

Millennium Cities

More than 3.5 billion people, over half the world's population, now live in cities.¹ Not only is urbanization on the rise, but poverty is as well, with over a billion living in urban slums.² The migration to urban settings creates overcrowding and pollution, increasing cities' disease burden and placing real strains on the delivery of basic social services.



With sufficient support from our donors and partners, our efforts can bring millions out of severe poverty and enable the Millennium Cities to emerge as thriving urban centers.



The Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI), founded in 2006 by Earth Institute Director and world-renowned development economist Jeffrey D. Sachs, assists selected sub-Saharan cities in their efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight fundamental and quantifiable targets aimed at halving extreme poverty by 2015. We help these under-resourced urban centers become viable, sustainable "Millennium Cities"—each with distinct livelihood opportunities, improved access to public services, and links both with the countryside and international markets.

We have made great progress in many of the Millennium Cities through a combination of research and policy analysis and by working with local, domestic and international partners to stimulate economic and social development. Our extensive network of partners around the world—including investors, philanthropists and entrepreneurs; nonprofits and corporations; and governmental and multilateral institutions—joins MCI in the belief that, for the first time, our generation has the opportunity to complete an urban transformation across Africa and beyond.

Developing Economies and Improving Quality of Life

One of MCI's top priorities is to encourage economic growth within the Millennium Cities by attracting domestic and foreign investment that can create jobs, stimulate enterprise development, and increase prosperity through more efficient agricultural production, increased and improved agro-processing and manufacturing, and access to a wider array of export markets. For each city, MCI undertakes research and analysis work, together with its partners, to evaluate the legal framework for investment, identify commercially viable opportunities, strengthen the capacity for investment promotion and facilitation, and promote public-private sector dialogue. This work is resulting in the preparation and dissemination of research through publications, mailings and events, in an effort to inform foreign and domestic investors about promising business and investment opportunities.

MCI also assists the Millennium Cities by conducting detailed, MDG-based needs assessments in the areas of education, public health, gender equality, and water and sanitation, to help the cities identify gaps in the provision and quality of related social services, together with the relative costs of filling those gaps. MCI's research and recommendations are shared with key stakeholders in each city, where they can help lay the groundwork for the production of integrated city development strategies through which the cities can capitalize on local strengths, engage development partners in expanding access to improved social services, and enhance investment and other livelihood opportunities.

The hope is that the Millennium Cities can serve as scalable models, enabling similarly under-resourced cities across Africa to chart their own progress toward achieving the MDGs.

Key Interventions

Investing in the Future

MCI's extensive research and due diligence, combined with our city investment guides and reports on investment potential, capacity-building workshops, and a continuous dialogue with prospective investors and public officials, have led to the development of numerous strategic investment projects, including the production of palm oil and shea butter; a children's park and shopping mall; and bamboo bikes, an environmentally friendly and affordable form of transportation largely constructed with local materials. These investments are expected to create income-generating opportunities and to help spur growth and development.

¹ López-Moreno, E., Oyeyinka, O. and Mboup, G. *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide*. (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme), p. IX.

² United Nations Population Fund (2010). "Linking Poverty, Population and Development." <http://www.unfpa.org/pds/urbanization.htm> (Accessed 13 September 2010).



Our local, domestic and international partners conduct critical interventions in the Millennium Cities to address vital needs in education, public health, gender equality, and water and sanitation.

Addressing Life-Saving Medical Needs

Medical treatment—particularly specialized care—is frequently unavailable or unaffordable in the Millennium Cities. Our partners in health have successfully led numerous interventions to provide needed clinical care as well as critical training for local physicians and other medical professionals. Specialists have provided training and/or treatment in such areas as neonatal emergency and resuscitation techniques; infant health and nutrition; obstetric ultrasounds; accident and trauma care; HIV/AIDS and nutrition; infectious diseases; fistula repair and other urological surgeries; eye and dental care; and heart disease, lifestyle and diabetes; and community health. Some of MCI's partners have helped create a model for safe regional blood banking, and many have generously donated much-needed medical equipment, supplies and medicine to numerous Millennium Cities. Our partners have even designed, built and trained staff to operate two neonatal clinics in one city, an emergency ward in another and a Regional Center for Eye Care Excellence in two more, thereby improving access to life-saving care to a combined population of more than two million.

