

**ACTION**

**FRAMEWORK**

**FOR URBAN YOUTH**

**ENGAGEMENT**



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This booklet represents a joint effort of International City Leaders and UN-Habitat under the research leadership of The New School. It was coordinated as a practicum of the United Nations Summer Study Program within Julien J. Studley Graduate Program in International Affairs. The research and analysis are a collective work by students, faculty, UN-Habitat staff and International City Leaders.



# FOREWORD

This report is a joint effort between International City Leaders, UN-Habitat and The New School University. Building off goals and targets set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), this document presents an **action framework** highlighting ways to empower urban youth to realize a sustainable future. Furthermore, it includes case studies in which youth are taking initiative and creating that reality.

We live in an era of unprecedented urbanization, and young people comprise a large share of the urban population. Too often they are thought of as passive beneficiaries, rather than engineers and implementers of social change.

This action framework understands youth's potential and encourages policy makers, legislators and other stakeholders to engage with youth in many ways. Youth are implementers who can and are affecting sustainable development in cities. Their participation is not just beneficial to the process, but crucial if the vision of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda are to be realized.

In this new millennium the world is more interconnected than ever.

Cities can be a showground for innovation, opportunity, and partnership. The action framework put forward in this booklet highlights instances of youth-inclusive programs from around the world that are advancing positive change. From Nairobi to São Paulo, youth are leading the way. The interventions and case studies set forth in this booklet are a guide to local authorities, policy makers, NGOs, and multilateral agencies. It offers tools for youth to become implementers of the SDGs and NUA.

In a small way, this project hopes to reimagine urban policies and practices that engage youth in accomplishing these agendas' historic undertaking to transform our planet. While there is no single prescription for change, this document serves as a tool to advance youth inclusive sustainable urbanization.



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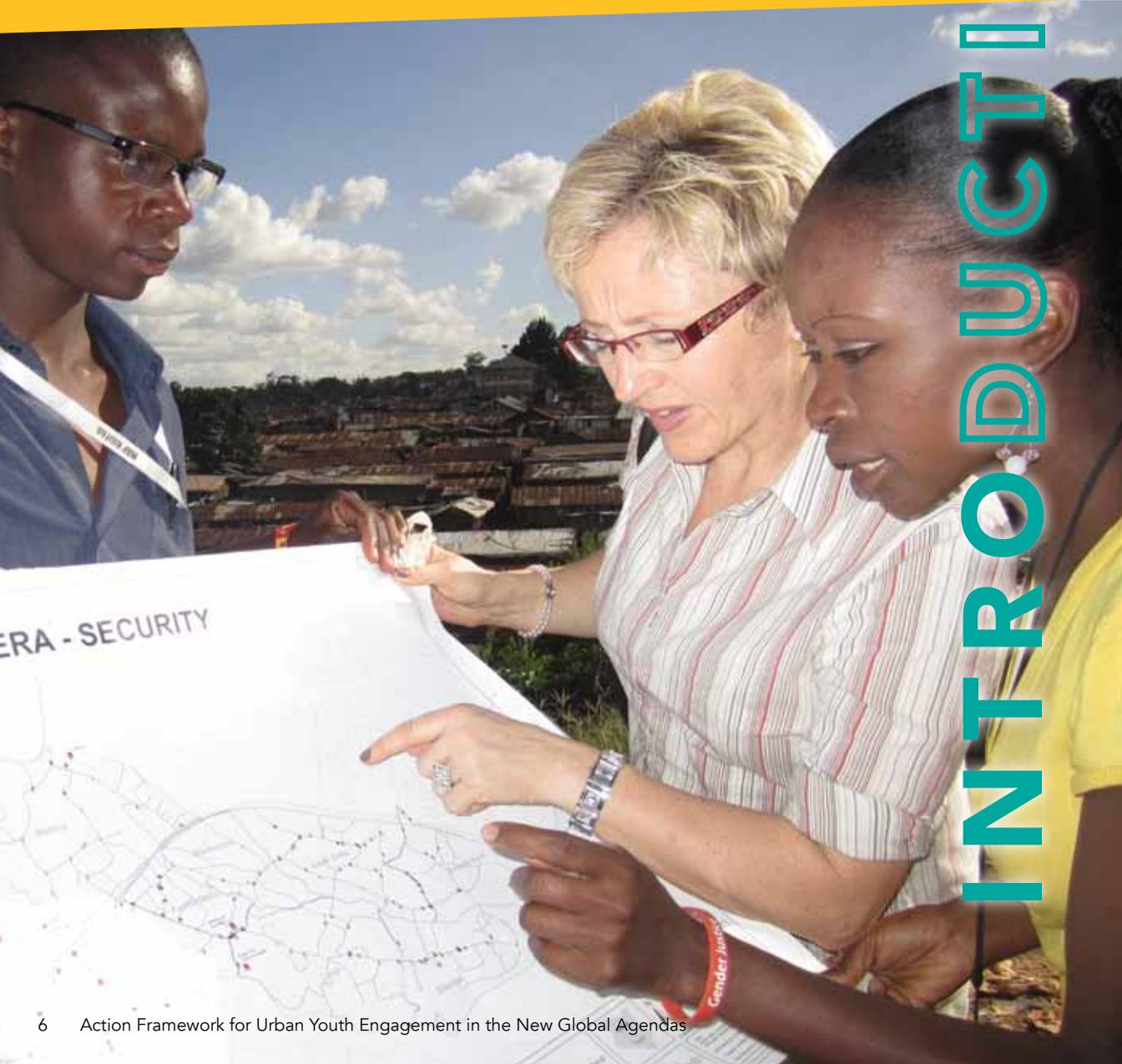
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The percentage of world's population living in urban centers has increased steadily over the past century. It is estimated that by 2030, 60% of the global population will live in urban centers, with youth comprising nearly 60% of urban inhabitants. The pitfalls and the possibilities of urbanization will impact young people in profound ways. Youth participation and engagement is crucial if the challenges of the new millennium are to be met.

