HY William Chan is the project associate for Global Studio, [Center for Sustainable Urban Development](#) at Columbia University and is an urban designer/planner for [Cox Architecture](#) in Australia. Last year, William represented young designers at the WDO General Assembly in Turin, Italy, where he was involved in launching the World Design Agenda 2017-2019 and advocating for SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. We asked him to share his vision of designing for better co-living in cities.

How have your experiences of co-living in cities shaped your work in architecture and urban design?

With more people living in cities than ever before, I believe it is essential to place social inclusion at the heart of co-living especially when it comes to urban equality and the right to access cities. Through living and working in Sydney, Milan and Berlin, as well as collaborating in informal settlements, I have seen the invigorating spirit of different people coming together, co-living in urban areas and building community through human-centered design.

“ In order for us to live co-live together, we need to co-design together too.

For me, architecture and urban design needs to be meaningful for people living together. And the most meaningful solutions come about when there is public participation in the design and planning of our cities – whether it is housing, public spaces, transport and infrastructure or governance. It enables people to become active agents in shaping, and sharing, their environment, unlocking the resourcefulness of place and providing design opportunities from equitable access. Put simply, in order for us to co-live together



Image source: Cox Architecture

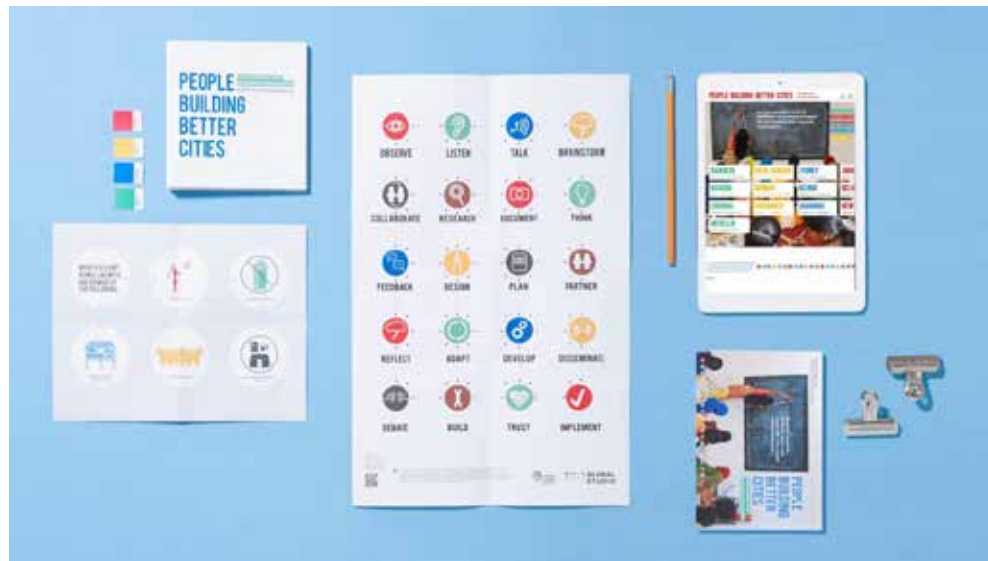
How are your design projects with slum dwellers and refugees contributing to achieving SDG 11 and to better co-live together in urban areas?

In the slums of Bhopal, India, I was involved in the new city master plan, which was designed with the participation of local residents to reconcile heritage with rapid urbanization. A bottleneck corridor in the Upper Lake divided the old town, a traditional Hindu area, with the new, predominantly Muslim area of the city. Our strategy explored 'knitting together' the fragmented cultural and built fabric. We designed new, publicly accessible walkways and plazas along the lake to create a more inclusive city center.

This project, alongside my work with township residents in South Africa, is showcased through Global Studio's [People Building Better Cities](#) initiative. The modular, open-source traveling exhibition advocates

innovative ideas on inclusive urban design and the global problems surrounding informal housing settlements. Since opening in 2012, it has traveled to 20 cities across five continents with a portfolio of localized design events and activities.

More recently, as a Fellow of the [World Innovation Summit for Education](#), I have been engaged with refugee communities in Athens, Greece, co-designing environments that foster innovation with a core emphasis on integration. Whether in a camp or urban setting, refugees co-live with their host communities and so social cohesion plays an important role towards livelihood creation. Through listening to and understanding the needs of users, child-friendly spaces were created in the city that brought local Greek youth with young refugees to learn and collaborate together as equals. Designing for dignity in these contexts becomes the most central driver to delivering cities that are socially sustainable.



How do you think designers can help accelerate actions towards the achievement of the SDGs?

The key for architects and urban designers to contribute towards the progress on the SDGs is to collaborate in a multidisciplinary manner with others from diverse professions. The SDGs aim to end the world's most wicked problems and this can only be achieved by breaking boundaries and stepping outside of our comfort zone.

An example of this is the award-winning Brisbane Ferry Terminals which were redesigned by Cox Architecture and [Aurecon](#) in my hometown, following the 2011 flooding of the city's river. This partnership harnessed ingenuity in architecture and engineering to generate an innovative solution that significantly shifted away from previous design conventions. It resulted in the world's first flood-resistant ferry infrastructure. The project is a testament to how our cities can co-live with the natural environment through collaboratively designing for resilience.

Watch [*Think possible: The story about the award-winning Brisbane Ferry Terminals*](#)



ABOUT

HY WILLIAM CHAN

HY William Chan is the project associate for Global Studio, [Center for Sustainable Urban Development](#) at Columbia University and is an urban designer/planner for [Cox Architecture](#) in Australia. Last year, William represented young designers at the WDO General Assembly in Turin, Italy, where he was involved in launching the World Design Agenda 2017-2019 and advocating for SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Twitter: [@HYWilliamChan](#)

Linkedin: [HY William Chan](#)

Presented by

WDO —

Design for a better world

See our features on social media. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

This feature is part of a series of articles presented by the World Design Organization. It can be found on [www.wdo.org](#)

This is a digital pdf, please consider the environment before printing.