Centre for Liveable Cities Lecture Series

Unlocking the Social Value of the Sharing Economy

Transcript of the lecture by April Rinne, WEF Young Global Leader.

The Q&A session was moderated by Dr Carol Soon from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS.

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April Rinne:
Thank you, oh good afternoon. What a great crowd. Everyone doing ok with the rain and? Everything super? I am delighted to be here and thank you to the Centre for Liveable Cities for inviting me and all of the organisations. Some of you may know, I'm in town for this week to do a series of events around the sharing economy. And thank you to all of the hosting organisations, for the warm welcome and the invitations, and also all of you for being here.

So, we're here together today to look at the sharing economy. What is it? What's happening around the world and what's on the horizon? Specifically, with the lens of social value. So looking at questions like: What's the true potential of the sharing economy? What trends do we see on the horizon? What are some of the effects — both positive and negative — of this phase as it grows? And how can cities benefit most from the sharing economy? Now, I don't have the answers to all of these questions, but today we're going to spark a conversation and initiate an investigation. I'm going to share examples from around the world on what's happening and, we're going to look at what this means for business, as well as for government, as well as for individuals. So my goals today are to give you a solid grounding in the sharing economy in its many shapes and sizes and flavours. To identify opportunities to harness social value in the sharing economy, to catalyse a conversation and hopefully, most of all, to inspire you to learn more. So we have a lot to cover, let's get started.

Now, by way of introduction, I work in the sharing economy globally. I work across industries and business models. I look at for-profit and non-profit models. On the one

hand, I help companies often with their policy issues. And on the other hand, I work with policymakers to better understand what's happening in the sharing economy, and not only how to best regulate it but also how to benefit from and participate in it. Now, what originally attracted me to this space wasn't all of the start-ups. It actually was the power to transform an entire ecosystem in ways that create massive social value.
Prior to the sharing economy, I worked for many years in development, working on creating new marketplaces for things like access to clean energy, access to healthcare — platforms that empowered more people, things like microfinance, if you're familiar with that term. Now, when I see business models that are truly transformative, not only meeting the needs of more people but are also that are more sustainable, more empowering, more community driven, I get really excited.

So as we explore the sharing community today, I'd like for you to keep this ecosystem in mind. Think about what the sharing economy means for you and for Singapore at the micro level in terms of individuals and families. But also at the macro level, what this means for society. What this means for urban planning and that sort of thing. Think about what this means for you personally in your daily life; as a parent, as a neighbour, as a member of your community, as well as professionally. What this means to you in your role; leading a business, as an entrepreneur, as a student, whatever the case may be. So in other words, what I'd like to ask you to do is, take the "biggest picture" lens that you can, think about the broadest umbrella possible that you can for the sharing economy.

Okay, first let's do a brief history of sharing so that we can better understand today's sharing economy in context. Keep in mind there's nothing new about sharing. Up until the industrial revolution, it's how we stayed alive. We shared all kinds of things. We shared market spaces and olive presses. We built shared infrastructure like roads and waterways, often with public funding. We shared skills and labour to harvest crops and make things. Now, many of these systems were built on trust and reciprocity. They were full of social value. They also tended to be highly local and didn't require much technology. But then, the industrial revolution showed up. And it brought us an abundance of goods, but in the process, it also broke some of these earlier systems of sharing. Money and markets largely replaced trust and reciprocity. Leaving us hungry for a sense of community and connectedness. Now globally, this industrial system peaked in roughly the 1980s with the perfection of consumer mass marketing, and the so-called “take, make, waste” economy.

The winners in this economy were those people who could buy and own the most stuff. They could tuck themselves away, stuck in traffic jams, living in secluded neighbourhoods, surrounded by pre-packaged goods and ignore society. But as we discovered, stuff doesn’t mean happiness. Then, just before the new millennium, the Internet shows up. And it breaks these old models yet again. Enabling us to connect with more people in more ways than ever before. Each of these earlier shifts, the industrial revolution, consumer mass marketing and the Internet, was disruptive. Changing how people saw themselves, what they could do and what they strove for. The sharing economy in many ways, builds on each of these earlier innovations while repairing the damage done, and in particular — we’ll talk more about this — bringing people back into relationship with one another. It’s kind of like a process of rediscovery.

Now against that backdrop, just pause for a moment and think about what you can do today with access to the Internet and the phone in your hand. You can find pretty much anything. You can find all kinds of information. You can find the weather. You can find a ride. You can find a job. You can find your next vacation. You can find your next date. Now imagine, by 2020 it’s expected that 90% of the global population over age six will have a mobile phone. And the vast majority of people alive in the world won’t remember a world in which they couldn’t find anything through their phone. Now, the power and potential that this kind of connectivity unleashes is unprecedented. It will transform not only how we think about and how we engage in cities, but also how we live our lives, how we raise our families and the kind of future that we build.

One of the more interesting results of this newfound connectivity is the rise of the sharing economy. An economy defined briefly as access over ownership and decentralised networks connected *through* decentralised networks of people connected through new technologies.

At its core, it's driven by three key principles: Resource utilisation, decentralisation and relationships. The first principle and one that's easy to understand is resource utilisation. This means basically, how much you use the things that you have. Cars are a great example of underutilized resources. Many of you know that on average, a car sits parked idle, unused, 23 hours a day. That's 95% of the time; it is inefficient. But once you start looking for underutilisation, you start seeing it everywhere. Buildings that sit empty most of the time. Clothing that you outgrow. Household tools that you use once in a blue moon and so forth. When you have to own everything, not only is this inefficient, it's also expensive. We can do better than this.

And now think not only about the things that you need but also the things that you love to do, and don't get to do very often. A great example here is boats. Many people love the water, but they don't own a boat. And globally, boats are about 10% efficient; 90% of the time they're docked, collecting barnacles and costing the owner money to maintain. This is a tremendous waste of resources and also enjoyment left on the table. Now imagine, what if you could access a boat when you wanted it? And not only that. What if you could access not just one boat, but all kinds of boats? A sailboat? Speedboat? A shoe-shaped boat? I love that photo of the shoe-shaped boat. Or a yacht, depending on your needs. Think about what this enables, both for people who own boats and those who don't. It costs less and defrays the cost of maintenance. It gives us greater choice and convenience. It allows people, more people, to do the things they love. And it's even better for the environment. We're using these resources more efficiently and more sustainably. And it's not just boats. Think about all the things that you love to do from time to time, and the new ways that you might be able to enjoy them.

The second key principle of the sharing economy is decentralisation. Thanks to new technologies, we're expecting a sea change in connectivity. I can connect with more people, in more ways and share more things than ever before. Prior to the sharing economy, companies typically held centralised inventory. They produced and held everything and then they sold it or rented it out to everyone else. But today, thanks to new technologies, we have access to an entirely new inventory of decentralised assets. Things owned by people like you and me, that we can now connect in a peer-to-peer manner and use more efficiently. In effect, we can match supply and demand or needs and haves better. So, I can find accommodation without a hotel. I can find a ride without a taxi dispatcher. And I can run errands without [going to a] store.

The third principle of the sharing economy is the one closest to my heart. It's also the distinguishing characteristic when it comes to social value — relationships. Think about the world today and in particular, the effects of overconsumption. We've built our cities around cars rather than people. Our homes are full of things we rarely use. And sadly, oftentimes the sign of success, when you have your thing and I have my thing, means that we don't need to know our neighbours. So, isolation and disconnectiveness and loss of community have become pretty big issues. I would say globally. These come at a huge price to society. And now, it's not that the sharing economy solves these problems. But it does start to get at the core of what's gone wrong. It brings people back into relationship with one another. Sharing involves some kind of human interaction. It's the human connections and interactions that help foster social value. As we look at the sharing economy today, we see that it touches almost everything in our lives. It affects what and how we purchase. But also, how we travel, how we work, how we live, how we eat. How we spend and invest our money, caring for our families and how we connect in our communities.

Now, this slide is just a very small snapshot of the sharing economy universe and we don't have time to go into all of these examples today. But I want you to be aware of the breadth and depth, and scope and diversity of what's going on. There are platforms out there to share all the things on this slide and a whole lot more. At the same time, keep in mind that what we're looking at today is just the tips of the iceberg. For as much as it seems that the sharing economy has grown, in many ways it's still in its infancy. But also keep in mind, the platforms to share all of these things are all driven by the same three principles. In other words, it's all connected. Now, as we look at the benefits of sharing or access over ownership, we see that they generally fall into four categories. And this, at the risk of repeating myself — I just want to make it really clear and give some frameworks and structure to the sharing economy today.

So the four main categories of benefits that we look at include: Economic benefits: You can save money, earn income, and create a more affordable lifestyle. Environmental benefits: We're using and consuming resources more sustainably. Community benefits: The relationships; social capital and that sort of thing that I was talking about. And finally, convenience — more choice, more flexibility, easier access.

One of the things I like best is that when you talk about why people get involved in the sharing economy. It doesn't actually matter why you're most interested. Maybe you want to save some money or maybe you want to do something good for the planet. Doesn't matter what your primary motivation is; the fact is you get all these benefits at once. And at the same time, I want to underscore that we can see social value in all of these benefits. The closest linkage is probably community. But we also know that well-being is enhanced when people can save money, when people can do something good for the planet, when people can meet new people, and so on.