# INTRODUCTION



This booklet presents findings from an youth focused analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). UN-Habitat is addressing urbanization within the framework of these ambitious agendas which represent an “ambitious, comprehensive and universal” plan to revive growth, achieve the sustainable development goals, and meet the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement (Brookings, 2016). It is more encompassing and committed to multi-stakeholder partnerships than ever before.

To emphasize this, the report provides examples of ways in which urban youth are engaged in accomplishing the goals and the overarching vision of the SDGs and NUA. Within this action framework, we use the generally accepted definition of youth, adopted by UN-Habitat as people between the ages of 15-32. From the analysis it is made evident that youth were often relegated to background or supporting roles in the formulation and implementation of these international policy roadmaps. Often, when youth were mentioned in the actual text of the SDGs and NUA they were included as a group of vulnerable people and referred to mostly as beneficiaries of the outcomes of the development goals, and the vision of the New Urban Agenda. This booklet was created to propose a method of closing this gap in the engagement of urban youth in the SDGs and the NUA.

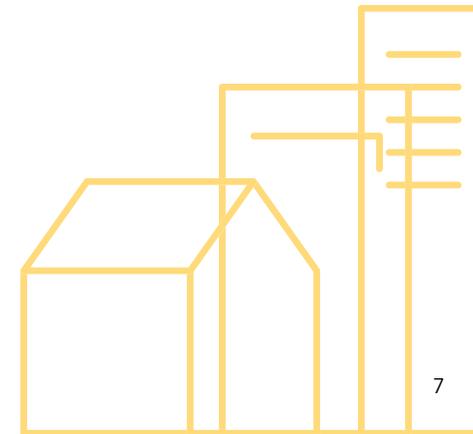
The first section summarizes an analysis of The New Urban Agenda and SDGs, including: how often youth are mentioned explicitly and implicitly in both, and how many of the target and indicators were specific to young people. The goal in the analysis was to uncover what role youth play in achieving the vision of the agendas, and where lacking, suggest ways that local policymakers, legislators and other stakeholders could effectively engage youth in order to achieve the goals more

effectively, efficiently, and/or sooner.

