

Perspectives on 'Resilience'

Interestingly, most people interviewed did not identify with the concept of 'resilience', as it had negative associations and a focus on 'surviving' rather than transforming current practices to 'do things better'.

Clearly, in the Durban context it is the 'slow-build' issues that are of most concern when thinking about preparing the city for change. The provision of basic services, building social cohesion and trustworthy leadership, securing multiple revenue streams for the Municipality and developing human resourcefulness in the face of a future where government will find it increasingly difficult to provide, are all seen as foundational components in thinking about how to prepare the city for future change.

Key Ideas Emerging for Durban's Resilience Strategy

In consolidating the feedback from the conversations held over the last three months, the following key ideas have emerged. These ideas are not complete or inclusive, but rather aim to provide the starting point for more focused discussions around expanding this list and then identifying potentially catalytic and transformative opportunities within each of these areas of work that could deliver important change in the city.

Summary of key ideas

- Addressing inequality, unemployment and crime.
- Rebuilding the 'societal fabric' that allows us to stand stronger in the face of change: a society built on warmth and generosity.
- Ensuring the provision of key services (water and housing).
- Planning an economy that enhances human wellbeing, equality and ecological infrastructure.
- Planning differently to incorporate ecosystems as key ecological infrastructure.
- Securing water supply.
- Enhancing transport infrastructure.
- Energy infrastructure for a low-carbon future.
- Preparing for climate change.
- Brave and visionary leadership.
- Building active and engaged citizens.
- Building human resourcefulness and supporting existing creativity.
- The important role of a stable and capacitated local government administration in leading key processes.
- Promoting adaptive governance that incorporates critical reflection and learning into processes.
- Strengthening partnerships between government, business and communities.
- Building a political environment that facilitates Durban's ability to respond to change.
- Facilitating 'platforms for conversation' to inspire new thinking and innovation.
- The importance of good data in informing planning and decision-making.
- Sound financial practices.
- The need for catalytic and transformative interventions.
- Rallying the city to action through communication forms that are simple and accessible.

What has become clear over the last few months is that Durban's 'resilience journey' will need to be an iterative and interactive one that continually draws on new and different perspectives to add depth and insight to the areas that are likely to be part of the city's Resilience Strategy.



A resilient city has to be a sustainable city that incorporates environmental, social and economic issues. All three of these aspects need to be in harmony or balance and if any one aspect is optimised the others are prejudiced.



- Private Sector



100 RESILIENT CITIES

DURBAN'S 100 RESILIENT CITIES JOURNEY

Change Comes Quickly

Every city experiences change. For some, change comes quickly: the arrival of an earthquake, the loss of homes and infrastructure after flooding or the aftermath of a violent event. For other cities, change is less immediate: the ever-growing number of people moving into urban areas with the expectation of service provision and access to jobs, the expanding inequality gap and increasing crime, or the slow erosion of our natural resource base. Change can also be positive: an upsurge in community-based action that inspires new policy directions, or the provision of

improved transport infrastructure to facilitate movement and urban connectivity. In a rapidly changing world where the future is increasingly unpredictable, how cities prepare themselves both to respond to negative change and to leverage the benefits of positive change will be a critical factor in determining their ability to survive and to thrive. The 100 Resilient Cities Programme provides an important opportunity to explore what these ideas might mean in a city like Durban and to build a resilience story that is relevant within our unique city context.

"Resilience means we are a city that will withstand the change of time... and we will rise above it. People who cannot adapt to change and cities who do not adapt to change or move forward, and people too, will often fragment or fall apart. Or they will move backwards. Our city, our stakeholders and our citizens are resilient to change, saying 'we are tough, we will cope with change, we will engage with it and move forward'" - ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY OFFICIAL

Hearing Different Voices

In a city as diverse as Durban, an important part of the 'Resilient Cities' journey to date has been to use many voices to contribute different perspectives to the resilience story. Our conversations have included community focus groups, commuters at taxi ranks and people in their homes and places of work. Experts from a range of fields have provided insights into specific challenges and opportunities in our city, while others have brought fresh and creative ideas to the table. Throughout these conversations, the key objective has been to develop a better understanding of the changes (economic, social and environmental) that are likely to confront Durban, and to discuss the transformative approaches that will be required to position Durban more strongly as we move into an uncertain future.



What People Have Said

Challenges identified by the citizens of Durban include the increasing levels of crime, unemployment and poverty, and their impact on human wellbeing and social cohesion. Rising drug use, particularly amongst the youth, was a significant concern. The absence of an integrated transport system was highlighted as it limits access to economic opportunities and reduces the disposable income available to those who travel long distances. This contributes to the widening inequality gap in Durban, as does inadequate housing provision and lack of home ownership for many citizens. On the positive side, many respondents commented on the way visible infrastructure development (e.g. provision of services such as water and electricity, the beachfront development and roads provision) improves quality of life and builds civic pride.

“ Our conversations have been varied and have ranged from community focus groups and commuters at taxi ranks to people in their homes and places of work. People get jobs, electricity and water in urban areas. ”



“ Positive changes are seeing more people get jobs, electricity and water in urban areas. ”

- Durban resident

What People Have Said (Continued)

Those involved in the 'operations' of the city, whether as municipal employees or as members of business, NGO's or civil society organisations, added to these ideas by highlighting the service provision challenges associated with the rapid level of urbanisation in Durban in a context where new and efficient technologies (eg. water re-use) do not receive sufficient support. Environmental changes, biodiversity loss, the water provision crisis and climate change were also identified as factors that could undermine the city's resilience, as are the current financial challenges linked to a shrinking rates base and the absence of multiple income streams to support municipal functioning. Challenges with city politics and governance issues, and the increasing 'disconnect' between communities and the Municipality were also raised as concerns that undermine the ability of communities to act independently to enhance their own resilience.

A number of interventions were underscored as being important in building Durban's ability to respond positively to these changes. Education is seen as an important factor in transitioning the economy to one that offers a broader base of economic activities and employment opportunities for Durban's citizens. Improved partnerships and collaboration, particularly between communities and government, are recognised as essential in order to build and enhance community resourcefulness, creativity and innovation and to strengthen the involvement and role of communities in decision-making. In this regard, looking carefully at existing political arrangements (which in some cases appear to build dependence on government for solutions) is also important. The need to ensure a functional natural environment that can continue to provide essential services such as water provision and flood attenuation was also identified as critical, as was the role of strong and visionary leadership in navigating an uncertain and challenging future.

At a fundamental level, most of those who were interviewed recognised the need for a 'change in mindset' amongst the people and leaders in Durban towards a new path of exploring what it might mean to 'do things differently' in response to the challenges being faced.