So the point here is, social value is potentially everywhere. And I spend a lot of time poking holes and sharing economy models, and trying to figure out what might make this run off the rails? Or where might there be some risks? And the sharing economy is not a panacea and it has to be harnessed responsibly, and we'll talk more about that later today. But at the same time, nonetheless, I cannot find any other business model that delivers this many benefits at once. And that's a really powerful proposition. Again, not only for business, but also for government and individuals. Now, as we zoom out and look at how different places are approaching the sharing economy, both in terms of business platforms that are evolving and how different governments are approaching the space. We need to remember that there's no one right approach — the sharing economy isn't black and white; it is full of shades of grey. And as I've done more work in this space, across countries, and many cultures, I've realised how important it is to take a baseline snapshot of the kind of economy that we're working in, and what its fundamental values and assumptions are. This may seem trivial but it's absolutely essential because it colours everything else. So we can start by asking, "What's our vision of this economy?" "How market oriented is it?" "What role does the state play in guaranteeing well-being?" For example, in the United States, it's often seen as the playground or unfettered capitalism, while many places in Europe have a stronger social sector and more welfare-driven economies. Now, because the sharing economy is perceived and operates within this broader context, by its very nature it looks and feels different in different places. So it should come as no surprise that in the United States, there's quite a bit more venture capital but also more concern about thin social safety nets. Whereas in Europe, greater concern about the role of strong unions. The point here and my question for all of you is, "Where ought we to place Singapore on this spectrum?"

Okay, with that brief background, let's dive in. We're going to focus on three key areas tonight where there's a lot of sharing economy activity and social value. First we're going to look at different uses of space. Second, we're going to look at how the sharing economy is affecting infrastructure. Third, we're going to look at a range of asset sharing and social services that build community. And then finally, we're going to apply all of these and look at what these platforms and what these opportunities, how they play out in cities. In each case, I picked examples that I hope, I believe, are particularly relevant for Singapore.

So let's start with space. There are so many kinds of space in cities. Homes, office space, retail space, green space, parking space, you name it, that are often underutilized. And could be used for activities with some kind of social value. Let's look at a few examples of how this is playing out. Now, we're going to start with Airbnb, not because I think it's a model that any of you don't know about, but rather I actually was asked, please you know, not to mention Airbnb or Uber. Part of my role is actually to show you what is happening beyond those two companies. But this is a really helpful jumping off point to provide broader context for what else is happening.

Now, as many of you know, Airbnb is one of the best known sharing economy examples. In nine years, it's gone from three roommates, who put an airbed down in their flat in San Francisco — actually it's the flat on the top left corner. That's the original flat. They did that to help cover rent. It's grown from that into a global online, accommodation marketplace. Hosting more than 1 million people a month, in over 35,000 cities, in 193 countries worldwide. Now, the benefits of Airbnb have been well documented. We're enabling people to earn income. Airbnb income is necessary for a lot of people to make ends meet. We're enabling people to travel to more places. Which helps boost local economies. And I personally think this is not just what's happening in cities. I've used this in places like Rwanda and Mongolia, that don't actually have much traditional tourist infrastructure. So we're really helping spark some additional local economies. And on that point, we're also spurring and ecosystem of related and supporting services. Whether it's local concierges or key delivery, that sort of thing. So the point here is it's not just about Airbnb it's about entirely new clusters of local economic activity. But, keep in mind, it's not just Airbnb. There are several dozen home-sharing sites and a whole range of models. For example, Knok focusses exclusively on family travel. Love Home Swap allows members to pay a membership fee and then swap their homes as many times as they want for free. Or Housing Anywhere, which is a platform for international student housing. The point here is, we're using space better in terms of matching supply and demand, and the needs and haves, thanks to sharing economy platforms. But, we're also looking at a wide range of uses, some of which are more helpful and create more social value than others — depending on a city's constraints, its economic status and the intentions of its participants. So, for example, there's a big difference between renting a spare room in your house or your house when you're away versus actively renting multiple properties on a full time basis. There are also differences in cities that have acute housing shortages versus other cities that are struggling to redevelop. And these platforms actually offer them the first chance of success by stimulating more economic activity in a broader suave of the city. So go back to what I said about this being a spectrum. Now you see that in action. The key here as a government, as a regulator, let's say, is to identify what kinds of uses and benefits you do want to see and then do everything you can to support them.

Let's move on from residential space and look at office and commercial space. Again, go back to resource underutilisation. On average, an office building sits empty, unused, 60% of the time during workplace hours. And the average office costs about $12,000 a year to maintain. At the same time, there are now lots of people in the world who have flexible work arrangements. Perhaps they work remotely or they're freelancers and they don't have an office. But just because you don't have an office doesn't mean that you don't need to have a place to work or have meetings. Enter LiquidSpace. LiquidSpace is a platform that matches people who need access to temporary flexible work space with people who have such spaces. What's really interesting here is it taps into all kinds of spaces. This goes way beyond desks and empty offices. We're talking about hotel conference rooms, public libraries, media pods. All kinds of more innovative, creative, expansive, uses of this space that are appropriate for work and meetings. Now think about the different kinds of social values that are potentially unlocked through platforms like LiquidSpace. We're bringing people together in new ways. We're creating more collaborative and economical work options. And from a city perspective, we're helping cities manage their own space and overall land use needs better. Let's move on, another example, one of my favourites, is from the UK. It's called somewhereto__. It's a great example of social value, so the somewhereto__ team recognised some years ago that a lot of young people are really big on ideas and a little bit low on cash. Meanwhile, there are also a lot of people in the community that have some kind of idle space that could be used by youth. So somewhereto__ is a platform that focusses on youths aged 16–25 and provides them access to space to create, practise, perform, launch a small business and so on. For example, somewhereto__ matched 17-year-olds who were actually disadvantaged youths themselves, but help them establish a business, a social enterprise repairing bicycles. They in turn ended up working with ex-offenders who went on to launch their own small businesses and this was simply providing an access to space where they could actually have a small bicycle shop. Or, they enabled a 19-year-old woman who was really interested in teaching youths about healthy eating. They helped her have the space to launch a business focussed on hosting workshops, cooking workshops for young children. So in my opinion, somewhereto__ is a great example of how to create social value. You're tapping into youth potential and you're tapping into underutilised community space. It's a win-win and it costs almost nothing to do. Finally, let's look at an example of how land can be identified in ways that may boost social value.

Opportunity Space is a platform that describes, itself as a new marketplace for undervalued land and buildings. Opportunity Space partners with cities and helps them identify underutilized space and develop more productive uses for them. So, it could be a house, it could be a business, an office building. It could be a factory or a park or whatever else. They work in a lot of places that are run down or that are part of urban regeneration efforts. You could easily imagine how a platform like Opportunity Space could help urban regeneration.

Talking about Singapore, where the cost of car ownership is very high. How do models like BlaBlaCar of Tripda help this situation? From my perspective, promoting this kind of transportation option could be a really big win, boosting social value and also reducing the need or the pressure from people to own cars.

Next, let's think about energy infrastructure. Historically, energy utilities have provided centralised service. However, today we see a shift towards decentralised and off-grid energy solutions such as distributed solar. It's increasingly possible for people to become producers of energy not only consumers of it. Yeloha is a start-up that describes itself as the first peer-to-peer solar-sharing network. Their goal is to help anyone go solar, regardless of their income level or their location. Currently, there are a lot of obstacles for people to get solar energy. Roughly 80% of the people who want solar can't get it because they don't have the right kind of house or they're not allowed to put panels on their roofs. Whatever the case may be. So, Yeloha seeks to solve this. And they do that through a network of members, which they classify as sun hosts and sun partners. Now, a sun host is someone with a rooftop who agrees to let Yeloha place solar panels on their rooftop for free and in exchange for doing that, they get to keep one-third of the energy generated for free. Then, Yeloha matches sun hosts with sun partners. People living on your block, in your neighbourhood, in your area, who want to share the extra energy generated. You can either pick, so you can say, "I want these to go to these people here." You know, your neighbours or Yeloha can assign them to you. But now think about the results of this kind of model where we've just generated our own electricity, our own energy that wasn't possible that long ago. But in this case, everyone receives a lower energy bill. And everyone has cleaner energy. You might even meet new neighbours. So in this case, social value, it's economic, environmental and community-driven.

Finally, let's look at healthcare infrastructure. Cohealo is a platform that enables the sharing of as well as clinical expertise. In effect, the entire health system. Think about how many people can't get or can't afford the right access to the right healthcare. Or how often really expensive medical equipment isn't used. Cohealo facilitates these connections. Saving money and helping healthcare providers open up new lines of business. But it's also a great example of the more subtle definition of social value. By its very nature, Cohealo is helping people get access to more affordable, efficient healthcare. But, look at the website. They simply say, “Turn unused capacity into profit.” Now, in my opinion, Cohealo is full of social value. But they’re not really capitalising on that as they should. And as a result, they’re selling society a bit short. The point here is that social value, like I said, it can show up in many, many ways in the sharing economy. But it’s up to us, all of us to look for it. Understand it. Leverage it and promote it whenever we can. And last, let’s shift to a few examples of asset sharing and social services focussed on building community and social value. There are so many examples here that we could use and I apologise, many that I wanted to include but we don’t have time for that today. I picked a few of my favourites that hopefully include, at least a few that you haven’t heard of before.