The second section presents a proposed ‘Action Framework’ within which ‘drivers of change’ are applied to the key pillars the SDGs: 1. People and Places, 2. Prosperity, 3. Planet, 4. Peace and 5. Partnerships. These drivers of change are possible interventions in the way of policy, legislation, financing mechanisms, planning, governance and institutions could implement and engage youth in achieving the goals of the SDGs and NUA. This section can be used to provide actionable guidance for local governments.

Lastly case studies are provided which demonstrate how the interventions have been implemented in specific cities. Understandably many cities have specific situations or limitations which may limit them from implementing these practices, they are nevertheless useful as a conceptual framework for localized action.

The report concludes with summaries of key findings that are crucial for the successful inclusion of youth as a cross cutting issue in the implementation of the SDGs and New Urban Agenda.



# YOUTH & THE NEW GLOBAL AGENDAS

The 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda are the core elements guiding urban policy within this broader new global initiative. While the 2030 Agenda is not exclusive to urban environments, many of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets can have significant impact on cities. The New Urban Agenda is UN-Habitat's central framework for building a better and more sustainable urban future.

Both agendas, along with the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the COP 21 comprise a suite of interrelated global agendas. It calls into action poor, middle-income, and rich countries alike to partake in a truly global aspiration: "we can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet" (UNGA, 2015). In order to appropriately tackle the matter of urban youth, it is vital to have an in depth understanding of how often youth are referred to, how they are portrayed, and most importantly what role they will play in these new global agendas.



# YOUTH & THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS<sup>1</sup>

In order to analyze youth within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we identified the most relevant goals and analyzed the targets and indicators for each. The SDGs that are relevant to cities as well as youth are Goals 1-11, 13, 16 and 17. Consequently, Goals 12, 14, and 15 are perceived as less relevant when it comes to said topics and will not be discussed in detail in this document.

Beyond Goal 11, which is dedicated to cities, most SDGs require the involvement of all levels of government to ensure that no one is left behind. Although the 2030 Agenda was not designed specifically for or by cities and regions, they play a critical role in most underlying public policies and investments. It is estimated that 12 of the 17 SDGs, and 65% of the 169 targets will not be reached without proper engagement of and coordination with local and regional governments (OECD, 2018).

Furthermore, when it comes to analyzing youth and the SDGs, it is extremely important to have an in depth understanding of the language utilized when referring to youth, whether youth is mentioned implicitly or explicitly, how often youth is mentioned if at all and if youth is seen as a beneficiary or as a partner. Figure 1 shows an overview of the instances where youth is mentioned and if it is done implicitly or explicitly. It is very important to note that youth is only mentioned, be it implicitly or explicitly, in the targets and/or indicators of the goals as opposed to the wording of the goal itself.

Figure 1 shows that youth is only mentioned explicitly in the targets and indicators for Goals 4 and 8. Goal 4 on education clearly lays out the importance of education in the development of young people especially when it comes to preparation for employment. The targets and

