

INEQUALITY IS

Don Chen on inequality and urbanization

By 2050, about 70 percent of the world's people will live in cities. Don Chen, who directs the foundation's work in Equitable Development, sees this as a tremendous opportunity.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

DON CHEN: One of the big trends in the 21st century is going to be the urbanization of the world. Right now, about half of the world's people live in cities, and by 2050 about 70 percent will live in cities. As our world urbanizes, we see some extreme degrees of inequality from the very poorest of the poor to people who are living a luxurious life.

[Inequality is logo. A graphic black equal sign with an orange slash through it. #InequalityIs. Don Chen, director, Ford Foundation. A Chinese American man in a suit and glasses.]

This question about creating just cities, is as old as civilization itself. If you think about Plato's Republic, the question about a just city and a just society was really the fundamental question, in particular about how people can feel included within their society and with their government. I think that all societies function better when everyone is contributing. So we have opportunities within cities under enlightened leadership to really address inequality head-on. Whether it's health disparities, whether it's political inequality, these are all things that are tied together and should be addressed together. Inequality is both a cause and a set of impacts that really define people's probabilities for whether or not they can make it. Narrowing that gap between expectations and hopes and what people are actually able to achieve is our key challenge in addressing inequality.

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