One that you might have heard of, a concept that you might have heard of, is called the Tool Library. So, go back to resource underutilisation and those things that you only use every now and again. Most of us don’t use tools like ladders or saws or power drills very often. And some of you probably know that the power drill is the classic case of an underutilised asset. A power drill costs on average $100 and it’s used 14 minutes in its entire life. Yes, massively inefficient and as some people say, you don’t actually need the drill, you need the hole in the wall. So, we’re paying a lot for that hole. In any case, Tool Libraries take care of this situation and they’re growing fast around the world. The examples I’ve included here are from Vancouver and Toronto in Canada. They’re two of my favourites, but again these are in many, many countries now. So, in Tool Library, you pay a one-time fee to join, which is typically about $30, $30 to $50. And then you pay an annual membership fee, which again is $30–$50, much less than the cost of a tool. Now this gives you access to all kinds of tools but it also gives you access to classes and workshops. Activities that help build community as well. We also see tool libraries popping up for example, for kitchen gadgets. The Kitchen Tool Library. There are Sporting Good Libraries. And so forth. It’s kind of, when you think about where our traditional library for books is, it’s this library concept that we’ve massively extended. And this is a classic case of social value in my opinion. For less than the cost of a drill, you can get access to a drill and so much more. So my question is always like, this is common sense, “Why wouldn’t you do something like this?”

Now, Peerby is an example form the Netherlands and it's a sharing economy, neighbourhood marketplace. And its tagline is, "Enabling instant access to the things you need." It's kind of like a tool library but for many more things and it doesn't have a membership fee and it doesn't have a physical space like a typical tool library would. Now, Peerby was founded by a guy named Daan Weddepohl. Back in 2009, Daan had a very bad year. Daan lost pretty much everything, he lost his job, he lost his girlfriend and his house burned down. So, he had to rebuild his life from scratch. But in dealing with this tragedy, he learned the power of his community. On Peerby, when you need something, you simply put out a request through the Peerby app. You put out a request to other Peerby members in your neighbourhood. I need a waffle iron. I need a garden hoe. Whatever the case may be. The amazing thing here is that Peerby maintains an 85% fulfilment rate in 30 minutes or less from the people living right around you. So for example, Peerby enabled these two neighbours to share this van. Very simple transaction but super, you know, it's insightful. They enabled this van to be shared so that this guy could take his wife and daughter on a surprise weekend trip and in exchange, he repaired the van tyre. You'll note that the van tyre was flat. So, he repaired the van tyre to go on a trip. It's a win-win for neighbours. This is very simple but incredibly powerful and it also underscores how the fact is that we might not own something, but the chances are really likely that those things we use only from time to time, somebody very nearby us does. So this kind of platform is full of social value.

Now, let's shift from stuff, physical assets to natural assets. Think about fruit trees. Not Far From the Tree is a platform that tackles food waste. Idle assets in the form of fresh fruit. Many of you know, and think about how many fruit trees we have on private property, in city centre I mean, oftentimes, in Singapore perhaps — Singapore is full of fruit. But in many cities around the world, you also have fruit that, a couple times a year, drops onto the ground and covers the sidewalk in cities. And it's not really, it's not a pleasant experience but at the same time, there's a lot of fresh fruit that goes to waste. I love this platform because here's how it works. When any owner of land or a tree, whether it's in somebody's backyard or on the city avenue, when you can't keep up with the bounty from your fruit trees or you simply don't want to pick the fruit. You call Not Far From the Tree and Not Far From the Tree has a cohort of volunteer cleaners. People that come out and harvest the fruit. So, they come out, they pick the fruit from your tree and then of the harvest, one-third goes to the person who harvested the fruit. One third goes to the person who owns the land. And one third goes to a local organisation that needs access to fresh fruit. So this includes homeless shelters, that sort of thing. Again, think about this, keep in mind at zero cost. Think about this, social value — social value is in the DNA of this kind of model. Everyone benefits by sharing. We're sharing fruit. We're sharing time. We're sharing land and building deeper community relationships.

And one final example, in the category of social services, that I absolutely love, and it kind of has double social value. We're tackling both fitness and well-being but we're also tackling eldercare. This platform is called GoodGym — it's out of the UK. GoodGym was started by a group of fitness enthusiasts who were frustrated by the amount of wasted human energy and talent that they saw in gyms and how disconnected they felt from their community. You know the treadmill factor? The treadmill syndrome? Exactly that. So, they initially created GoodGym as a volunteer platform. The tagline is, Get Fit by Doing Good. Now, GoodGym facilitates all kinds of things but I want to focus on one aspect, they facilitate what they call coaching runs. Coaching runs mean that as a GoodGym member, you are assigned to a coach. And your coach is an elderly home-bound person in the neighbourhood and you sign up to a fitness regimen which often looks something like, once a week or so, you're going to run to your coach's house, you're going to bring a paper, share a cup of coffee, have a chat, and run back to your home or office. Pretty simple. What did you just do? You just got fit. You just connected with somebody in your community. And importantly, an elderly or home-bound person just connected with someone else as well. Here's where it gets interesting in terms of policy and the role of government. The National Health Services, the NHS in the UK, which is responsible for delivering healthcare and social care, heard about GoodGym. They researched it and they discovered that GoodGym was delivering better social care than the NHS itself, at zero cost. So, what did the NHS decide to do? They decided to fund GoodGym, which is given this platform, a sustainable model but has also allowed it to expand nationwide.

Now, I'd like challenge all of you to think about how might we, you, Singapore, leverage the sharing economy not only to enable more social value, but also better delivery of public services. Now, lest we think of the social economy as a panacea, which it's not —

we'll talk more about that later. Let's look at some of its shortcomings, especially as they relate to social value. So, in my opinion, one of the most significant flaws that has come to light in the sharing economy is that how poorly suited current structures are, current legal structures are to the core sharing economy vision. Successful sharing economy companies are built on their communities. Without a thriving community, platforms have no value. Now today, outside investors can invest in sharing community platforms, those that are for profit or monetised. And of course, founders and employees can participate and be owners as well. But here's the rub, the members of this community the backbone of these platforms can't participate in ownership. So, there's kind of a rub, there's a tension here. Now, to be fair, many companies wish that there were entities, legal entities, vehicles, by which their members, their community members could invest, could become owners. But today, so far, those options are limited. Think about I mean, the classic cases, what would our driver-owned ride-sharing platform look like? That's the sort of thing I'm talking about. So, I'd like to challenge that, it's not that today's models are bad, they're simply insufficient. We're not fully capturing the true potential of the sharing economy in terms of the number of people that can benefit and the number of people that can participate. So I'd like for it to challenge all of us to think about how we can build business structures that include and benefit more people, both to increase social value but also to maximise the full potential of the sharing economy.

Now with that, we've looked at space, we've looked at infrastructure, we've looked at asset sharing and social services. Finally, let's shift our focus and apply all of what we've just heard and learn to cities. And for this, I'd like to ask you to put yourself in the shoes of an urban planner or a mayor with a vision for your city. How do we build more, how do we build smarter, more sustainable, connected, happy, healthy, thriveable places to live? As you all know, we are living in the urban millennium. Urbanisation will be one of the key distinguishing features of the 21st century. We're currently urbanising at the rate of one Copenhagen every week. Or to put that into context, we're urbanising at the rate of one Singapore every 10 weeks. Globally, the number of people that live in Singapore are moving into cities worldwide, every 10 weeks. And this pace is expected to accelerate in the coming decades, in particular in the developing world. So, to put that into context, by 2100, a time that we might not remember, but our children certainly will, we will have 40% more people on the planet, but 200% more in cities. There will be more people living in cities in 2,100 than inhabit the entire planet today.

So this is a big issue. Now, what does this mean? Well, it means all kinds of things. But one thing that it means for sure is that we have to do more with what we have in cities. Again, go back to resource underutilisation. Think about how many underutilised assets exist in cities, they're everywhere. Empty buildings, parked cars, equipment in storage and so forth. Now, today, thanks to new technology, we can move assets like cars, around cities more efficiently. But we're just starting to wake up to the power and potential of what's possible. Go back to the benefits of sharing and think about how they play out on a macro scale. So rather than helping you earn income, the sharing economy can help lots of people earn income. And rather than your environmental footprint, we can improve the entire city's sustainability. Now, by tapping into all kinds of underutilised assets, I sort of joke, it's sort of like putting on goggles. Goggles that allow you to see infra-red for example, you know how it just shows up, or heat, that sort of thing. Imagine if we could put on goggles that allowed us to see underutilisation in assets at the city-wide level. Not only can we think about how we deliver public services better and not only how much stuff there is out there that we could be using better and not having to purchase for example. But it also, at the macro level, starts to change and improve the cityscape itself. And again, while the sharing economy isn't a panacea, it isn't a silver bullet, especially when we put social value at the centre of our goals, the benefits for cities here are enormous. Now gradually, cities around the world are starting to recognise this and they're starting to get involved and embrace the sharing economy a bit more and this concept of the sharing city is taking root. From Amsterdam to London, Vancouver, Milan, Sydney, Seoul, etc. Cities are starting to take note. Now, a sharing city can be described briefly as a city in which assets of all kinds are easy to share. And the government and residents alike, understand and embrace its benefits.