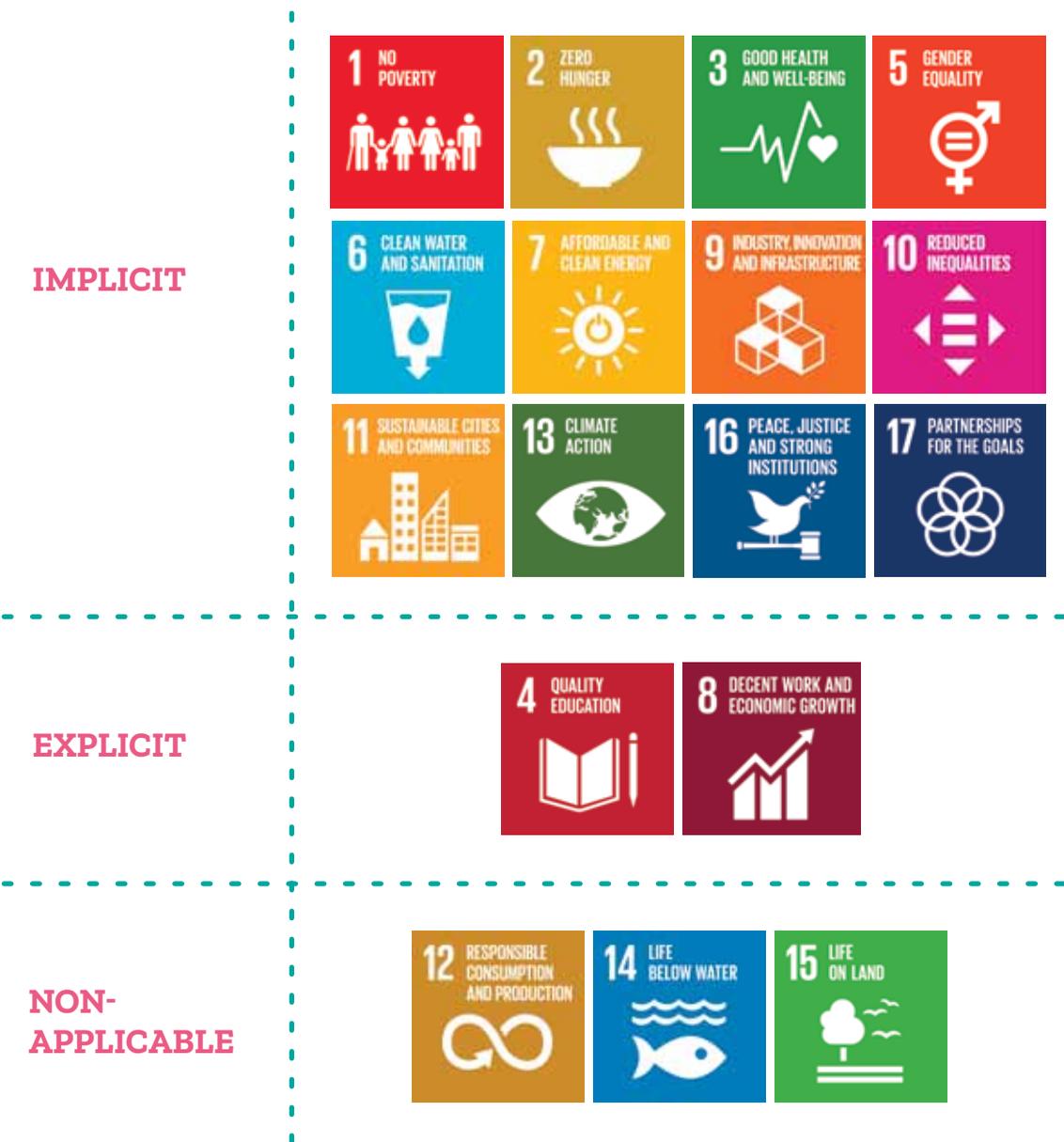
indicators for Goal 8 on economic growth and employment explicitly mentions youth, which is a tremendous accomplishment considering that youth unemployment is a major issue in many countries.

As for the goals that have targets and indicators where youth is mentioned implicitly, shaded in red in Figure 1, the language used consists of terminologies such as “all” and “age” as well as age brackets that fall under what UN-Habitat categorizes as youth (UN-Habitat categorizes youth as anyone from 15-32 while the UN categorizes youth as anyone from 15-24). Again it is important to emphasize that the wording above is found within the targets and indicators, youth is not mentioned at all in the phrasing of the overall Goals.

Perhaps **one of the biggest takeaways from analyzing the SDGs is that youth is seen as a vulnerable beneficiary as opposed to a partner. This can be noted when looking at the language as well, for it is evident that youth is grouped along with other vulnerable groups.** This is problematic because youth has the capacity of being pioneers when it comes to implementing these goals and making significant progress towards sustainable development. Furthermore, if youth is part of the planning process for change not only will they reap the benefits but they will be able to provide valuable input for how the change should take place and participate in the construction of a better tomorrow. It is therefore a pity that youth are not mentioned explicitly in Goal 17 which calls for a global partnership.