Advancing Educational Opportunities

Our School2School program connects schools in the developing and developed worlds, providing paths through which under-resourced schools in Millennium Cities and other low-income settings can overcome many of the intrinsic deficits they face. These powerful partnerships—focused on encouraging literacy and teaching invaluable science, math and technology skills—have the potential to enrich learning and mutual understanding and lead to devising solutions to common global issues. In another project, to help respond to a Ghanaian government mandate for pre-school education, MCI sought out early childhood development experts who are working with local education officials to design and train Ghanaian educators in a thorough, interactive curriculum that builds on children's innate curiosity and capabilities. The program has completed trainings for 75 educators, and an additional 300 have received initial training. Seventeen model kindergartens serving 3,000 students have been built as part of the project, intended to be replicated across the region and beyond.

Empowering Girls and Women

To help girls stay in school, MCI facilitated the construction of safe and private latrines at public schools and we helped create girls' LitClubs, intended to cultivate literacy skills and foster self-esteem. We are continually focused on creating learning opportunities for girls in the areas of literacy, science, math, technology and higher education. Through their studies, girls and young women can acquire important skills that can help them obtain good jobs, strengthen their local economies and contribute to solving the essential challenges confronting our world.

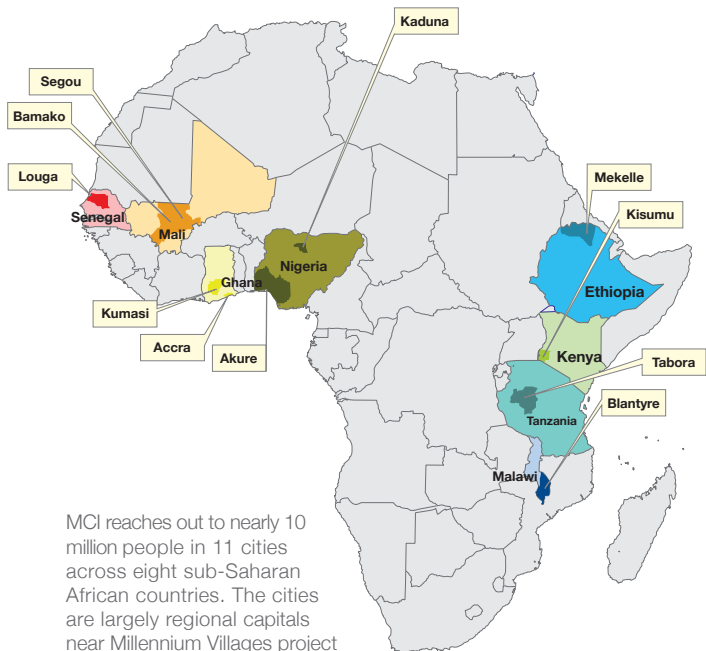
Improving Infrastructure

MCI has worked closely with our partners, including Columbia University's Urban Design Lab and foreign government aid agencies, to upgrade inadequate infrastructure and to improve conditions in the Millennium Cities, particularly in informal settlements. This endeavor involves identifying solutions capable of delivering reliable access to safe drinking water, sound sanitation systems, and cleaner, more efficient energy and transport systems.

MCI Leadership

Dr. Susan M. Blaustein
Director
sblaustein@ei.columbia.edu

For more information about MCI and our partners, or to learn how you might support our work, visit mci.ei.columbia.edu.



MCI reaches out to nearly 10 million people in 11 cities across eight sub-Saharan African countries. The cities are largely regional capitals near Millennium Villages project sites, located in different agro-ecological zones that reflect the range of farming, infrastructure, education and disease challenges facing the continent.

Photos courtesy of Mount Carmel Training Center, CyberSmart Africa and Himalayan Cataract Project

THE EARTH INSTITUTE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

earth.columbia.edu

The Millennium Cities Initiative is affiliated with the Earth Institute, Columbia University, whose mission is to mobilize the sciences, education and public policy to achieve a sustainable Earth. Through interdisciplinary research among more than 500 scientists in diverse fields, the Institute is adding to the knowledge necessary for addressing the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. With over two dozen associated degree curricula and a vibrant fellowship program, the Earth Institute is educating new leaders to become professionals and scholars in the growing field of sustainable development. We work alongside governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations and individuals to devise innovative strategies to protect the future of our planet.