Let's take a look at what a couple of leading cities are doing. Now, if I had to pick any one city today that's doing the most benefit for the sharing community, it would actually be not too far from here: Seoul, South Korea. Seoul's visionary mayor seized the sharing economy as a tool for urban planning and community building. And their Seoul sharing city initiative is unparalleled. It began in 2012 and since that time, they've been doing and trying all kinds of things. So they've passed new legislation. They've established a brand new government department with a team and a budget and full resources. The sharing city team which is inside of the government's innovation bureau. They're education residents through town hall meetings and workshops. They've established what they call share hub, which is an information portal for everyone to learn about what's happening in the city. And they're even investing public funds in local sharing economy initiatives. And they're only investing in what they call social businesses. Those platforms, those businesses that have social value at the core of their mission. So, this is a snapshot of the Seoul sharing city universe. Just look at all, what's going on. And I apologise, some of it, the font is a bit small. But it's quite extraordinary and keep in mind here too that, so far they've really focussed on smaller local organisations. So, the only thing that's on this slide is actually the local organisations. Global platforms like Airbnb are there as well. So this pie, this picture is actually even bigger than it looks. Now, Seoul has done a great job boosting local stakeholders and promoting a blend of business models. So they've enabled things like Kozaza, which is homestays. They've also done Open Closet, which I love. It's a clothes-sharing platform for young professionals. Many of whom do not have a lot of business suits. Open Closet is a fabulous city-led initiative. Or, a platform like Nortzang which enables the repairing and sharing of home furniture. Now, Seoul has taken this one step further and it's also put its own resources into shared use. So for example, they did an inventory of all city-owned spaces and identified 900 of them that were underutilised. And decided to create a platform to put these spaces into shared use. In the first year of this programme, more than 23,000 groups used these idle, city-owned spaces. They used them for things like yoga class or music classes. Things that actually build a lot of social value. In addition, Seoul has a pretty ambitious transportation plan that actually sees. This is verbatim, they want to make private car ownership obsolete by 2030. The only car, there will be cars in Seoul, but they will all be shared vehicles in some way. So, it's pretty impressive what they've done.

Now, looking at the progress today, we do see a lot of strengths and we also areas for improvement. In my opinion, the secret to Seoul's success if you will, has been two-fold. First, putting the community at the centre of what they're doing. Really making social value a core, fundamental priority. And second, walking the talk. Applying the sharing economy to the city and government itself. When I asked — I've done some work with Seoul — and when I asked then about this, they actually said, I said, "Why did you get involved? Why did you do this in the first place?" And they said because they're a mega city of 25 million people. And they said, "We lost connection, community connection that we used to have. We have to bring those back." And they said, "You know, that's our number one goal, it's to bring people back into relationship. To rebuild some neighbourhood and community spirit." And I thought was really compelling that they said, "If we get that part right, the economics and the environmental benefits, those will naturally follow. But if we don't get the community part right, then nothing else matters." And I think, you know, this is a really good example that cities everywhere can learn from. Now, at the same time, their biggest challenge, according to them has been seeding this sharing paradigm and the mindset change that is required to go from sort of an ownership mentality to a sharing mentality. And they realised that what they were doing at a cultural, psychological level, takes time. And it's been difficult for them to see their fruits, to see their efforts bear fruit faster. They've struggled, as they would say, they're struggling to find enough opportunities to enable people to share. They're not very patient and they're having to be patient to get this mindset shift to take root more deeply. That said, I mean when you think about it, with time and with continued effort and with technological advancement, they're going to get there. And not only I think that they're going to get there, but the way that they're approaching this space, could easily become a competitive advantage.

Next, let's shift from Asia and move to Europe, and let's look at Amsterdam, which is Europe's first and most developed sharing city. Now, on the one hand, we might think of Amsterdam as being primed for sharing. It's always had to look outside its borders and collaborate for survival. And it's also known for its open culture. But Amsterdam's rise to global sharing city status required a much more deliberate focus and effort on behalf of the range of stakeholders. In contrast to Seoul, Amsterdam's sharing city efforts has been much more consortium led. It wasn't prompted by a visionary mayor but rather by a whole bunch of really awesome people and organisations. Within the government, the Amsterdam economic board has played a key role. But so has the city's chief technology officer, who has become a key champion for this whole initiative. In addition, critical have been ShareNL, which is the country's National Sharing Economy Trade

Association. The national government, knowledge institutions, traditional firms like financial, insurance and consulting firms. Even the airport is a partner in sharing city. Now, from the beginning, while Seoul was focussed very much on community from the very beginning, Amsterdam has made it clear that their key priority is environmental sustainability. The city, before the sharing city initiative, the city had already signed up to be a green city, with zero waste by 2020. And they see that the sharing economy can help them reach these goals. So for example, middle of last year, an initiative called the Green Deal was launched, which is a massive collaboration amongst more than 30 different partners. Including car sharing companies, insurance companies, four major municipalities, and a whole range of businesses and interest groups. They have a simple yet bold goal: 100,000 shared cars in the Netherlands by 2018. Now, to put that in perspective, this dwarfs any other programme by a factor that you've seen anywhere in the world. I mean, this exceeds what is in the United States. This exceeds any other market; 100,000 shared vehicles is a lot of shared transportation. And on average, when you put one car into shared use, you take somewhere between nine and 15 vehicles off the road. So they're really rethinking again their transportation infrastructure. Now, the only way they're going to achieve this kind of bold goal is together. And in turn, what this is done is actually boosted, the overall visibility on the sharing economy. When it comes to policy reform, Amsterdam has also been really smart and creative. For example, they invited Airbnb into the policy reform process. They invited them to co-develop regulations that were practical, implementable and they avoided a contentious battle and media war as a result. Again, it thinks that this is the kind of approach that cities everywhere can learn from.

And finally, in terms of who's doing the most at the national level, I would have to say it's the UK. In late 2014, the national government of the UK, commissioned an independent sharing economy review, which was extremely well received. This led to the sharing economy being included in last year's national budget. And an investment of £1.1 million in two sharing city pilots. In addition, a consortium of more than 20 of most, the best known sharing economy companies founded SEUK, which is a new trade body for the sharing economy. Its mandate is to ensure best practices and act as a single voice. They already have a code of conduct and they recently created a trust mark for responsible sharing practices. And this is just a side anecdote, actually, last night, the UK government, in combination with SEUK, the trade association, published a productivity report on how the sharing community is impacting and helping the UK economy but also pointing out how the matrix we have in place to measure economic growth and well-being really don't capture the value of the sharing economy. So, there're also, in terms of not just policy reform but thought leadership, the big picture of how UK is leading the way.

Now, coming full circle and looking ahead, what does all of this mean for Singapore? How might we take these learnings and best apply them here and for maximum social value. As I reflected on these questions, I've come up with the following ideas, and these are really intended just as a starting point. First, build on Singapore's strengths. You have an historical emphasis on self; self-reliance, which fits really well with the sharing economy ethos. You also have a track record of staying ahead of the curve. You also have unparalleled institutional trust especially within the government. So if the government can actually proactively invest in and promote the sharing economy, it could become a game changing competitive advantage. Second, build on Singapore's strategies. You have a three-pronged growth strategy, highly skilled people, an innovative economy and a distinctive global city, each and every one of these three prongs matches extremely well with strategies that could be developed around the sharing economy. And third, looking forward, lean in and walk the talk. Do all that you can to learn about these platforms and integrate the sharing economy, particularly those opportunities and platforms that have social value into the overall economy. And I'm always very cautious to say the sharing economy is not going to overtake the economy. It's not going to, you know, we're not all going to share everything. But what we're looking is a case in which the sharing economy is becoming an increasingly large and meaningful part of a bigger economic pie. Also of course, apply these principles to the government itself. Take a look at what Seoul is doing, sort of look in the mirror and say, "How can we as a city, as a country, benefit from the sharing economy?" and favour those platforms — whether they're global, whether they're local, favour those platforms that favour community, where the community at the centre of what's going on. And perhaps most of all, at the end of the day, recognise that if we can approach this space responsibly, we will see that the sharing economy is much more of an opportunity to be seized than a problem to be solved. And with that, thank you for listening and I will welcome your questions shortly.

Dr Carol Soon:

Hi, good afternoon. Thank you to CLC for inviting me to moderate this session with April. This topic of sharing economy is something that's really close to my heart because of my interest in the idea of Singapore as a digital village. I think we all agree that April did a wonderful job today and I found her lecture extremely enlightening. Besides talking about the benefits and principles of a sharing economy, I thought what was really useful for us in Singapore, whether we are from government or from private sector or even the people sector are the clear implications for cities like Singapore. And thank you very much, you know, for being so applied and so clear in terms of the implications and possible applications for Singapore and the policy makers.

Now, for today's Q&A, I do look forward and we do look forward to questions because I understand that besides people from the policymakers, we have members from the private sector as well as the people sector. Now, after this, I will advise you if you have not, introduce yourself to April and swap your name cards with her because she has an amazing deck of name cards, right? Every one is unique. On the front is her name, her affiliation and at the back is a picture of, I think, the cities that she has been too. So, every card is different. And I thought that it was really serendipitous that I picked one from Berlin, which is linked to my first question, which I hope to ask, taking my privilege as a moderator.

