

INEQUALITY IS

Edgar Mora Altamirano on inequality and public policy

The mayor of Curridabat, Costa Rica explains how inequality is driven by a lack of understanding of public policy and how technology can break down that barrier.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

EDGAR MORA ALTAMIRANO: You don't create citizens in classrooms or schools. You don't make them in churches. Citizens are made in cities, facing moral challenges that arise from their shared lives. That's the fundamental role of cities.

[A bright yellow brushstroke slashes through a graphic black equal sign. #InequalityIs. Edgar Mora Altamirano, Mayor, Curridabat, Costa Rica. A Costa Rican man wearing black-framed glasses, and a gray suit jacket over a white button down shirt.]

Inequality is not having a place in the creation of public policy. People believe that politics are somehow dirty. And, incidentally, that has to do with the pomposity and capacity for deceit developed by we who make policy in the formulation of our ideas. If we stop doing that and, instead, use technology and the power of visualization that's easily understood by people, we'd have citizens who were better informed and then more engaged in finding solutions. Recently, we did a study examining the real lived experiences of disabled people around the city—distances, routes, but also air quality, ground vibration, the turn radius that people in a wheelchair would have to make to get around obstacles.

[Animated generic city map. Cell phones ping alerts of road obstacles.]

So when you put this on a map it combines with other info and gives us a sense of what the real quality of life is in a place. In that way, using technology and using visual arts is fundamental to public policy and to be able to break existing barriers to understanding in matters of public policy. That's very important because that's where people build faith in public institutions or where they lose it.

[Inequality Is Logo. Join the conversation. #InequalityIs.]

End of transcript.