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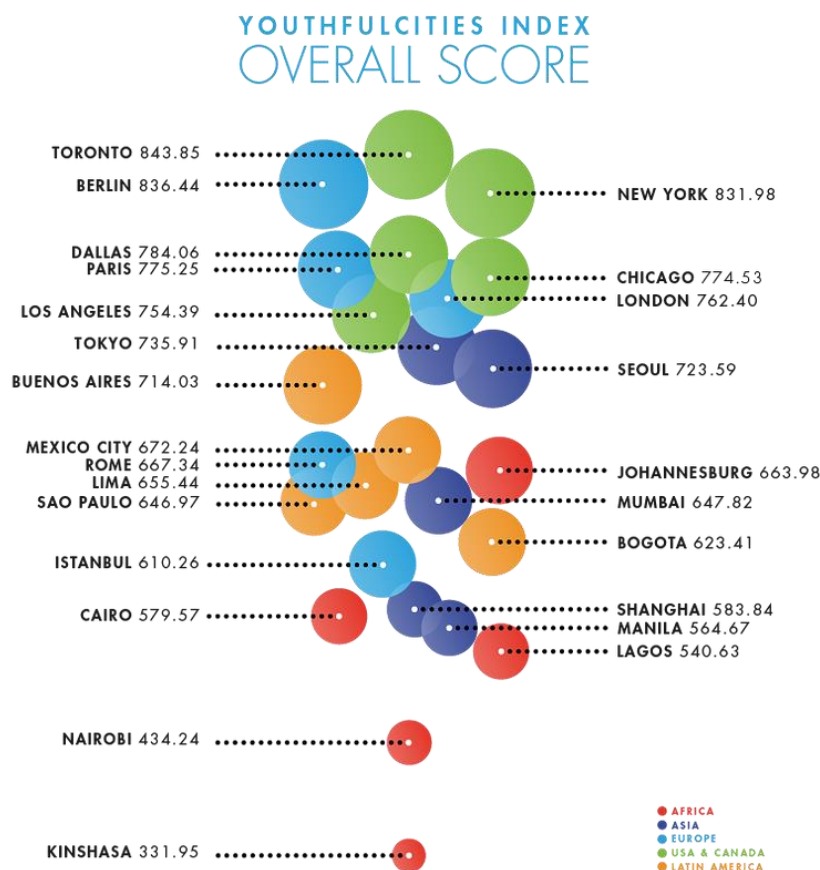
<http://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/youth-research-knowledge/cities-are-definitely-full-of-youth-but-are-they-youthful/#FN1>

Today the [YouthfulCities Global Summit](#) has kicked off with over 100 urban planners and thinkers attending in Toronto, Canada. The week long summit will conclude with the launch of the latest [YouthfulCities Index](#), which will honour the most youthful city of 2015 based on the most recent data from young researchers and young people. We'll be covering the summit and will review this year's index in the coming weeks.

In 2014, 50% of the world's population was under 30 years old, with more than the half of the world's total population living in cities ^[1]. Increasingly, cities play an important role in the lives of young people: Here one can find the best training and employment opportunities, enjoy the most diverse cultural offerings and nightlife experiences, and have a better chance of improving their standard of living ^[2].

But what makes a city youthful? And which city is the most youthful in the world?

This is exactly the questions that led to the founding of [YouthfulCities](#), and what, through data and research they have attempted to answer. In 2012, they began exploring how cities could be rated based on their youthfulness, and last year, thanks to funding from [DECODE](#) (a youth innovation consultancy), they released an index for twenty-five cities. This year they have raised their ambitions and seek to expand their reach to 65 cities overall. In 2014, North America and Europe were the winners with Toronto, Berlin and New York taking the top three positions. The best ranked city outside of North America or Europe was Buenos Aires in 10th place. While Latin American and African cities scored highly in civic participation, cities from Asia were, on average, ranked higher in environmental sustainability than others.



The Youthful Cities Index

2014, with Toronto, Berlin and New York ranking top.

Based on 80 indicators separated into the three groups “Live”, “Work” and “Play”, the largest cities in the six regions Africa, Asia, English-speaking North America, Europe and Latin America are evaluated with the results then published in a ranking ^[3]. Covering topics such as diversity, education and nightlife, the field of indicators is correspondingly broad, with 16 categories chosen *“to stimulate media and public awareness of youth-centred issues while encouraging a competitive spirit to improve cities for youth.”*

The indicators themselves were determined by a survey of over 1,600 young people in the participating cities and to ensure objectivity the researchers defined the indicators in as specific a way as possible. For examples: the miles of cycleway in each city; the number of possibilities for youth volunteering; and the volume of recycled waste. You can see the full list of categories, indicators and results in the [2014 report](#). The data collection uses online sources, such as census reports or official websites, and by talking to the sources in person. Furthermore, Youthful Cities claim that local youth organisations from all over the world were included in the process of research.

This year's launch of the results will take place in Toronto – the winning city of YouthfulCities Index of the last year. From an open application process, 50 urban thinkers and planners from around the world will attend the YouthfulCities Global Summit (alongside 50 participants from Toronto) to explore key urban issues, discuss innovate solutions for more youthful cities, and launch the 2015 index.

Though this data makes for an interesting read, some key questions are left:

What impact does this kind of data and ranking have on the future development of “youthful” cities – from a policymaker, activist and youth perspective? Is the index simply a ranking of the most trendy cities from the western world? Is the index also applicable for cities in the developing world? How can the index be strengthened and expanded?

We will try to find answer to these questions and will review the index in another article published in few weeks.

You can follow all the action of the Global Summit at [#YCGS15](#) and [@youthfulcities](#). For [youthpolicy.org](#), [@fridolinfrisch](#) is in Toronto!

Footnotes:

[1] – United Nations, 2014, *World Urbanisation*

Prospects, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf> []

[2] – Turok, I., McGranahan, G., 2013, Urbanization and economic growth: the arguments and evidence for Africa and Asia, *Environment and Urbanization*. []

[3] – For full methodology, categories and indicators, see <http://www.youthfulcities.com/#!index/c10kg> []