So, now, you gave very good examples of say AirBnb, etc. We probably have heard of Berlin, where they have a sharing economy right? So in this particular community in Berlin, they have public fridges where people swap food through an online platform. They also have, I think, what they call, community cupboards and borrowing shops. And on the other side, there's also the Really Really Free Market initiative, which started in 2008 in Moscow and now has many additions across the world including Singapore. Now, in these two examples, transactions and exchanges are made with really no monetary transactions involved, right? And I'm glad you brought up that the issue of the wide spectrum of sharing economies from non-monetised to monetised, from community-driven to market-driven. So, some critics of sharing economy has actually said that sharing economy is a misnomer because many of these companies are say driven by, say, monetary opportunism instead of altruism. Right, so I would like to hear your views on that.

April Rinne:
Wonderful, how long do we have? Just kidding. Great question and one that I am delighted to field. So, it's very interesting and I have this joke this morning — and I'm here all week — and this morning we had a workshop on the future evolution of the sharing economy and so this morning the question that was fielded was: So, you've mentioned that non-profit platforms like the sharing economy is about scale. It's about monetisation. It's about like finances. Okay. That's what I get half the time and the other half the time I get, anything that involves money isn't really sharing. Right so, there's a very natural, healthy tension there and I love this because I can see that you know the profile of the person that I'm speaking with really will determine that. And for a lot of people, the moment you enter money into the equation, something changes. But for a lot of people, without question, I can actually say, that when you ask people who are participating in this broader sharing economy on day one, why did you get involved on day one? Was it the economics? Was it the environment? Was it community right? Nine people out of 10, 99 people out of 100, say it was economics. I could save money. I could earn income. Like, this hit my pocketbook And I'm all about stimulating participation wherever we can find it. So you can't, you can't downplay the economic incentive and for a lot of people, as long as we live in a broader monetised economy, it's really, really, important. But then, when you ask those same 100 people, okay, that's why you got involved on day one, but why did you stay involved? If you started with car sharing, why did you did you start participating in skills sharing? What allowed you to stay involved? What prompted you? The numbers flip completely and what you find is the number one reason, 99 people out of 100 say the reason I stayed involved in this space was community. I met people, I connected in ways I didn't think were possible. I felt bigger, like part of something bigger than myself. So it's very interesting, you need the economic stimulus on day one to open that door. But once the door is open, it very quickly becomes about much, much, more than money. Now, from my perspective, my goal, and I'm always very cautious to say I'm not here to necessarily convince or

convert anybody to the sharing economy, you're either going like it or not, that's fine. But I want to sort of expose a broader menu of options for how you might meet your needs, for how you might think about your budget, for how you might think about running the city and so forth. And so I'm trying to cast that net as wide as I can, and the way to maximise participation in this space is to provide as many different options as you can. And some people are really attracted to that non-monetised model. It has lots of benefits, it works really well on a hyper-local level but what we found is that that kind of market is, or that kind of setting I should say, is very hard to scale beyond, you know, a neighbourhood in Berlin. It'll scale local clusters but it's not like a network of sorts. Other people are really attracted by the ability to earn income or save money. So I try to be equally inclusive of all of those different models, depending on what your goals are, depending on what your needs are. I mean I think, I spend a lot of time thinking about what the sharing economy needs for low-income people. And what we look at there, I mean I think a great example is low-income people, the extent to which they can save money by sharing and it doesn't need to be free, but just lower cost. It costs less to share rather than own, and this means that people can all of a sudden participate in markets that previously were excluded to them. So, we certainly can have a long, almost, I mean, not just philosophical debate, we can have economical debates in terms of what's the true, you know the crux, the core vision of the sharing economy. From my perspective it's not about whether or not money is included, not at all. I see social value in monetised platform. I see social value in non-monetised platform. I see it across that spectrum. But the key that the longer I work in this space, and the more that I chip away at these models, those platforms that, like I said put what I'll term community, relationships, social values, that put that at the centre of why they do what they do, people are happy to pay for some of their services. That's where you see success. I'm based in San Francisco, where there are raging debates about whether or not venture capital taints the sharing economy completely. Not necessarily, depending from my perspective, not necessarily, depending upon what the company is actually doing. And the importance that they're placing on relationships and community. And just one very brief comment, because you asked me on the terminologies. So, we've got sharing economy, we've got collaborative economy. Peer economy, access economy, gig economy, on-demand economy, trust economy — I could go on and on. There're all these different terms, none of them are perfect. And all of them are somehow useful.

And I sort of joke and some people have written about the fact that the sharing economy, maybe it's not in its infancy anymore but it's not yet in adulthood — sort of in its adolescence. And terminology is messy. And a lot of what's happening in the sharing economy is sharing. There's also a lot of companies increasingly that are jumping on the sharing bandwagon. But it's what I would term share washing. You know, they're just using the term, but those are the ones that aren't looking at the relationships. They are looking at the strictest transaction, and that to me does detract from the core mission, which is really about going back to those three principles. Not just the resource utilisation, not just the decentralisation, but the relationships and you know, helping people live more, not just productive but more meaningful, interesting, connected lives.

Audience 1:
Hi April. My name is Yu Sian, I'm from the Housing and Development Board. And specifically from the building and research side of it, I have a couple of questions relating to protecting the disadvantaged in the sharing economy. The first question is, specifically, I think the people who might stand to benefit the most from the sharing economy may also overlap with that set of society that has less access to the Internet, the smartphones and that kind of a structure. So, how can we mitigate that? How can we give them access? And the second question is a bit about, I've read about how the operators and agents in say, Task Rabbit you know, and some of these ride-sharing platforms find that they're at the whim of the big companies that run the platform. And the rules can change and they really have no way to control their income. How do we protect those people as well?

April Rinne:
Yeah, okay. Great, great, questions. Let me take that. The first, sorry, I'll take those in reverse order. What you actually just pointed to is something, I wouldn't say that it keeps me up at night, so to speak, sort of. It points exactly to what I was talking about in terms of the business model reform, where the people that are building these platforms don't necessarily… they have some power, they can leave the platform, kind of thing. There's no, they're not beholden to any particular platform but they don't necessarily have the same level of voice that you would hope to see. And so, we are, and I think companies are increasingly aware of this. It also speaks… and some service providers

and I think in particular drivers, which some of you have probably heard, they're starting to mobilise as well. And then what you find, going back to those platforms that put community at the centre, actually, if they're really good, they can get their community members to actually mobilise on their behalf. And do advocacy for why this company should succeed, why they should have policy for reform. On the flipside, if drivers or service providers aren't actually pleased with how the company, the platform, is treating them, they can also mobilise and we are seeing some lawsuits in Washington state, in Seattle actually. Seattle is the first city that two months ago — first off, it's an experiment — first time in the world, but they're allowing these drivers to unionise so that they can actually advocate for their rights in a more formalised manner. And I think, we're very early into that sort of thing, but no platform is actually, in my opinion, adhering to the values of the sharing economy and looking at the longer-term vision, is going to do things that actually are damaging, if you will, to the service providers, because at some point, a better platform could come along that does get that and the participants will migrate, I mean that's an option. But I think much more, what I would like to see is a diversity of business models and more legal reform on that regard. So, that's not a full answer but I'll leave it there for now.

On the digital gap, the digital divide, it's interesting. This was something that did concern me for quite a while and not to say that it doesn't concern me anymore, but what I've realised is that we have a tonne of challenges to face in the sharing economy. Outdated policies, digital gaps, concern about inequalities, all of that sort of thing. The digital gap is a challenge today, there's no question about that. But what we also see is that every day that gap is narrowing. And I go back to the demographics: By 2020, 90% of the global population is going to be in a position to participate much more actively than they can today. Now, I don't mean to shirk the question, but I'm much more trying to focus on — okay, if we have limited number of hours in the day, how do we get policies in place that can help support this? And the digital gap, there are lots of people focussing on that, I mean part of it is access to the technology, that, I'm not worried about at all because price points are coming down. This is becoming such, I mean the smartphone is becoming your connector to pretty much everything. It becomes so much more valuable. Some of you have probably heard you know, that more people that have mobile phones than have toilets in the world. More people have mobile phones than pretty much any other utility. But at the same time then there's also digital literacy, and I think that there's a lot more that we just need to be investing in, in particular, elderly people just getting comfortable with that technology. They can afford it, but they don't necessarily use it. And so, we see initiatives that, and I think there could be much more investment in that space. But for me, I'm much more concerned about making sure that we actually are putting guard rails on this space to allow these companies to even continue to grow and thrive and get seeded, which will then facilitate more people participating, including the elderly.

Audience 2:
Hi April. My name is Duoji San. I'm a civil entrepreneur and environmentalist and right now I'm a Director of The Home Group. And we're currently focussed on building two eco cities or sharing cities from scratch. One in Indonesia and one in the Philippines. And the reason why we were targeting these two places is because, in terms of vulnerability to climate change, the number two city in the world most vulnerable is Jakarta. And number four is Manila. So what happens when you've got these huge quantities of people urbanising, but potentially the cities around them are going to be either, you know, hit by many storms and hurricanes or alternatively flooded. So, two questions, but first of all, really, really, enjoyed your speech and I think that there's so much to learn from some of the examples you gave. But my first question is, if you were to design a city from scratch, so a lot of these sharing services are built around existing infrastructure bottlenecks or problems. If you were to build a city from scratch, what would you do or think about? Or what type of first things pops into your mind that you would design around? The second thing was, you're very well-travelled, so it's interesting that so much of the sharing economy comes from San Francisco in California, where there is this abundance and plentitude and sharing as opposed to say, in New York City where people are so busy, they just don't seem to have that same culture of sharing. So, in all the places that you have travelled, where are the places that you think you've seen the characteristics of sharing? And why or why not? So, for example, Berlin, I totally get it. But I would never have thought Korea would have been such a sharing economy. So, there are my two questions, thank you.

April Rinne:

My gosh. These are wonderful. I want to stay here all night. So, I'd love to chat afterwards about Manila and Jakarta because, I can't remember if it was mentioned, most of my career has actually been spent in developing, or I guess I mentioned it briefly in my intro, developing and emerging economies, but building market places for people at the base of the economic pyramid. So, again, clean energy, healthcare, water and sanitation. Like that's what I did for many, many, years and then the sharing economy popped up and I thought, "Oh, this is another market space where we're building markets that work, can work better for more people." So, I am very much looking on the horizon and seeing the convergence of sharing economy and digitisation and access to smart phones and so forth, converging with the development path where I look at mega cities in the developing world, by and large none of them today are using terminology like the sharing economy. They're not looking through this lens at all, but my goodness, could it help them in particular with their sustainability goals and in particular, as they you know are experiencing massive urbanisation. So I look at these two things colliding and I'm like, "Okay, I want to spend more time," I spent a lot of time in Jakarta and Manila in years past, but not in the context of the sharing economy, so sometimes things come full circle. I'd be happy to talk with you more again. It's very interesting so, it's hard I mean, there aren't that many new, you know, brand new footprint, brand new cities out there today. There're a couple in Dubai that sort of thing. I'm not sure, that I wouldn't look at as sharing city inspired. One of the things, and I don't know the degree that you can do this in your present situation. But one of the things I get really excited about is actually the new kinds of co-design opportunities that are arising, going back to human centred design and things like that. It goes beyond sharing economy. But what we find is that the more you can involve the community in what they want to see, the better community you're going to develop. So, identify who's going to be living there and then say, what kind of space is important to you? You might want collective community space for the elderly for youth, for sporting activities, cooking, who knows what. And the more you can actually co-design, what we also see is even policy reform. We're getting really, when you open up these questions to the people who are directly affected, you often get some really creative solutions by people who have no formal training in policy reform for example, these folks might not be urban planners but a lot of design firms are also actually able to look at the collaborative potential if you will. One very simple principle is, you absolutely need to rethink how we, how much space you would put aside let's say for, I don't want to say collaborative use, community use, written large. I mean we had a conversation on the way over here actually about high-rises. Where on one hand you think, "Oh my god, high-rises are the worst possible case study for the sharing economy if you will, if all you do is you walk into the building, there's a doorman, you go to the elevator, you go up, that's it. Completely anti-sharing economy. But there are other high-rises in the world that have very proactively set aside large chunks of space for community central use. You've got buildings with a bike depot. You've got buildings with toy libraries. Actually it's a great example, I'm blanking on the name, in Australia, a housing, apartment development, a whole series where every single development they now have space for a tool library, they have space for bike sharing. And they put these principles into every building that they structure. So, lots of ideas I think there. Now, in terms of the cities, the places where we see a lot happening, it's a great question, I will push back a little bit and say, San Francisco as much as you know, I was born in San Francisco, I'm a native. I'm so not impressed with that city right now. I cannot tell you. Everyone is saying to me, "Oh, we got to follow what San Francisco is doing." And I'm saying, "No you don't." And what I mean by that is yes, Silicon Valley, the San Francisco Bay area, it is a hotbed for tech innovation. No question about that, but is it a hotbed for policy innovation? Is it a hotbed for thinking through city and urban planning? No. they're falling farther and farther behind and it's not that the mayor is bad. I mean the mayor is fine. He's not a visionary, he's not a great, he's a good mayor, not a great mayor. You have a lot of fear and concern about just keep the tech money flowing in but not really looking at the broader societal ramifications. Meanwhile however, there are lots of cities, and I should also say, just to put this in context, San Francisco celebrated the fact that it's established the first sharing economy task force in the world back in 2013. That task force has never met. It made a great press release but not much more. And I say that with all due respect to San Francisco, there's a lot of good things happening there. But the policy piece around the sharing economy, really, really, not even underwhelmed. I'm just disappointed. Meanwhile though, you have a lot of cities that are, maybe not as well-known but actually hungrier to better understand this and some of you might have heard me talk before, just slightly further north, Portland, Oregon. Not a big city, doing incredible things around the sharing economy. So, many years ago, they actually passed tax legislation that provided more favourable tax of car sharing, not compared to owned vehicles. Compared to traditional car rental. They have an office of neighbourhood initiatives. All they do is seed community-level neighbourhood sharing-related initiatives. Back in 2014, first city in the world to actually partner with Airbnb and they created what they call, it's a shared city initiative. Now, in that case it was helpful in terms that it reformed taxation for Airbnb hosts and it established a registration portal and that kind of thing. But beyond that from the city's perspective, they were like, "Oh, this is just a gateway by which we can actually learn a whole lot more about the sharing economy." So, really smart thinking. Portland, I love. In terms of big cities, I have to say London and Amsterdam are both doing quite a lot, doing quite well. I expect we're going to see in the coming months, more announcements, more good news you could say, coming from places like Sydney. Coming from Vancouver, I mean these are places that you might imagine but also I mean maybe one oddball, that you might not expect, Milan. Milan, Italy of all places. What I found really interesting, so they've now established a sharing city. It's not a formal initiative but they're proactive. They proactively have point people within the government doing this. What I like that they did, this was again back in late 2014, they were like, "We have big problems about how to regulate this space. We don't know what to do. We're going open this up to a public consultation." And so they had a structured series of both in-person and virtual, discussions with the public. What do you like about this? What don't you like? What do you want to see us do and not do? And they had questionnaires that anyone could complete and submit feedback online. And then they had periodic town hall meetings where they just came together and publicly discussed it. And they came up with some really interesting initiatives but it also helped them on the policy reform piece. And in that case, they also were looking at expo, which was the global expo last year in Milan. And they were looking at a really big event where they were going to have a lot of people come in. They weren't going to be able to host all of them and so they were also trying to figure out how to use the sharing economy to help us navigate this big event. And that gave them a very live, real opportunity to test out some of these models, to forge some partnerships and things like that. So, I would also say that any place that actually has let's say a big event, or that has a critical issue around transportation or some other issue that the sharing economy can help meet. That's all… it's just a great place to visit.

Dr Carol Soon:

Yeah and on the point about high-rise building right? They may not, like you pointed out, they may not always be inimical to the concept of sharing. So in Singapore, some of you might have heard of block pooling. It's actually a ground-up initiative for the various HDB estates, where people living in the same estate would trade say, goods and even services like babysitting etc. So definitely, I think at the end of the day, where there is need, you get innovation and you know, excellent implementation.

April Rinne:

If I may comment briefly on that, there's also a State Buzz right? It's the same sort of thing, so I was researching this in event of this visit and it's fascinating because I love what's happening there. And at the same time, and I was going to try to have some opportunity to mention this just as a piece of feedback, so I might as well do it here. From what I understand, a lot of times, they say, "Hey, we're going to do block, block sharing, block pooling. Here's the form, fill out the things that you're willing to share." Right? So you have to like sit around and go, "Well will I share, I don't know. Will I share…? What do I share?" You know, versus, and which fine, you know, with all due respect, it's fine. It's a totally valid model. But I would encourage you to look more at options like Peerby. So in Peerby there's no inventory. They're catching the inventory on the flipside. Here's where it gets fascinating. You simply say, "I need snow chains for my car. I'm going skiing." You put that out. Peerby has no idea what people actually own but every time that message goes out, so instead of having to preload the inventory in that particular case, you're saying, "Does anyone out there have it?" And oftentimes people like, "Oh, I have snow chains. Sure, like that's fine." Or "I have a camera," or guitar or whatever the case may be. And so not only, they've kind of reverse-engineered the supply and demand. Because what happens is, you click, you say simply you know, "I don't have it," or "I have it and I'm happy to share it," or "I have it and I'm not willing to share it." But the point is it's much more demand-driven that you throw these requests out and then people opt into whether or not they're willing to share it. Because what I found again and again is it is very hard when you say to people, what are you willing to share? They're like, "Emmm… I don't know. Where do I start?" Especially if they haven't participated before. Yeah so, if, when I look at things like block pooling, I'd be very curious to know if people simply first said, "Here are the things I'd like to have access to." And then backend into who has those things. Rather than trying to predict what people might want or need to share.

Dr Carol Soon:
Yes?

Audience 3
Hi. Thanks for the sharing this. My name is Sanford, I'm from the private sector. So, from a kind of user perspective from a common man here, if you were, for example, living in Singapore, how would you participate in the sharing economy? What can people do on a day-to-day basis? Or travelling around Asia? That would be one. And then specifically for Singapore, maybe more on a policy basis where car ownership, the cost is so high — you mentioned Amsterdam sharing 100,000 cars — if you were going to give feedback to the Ministry of Transportation, how do we get there? What could Singapore do in the area of car ownership? And then thirdly, more generally, the trust issues inherent in the sharing economy. What, besides user ratings, user reviews, what are some of the common design elements that could be incorporated into the sharing arrangements that would kind of promote trust, address trust issues inherent in a sharing economy? Thanks.

April Rinne:
Fabulous. Okay, so I'm going try to remember all those. You wrote these down. But the first one. I would, by the way, gladly live in Singapore for a while. And it's interesting because I do assessments of like what kind of sharing economy, what would I expect based on objective criteria about a place. What would I expect to see in terms of presence of sharing economy, how diverse, what's happening? And it's interesting because based on objective criteria and in particular, you know, nirvana, as I like to say, nirvana for sharing is when you have a density of people and a density of things to share. Singapore is like off the charts for this. So it's interesting though, is on the surface, I would expect to see a bigger local sharing economy than I actually see. Now, that's not criticism by any means. What it means to me is, I think with a little bit of proactive stimulus and a little bit of like, starting to use common terminology, terms like the sharing economy or the collaborative economy or whatever. You actually could

catalyse something much bigger than many other places. Or I should say you could catalyse something with potentially with much less effort than other places that don't have the same set of you know, the same density, the same level of technological access and so forth. So, that said, there is a local sharing economy. It is growing. It is thriving and I think I'm going to dodge this question by asking, I think there are couple of people in the audience, there's a Singapore Sharing Economy Association that's actually made up of local sharing economy companies as well as global companies. And, any representatives from the association here? There you go, thank you. I didn't want to call you but, Eugene, do you want to briefly comment on what's happening here locally?

Audience 4:
Hi, name's Eugene. I'm from the Sharing Economy Association of Singapore. We started like two years ago. So, there are a few sectors that probably have to do with sharing economy in Singapore. I think for the spaces, there's definitely companies like Airbnb, Panda Bed and there's also a few co-working spaces out there. For transport, there's iCars Cloud they do peer-to-peer rental of cars. There's Ride Sharing, there's Share Transport — they do a ride sharing, car sharing that kind of platforms. For the other transport companies there's also on demand delivery, courier services things like that. GoGo Van, Easy Van, Ninja Van, CarPR, and things like that. There's also Van Tycoons for rental of items. There are other platforms that look at different sectors. Money-lending, the legal kind not the illegal kind right. There's crowd funding. So there're different sectors involved. If anyone is interested, come and speak to me.

April Rinne:
Excellent. Thank you. And I think it shows… I mean, it's early stage but there's actually quite a nice diversity of what's happening. We met, from my perspective — when I also think about talent pool that you have here in Singapore which is extraordinary. I would hope to see, like to see, expect to see, I guess you could say, more platforms, more growth on the skill sharing side of things. You know, the menus are great but like there's a whole lot of specialised expertise where people can deliver you know, services and expertise more that way. And just, and I mention this more offhand. But it might be helpful for some of you, when you look at the different categories that things might be shared and the kinds of participation I would expect to see in the Sharing Economy

Association, we often talk about the 3 Ss. So all kinds of *space* that can be shared and we talked about that today. Residential space and office space and green space and so forth. All kinds of *skills*. So, we're looking at the skills sharing end of things. And then all kinds of *stuff*. And so stuff can be the clothes and the cars and the toys and whatever else. And so actually, already you have participation for each of those categories in the Sharing Economy Association. But I think what will, what I will expect to see is just more growth and diversity amongst each of those three verticals.

Okay, your next one was car sharing, right? So, this is going to sound probably too simple of an answer but there are two ways that you can change people's behaviours so to speak. Carrots and sticks if you will. You can make behaving in one way more attractive by incentivising people to do that and you can make life more challenging by disincentivising people to do that. I mean quite honestly, from what I understand about car ownership, it's already a ridiculously expensive proposition, so you've set the stick pretty high. You've disincentivised quite a lot but it also still, it's a status symbol, it's this, it's that. One of the things that we continue to see, I mean the way that you make, you make it really easy or you make the case really compelling for people to not own cars is you make it as seamless, as efficient, as comfortable to share a car as it is to own a car. Now, we're not quite, broadly speaking, we're not necessarily quite there yet. It's not as though you can just find a car at a moment's notice. It might be two blocks away you know, but we're getting better every single day. Everything from remote car access to you know, car to go and drive now in many cities where they operate, they guarantee there will be a car available within 500 metres of any spot in the city. 500 metres isn't bad but that might still be too far for some people. We get that down to 100 metres, it becomes hard to say, "Okay, this is less convenient than my car." So, I think, I mean, I go back to Seoul on this one. Their transportation vision plan, which is like, car ownership will be effectively obsolete. So they've done things and I'm not sure if I agree with all of this, but fascinating. They have legislation in place that says for any new build, if you're building a high-rise, you are allowed zero parking spaces. That… whoa… okay… you know. I mean what's interesting is that not that long ago, you determine how many floors you could build on, in a building by how many parking spaces you have available. You had to have the ratio right. They basically said, "Forget it. Not pro rata, not percentage. Zero." That's a pretty good disincentive. You know, if I want to live in the city centre of Seoul, I'm not going to have a car because there's just no way I want to deal with that. They're making car ownership such a hassle that people just start going, "Ughh… no." But at the same time what they have to do and what they're working on, trying to do a little bit better, is making the option for car sharing and ride sharing and shared use options more attractive and seamless and convenient. You know, a beautiful user experience if you will. And just briefly, this was mentioned in a conversation yesterday as well. Some of you might know this. Seoul, for all of it's promoting of the sharing economy, it is, I mean it's having its challenges. It banned Uber. Now you're like, "Wait a minute, what? How do you…? How does that make sense?" Couple things is, I want to point out there, they said, "We definitely want ride sharing here. We are going gung-ho on ride sharing. We want to focus on local companies so we're going to tell Uber to basically go away. But, what we're going to do is develop our own app that's even better. So, they made that statement and I was going kind of like, "Oh, my goodness. Where does this head?" And this you know, again got into that debate that, "Oh is it that money is the bad, the problem." And a couple of months ago, they did launch, in pilot phase, an Uber style app for a driverless vehicle. So, they actually said, it is even better because it's autonomous. Now, I have to say, this is total side note, but it was developed in conjunction with the Seoul National University, so SNU was the acronym. And they call the platform, they're calling it Snuber. Anyway, I mentioned, Seoul is not a perfect place. You know they struggled with policy reform a lot. One of the things is find quite compelling and Mike, you can correct me on this if I'm wrong, but they actually wanted to do some policy reform with regard to home sharing. But some of the regulations in place in Korea for home sharing are not set at the city level, they're set at the national level. And so they wanted to do policy reform, but there's a political debate amongst the parties and they encountered resistance at the national level which was quite challenging at the city level to implement some of these things. So, I called that out, it's far beyond your question, but Seoul, I mean, no place is perfect, but Seoul is getting, trying to get really creative at how it can sort of tackle and hack some of these problems. So, the car sharing thing I mean, take a look, I would read Seoul's transportation policy and start with those recommendations which can be quite heavy handed. The final question?

Dr Carol Soon:

Mechanisms for building trust.

April Rinne:

Oh, trust. Right, so, this is great. And actually, I have to say, big picture and I apologise I've said this to some of you already. Trust. You guys are so lucky here in Singapore that you have especially at the institutional level and the government level. You have unparalleled trust, integrity. Your government — it is looked at as the gold standard worldwide. So many places that I work have culturally low levels of trust and the government is the last institution that you want to trust. And so you look at things like policy reform and people are like, "Are you kidding?" You know? No. It's a system that is going to take 10 times as much effort, I think, to stimulate a sharing economy as you have here. So actually, you're already very far ahead of the curve so to speak, on the trust level. Now, in terms of the kinds of things that we're seeing that helped develop trust, peer reviews are a great example. But what's interesting, we're starting to see platforms also that are taking you know, you have a profile or reputation on individual platforms. We're seeing platforms that are developing basically you know, your entire reputation history, your entire reputation profile. This can both help stimulate additional sharing but it gets quite interesting when you start seeing people who are getting jobs, getting approved for housing, not because they have a lot of money in their bank accounts, not because they went to the right school but because they can actually point to their profile on all these different platforms and say, "I am trustworthy. I am you know, I've developed a reputation for following through on my actions." So, we're seeing those sorts of things start to emerge. In individual platforms themselves I would say are getting better and better at recognizing the importance of that and you know, beefing up their own trust and verification processes. Yeah it's interesting, I mean what you find, there's a lot of hesitation on day one about, can I trust this person? Can I trust this platform? And then you get through a couple of transactions and you start realising, why is it that we have this huge assumption in society that other people can't be trusted. And I have a slightly, maybe it's not cynical view on this, but I actually look at our whole society and the organisations and institutions that we've developed and we've actually built a society based on the assumption that "I can't trust you". So we build a society with the assumption of mistrust or distrust. And when you think about that I mean, this effect, my favourite example is like education. With compulsory education because arguably, we don't trust the children are curious to succeed, to want to go to learn. So we compel you to learn subject "x" on day "y" and year "z". And we're all going to learn it together. And that worked really well 200 years ago when we needed to train people to work in factories or to go to war. But it doesn't work so well today and we don't trust that children are inherently curious and might want to learn. We've look at how we've dealt with politics. I don't think… I should say globally. Politics, not necessarily full of trust. Look at consumer relationships and how companies, the information that companies often hide from their consumers. So if we just start rethinking, what if at the end of the day, not that everyone is trustworthy? Not that everyone is trustworthy but if we started looking at those people who can't be trusted as exceptions rather than the rule, what you find is again and again, people start saying, "Why did I think that I couldn't trust anybody?" You have to be responsible. You have to be proactive. You have to do research on the people that you're exchanging with, but there's… I continue to see people who say, "I just, I had that equation wrong."

Dr Carol Soon:
Well, we have just maybe two more questions? And just keep it as short as possible so, this person and that gentleman.

Audience 5:
Hi, I'm Derek from the National Environment Agency. So in response to the very last question, speaking from the regulator's point of view. I think shared economy is often something which regulators fret over, primarily because when it comes to shared spaces, I think, while we like to think that everybody is trustworthy and takes care of this common spaces but historically, we always see, that there always is that small number who abuse that trust. And therefore, there's a lot of, as you said, a lot of looking to the regulators to you know, "regulate that". To make sure that those people who abuse that trust is brought into line. And I think that oftentimes is also part of the difficulty in terms of regulating the shared economy space. So for example in the National Environment Agency there is a push about, how can we share kitchens, for example. And so, the problems is when many people are sharing the kitchens, are they all you know, keeping the kitchen clean for the next user? And when one doesn't do it, you know, who do you go after? So, there are questions like that. I'm sure it's replicated

many times over in many spaces. Look at how we've been dealing with the environment, polluting the seas and all. Any common spaces tend to be abused. So, going forward. What is that rebalancing of roles, that regulators have to do and how can we help communities who are prepared to share, in a sense, self-regulate? So that there's less burden on regulators to have to step into every single, you know, nook and cranny, to sort of, to rescue mistrust.

Dr Carol Soon:
Ok, we will take… you answer this question with the last question. Yes?

Audience 6:
Hi, my name is Burno. I am actually a proponent of the sharing economy. And I applaud your effort to actually characterise the sharing economy. My question is, one area of opportunity to increase participation is to address the trust and safety on sharing platforms. I just want to give you an example. I have a friend who recently checked into a rental accommodation on a sharing platform. It was dirty and disgusting. When this friend needed help, it took hours for help to arrive because the resolution is often hidden behind layers of electronic communications. Imagine if he was in an actual emergency where he does not speak the local language. So my question is, how would you advise government to play a greater role in setting trust and safety standards for such sharing platform?

Dr Carol Soon:
Excellent right? Because both of them touched on the same issue — regulation and the government's role.

April Rinne:
Yup. Which one shall I take first? Because both of them are really good. Let me take, I'll take this one first because it's fresh in my mind. Yours is excellent, it's deeper. I'll wander through that one. So, it's an interesting question because, on one hand, I mean we're looking at sort of say sharing economy means also a different balance in terms of shared responsibility. Of the scenario you just described, what if that responsibility is actually the regulator, the city, the municipality to figure out how do we make sure this

doesn't happen? What of that is the platform's responsibility? As a facilitator? And what of that is the responsibility of the individuals? Like, did you actually do your due diligence before you know? Did you have… how much information did you have? And, I don't have the perfect equation amongst all of those things. But I will offer a couple of ideas, so go back to Amsterdam, exactly this kind of situation. One of the things the city realised is that they did want to promote home sharing, short-term rentals, things like that. They thought, we're going to trust that most of these situations will go well but we need to have some kind of recourse mechanism for when they don't. So the city has established a 24–7 hotline. If you need help or if you have something that you want to report or can't figure out. They don't have all the answers by any means. But they've sort of designed this "we're last ditch resort" so to speak, if you have a problem, we can try to help. But they're not proactive necessarily; it's not, it's a different look and field of a proactive policing. Obviously, even if you don't have a problem, you can call the hotline at any point in time and say, "I have an idea. Hey, I have a, you know… I want to provide some feedback." I mean that's a very simple measure which I think city, establishing something like a hotline where you just are collecting information. And if there's something that might need urgent attention, an emergency, something like that, then you might be well placed to help solve it or, you find out what the platform is and you start especially, and here's where it gets interesting, especially if you know the people who are working at the platform. Especially, if you have a partnership with them. Or some kind of, you know, there's a relationship in place there with the platforms. You can actually help tackle that problem together. In terms of I mean, certainly, platforms across the board, I think, on one hand you can say, "Yeah, platforms are struggling to keep up with how, in a way, how quickly they're are growing, how many different transactions show up or what not. I do think, by and large, platforms are, they've come a long, I'm generalising here but platforms, they've come a long way from where they were a couple of years ago. And there's still a whole lot more that could be done. I will say, without knowing more about this particular set of events, I would start by asking, what information was available to you when you made this booking. What has prior experience been with this particular host or situation? I mean, there's a trail of breadcrumbs and you find that what you've just described, is relatively rare if you have a track record of good experience. It's sort of the classic case of the Yelp review. If it's a one-star review, you probably don't want to go there. Or one-star reviews end up getting booted, shut out of the platform over time. The one case in which you could imagine this happening quite easily is… it's a brand new situation. They're new to the platform. They're just getting into it and they just haven't necessarily learned all of the ropes so to speak. And there I think there's a whole lot platforms can do around, in this particular case, host education, best practices, principles. Making sure that like here are the standards that we expect in terms of health and hygiene. In terms of welcoming. In terms of communication, all of that. And if hosts aren't complying with that, well the platform has the ability to take some kind of remedial action. But it is, it's really I mean it's a combination. It's not about any one. The individual. The platform. Or the policymaker. There's a combination of responsibilities there that absolutely, as participants in the sharing economy, we have to be responsible for our own actions. We have to as much due diligence as we can. But then after that, we do need to call on better, the resources at the platforms, and the policymakers. But keeping in mind also that we are improving, we collectively. Things are getting better every year, there's no question. And we're still in early stages. And I expect significant more improvements in the years to come.

The question about, just the role of the regulators. So it's interesting because I'm wondering if I will admit, you bring up a wonderful problem that does actually keep me up at night so to speak, which is the tragedy of the commons. But here we're talking about common resources that aren't necessarily owned by anybody and it's not a space that a sharing economy platform is going to come in and occupy you know. But there's always from an environmental perspective, there's a massive tragedy of the commons that I don't think the sharing economy has really even started to put its head around necessarily but here we're talking about you know, oceans and marshes and water you know things, that are just not necessarily, it's not about the sharing but it is about a failure of common or community-based governance models to function. More broadly, when I look at the role of the regulator, I can sort of bucket that in the different activities, I mean I kind of, I often say that, you can look at education and research, you can look at partnerships, you can look at legislation, you can look through all these different lenses for how a regulator could approach this space but also I think more on a fundamental level. I do tend to be of the mindset that, we, all else equal on day one, we need lighter touch regulation that allows these platforms to grow. That even allows them to get lift off. There's a very real risk that heavy regulation on day one, we're going to kill certain activity before we even have a chance to know whether or not it's useful. So light touch on day one but, keeping in touch with these platforms, seeing how they're growing. Getting to know them, getting to know how they're used, how people are thinking about them all of that. That's a super, you need to be, invite them in, get to know them. Also though, what I find really interesting is, and this is more, sounds a bit abstract, but when it comes to things like of regulation, I would love to see more regulators say to platforms, "Hey, these are the principles we'd like to adhere by, if you can show us that you're taking care of issue xyz, by your platform, we don't need to regulate that." We just don't need to. If you can show and it doesn't need to be bullet proof, it doesn't need to be perfect. But show us that you're making some effort, and that you have… that you'll meet us halfway on all of this. I think it's super exciting and I mentioned to a couple people looking at ride sharing. Portland Oregon, go back to them. Fascinating what they did to try to regulate ride sharing. That they did last year, I love this example, they said we have no idea what to do but want to support ride sharing. We want to figure out what to do with taxis as well. What we're going to do is a four-month pilot. And during these four months, we're going to lift all, effectively all regulations currently on taxis. They had rate cabs and… gone. And we're going to allow ride sharing platforms in and for four months, we're going to let you all operate freely but we're going to make sure that you meet these certain conditions. You need to provide 24-7 access, you need to provide disabled access. You need to serve all neighbourhoods equally, low-income neighbourhoods etc. So they put very much of a public benefit spin on this. And they said, here's what you need to do, go. And what we're going to do is depending on, we're going to see how you all perform, how many of you do provide disabled access? How many of you do if you will, to your point, take care of this broader societal issues? And at the end because these are all data driven platforms, we're going to have the data on how you guys performed or what you did. And at the end of these four months, we're going to look at these data, we're going to look at how you guys did and we're going to set policy, based on performance. Super, super, smart. Because it gave the incentive, this might touch a little on your question as well. It gave all these platforms incentive to perform to their best. To meet these broader societal concerns. And what's interesting is that it's has now passed, and they've set policy, and I have to say it's one of the very few examples where pretty much everybody's happy. Ride sharing companies are happy. The taxi companies are actually quite happy. And what you found is even, quite unprecedented in my experience, a lot of the ride sharing platforms didn't have necessarily disabled vehicles. They didn't have vans and things. They actually partner with the taxi companies who have these vehicles. So, you have the drivers that are now participating in lots of different ways. So anyway, I mention that it's just one way, I think pilots where you're not promising that the policy will be set in any particular way necessarily. You are signalling that the sharing economy platforms will be allowed to exist and operate. But you're also putting a little bit of a nudge to help meet these public needs. And then say we'll set policy based on performance.

Dr Carol Soon:

I think that's excellent. And with regulation we've come to a close of this session. Please join me in thanking her.