<sup>1</sup> Another document has been created that analyzes and reviews the SDG's and youth in urban contexts in much greater detail. The document goes into each of the relevant Goals individually and provides a detailed analysis of each.

Figure 1: Overview of SDGs and references made to youth in cities, implicitly and explicitly noted



Firstly, paragraph 61 of the NUA on education, skills development, and employment is the only paragraph which speaks specifically to youth. This reference is particularly relevant as studies (e.g. the State of Urban Youth Report in 2013 and the YouthSpeak Global Report in 2016) conducted on challenges faced by youth worldwide found education, employment and skills development to be the main areas of concern. The focus on education and economic empowerment was also highlighted in the review of the SDGs where Goal 4, on quality education, and Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth are the only ones directly referring to youth. However, unlike the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, paragraph 61 is the only reference that recognizes youth not only as a vulnerable category of individuals, and instead acknowledges young people's leadership and meaningful participation in their communities.

Secondly, although the NUA considers the development of "integrated, age- and gender responsive" housing policies as well as "people-centered integrated approaches" to urban and territorial development, no reference is made in relation to the challenges youth face in accessing adequate housing. It is well known that in the first years of employment young people's earnings are modest and therefore, their ability to access housing or land is limited. Hence, policies promoting affordable housing and increased security of tenure for youth are imperative to achieving sustainable development. The UN-Habitat study "What Land Means to Youth" from 2013 found that youth are often expected to access land through adults or wait until they themselves are adults. Land is central to security of tenure, shelter needs, food security, livelihoods, economic opportunities and quality of life of young men and women. It is a form of identity and, oftentimes, a cultural expression (2). Despite the NUA's failure to address the problem of accessibility to affordable housing and land for young people, local and national governments

should commit to advance housing and tenure policies which are youth inclusive.

Despite acknowledging youth participation is essential for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, there are no recommendations on how local or national governments can partner with youth to advance urban development. Generally, the Agenda sees youth as part of a vulnerable group or as beneficiaries. Moreover, in the implementation section, the NUA does not provide any specific guidelines on how to harness young people's potential in tackling issues related to economic and social development, urban planning, social cohesion, climate change, peacebuilding. To this end, this booklet is an effort to translate the NUA from words to deeds by presenting a set of key interventions to be considered by local and national governments in engaging youth while implementing the Agenda.

## YOUTH & THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) was adopted at Habitat III Conference in Quito, in October 2016 and serves as a guideline for urban development for the next twenty years. Throughout the 51-page document and its 175 paragraphs youth are explicitly mentioned only twelve times. However, young people were often referenced implicitly, using the terminologies "all" and "age-responsive". The following section summarizes the main points highlighted in the longer review of the inclusion of youth in the NUA.



# USING THE FOUR PILLARS:

## AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING YOUTH IN THE NEW GLOBAL AGENDAS

While recognizing the interconnectedness of norms, policies and practices that influence human development, the 2030 Agenda introduces a five-dimensional framework for sustainable development centered on the following pillars: **PEOPLE**, **PLANET**, **PROSPERITY**, **PEACE** and **PARTNERSHIP**. UN-Habitat can utilize the five pillars framework as a tool to mainstream youth as a cross-cutting approach to advance sustainable urbanization. To this end, UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for Youth seeks to recognize, advocate and support the role of youth as leaders in sustainable development. While the first four pillars (people, planet, prosperity and peace) serve as a basis for the strategic plan of action, the fifth pillar (partnerships) is perceived as a catalyst in realizing all objectives. Each pillar is comprised of a series of outcomes, focus areas and main drivers of change that are interconnected, and UN-Habitat identified as timely and imperative to achieve sustainable human settlements globally. Figure 2 provides a visual overview of the four pillars strategic framework.

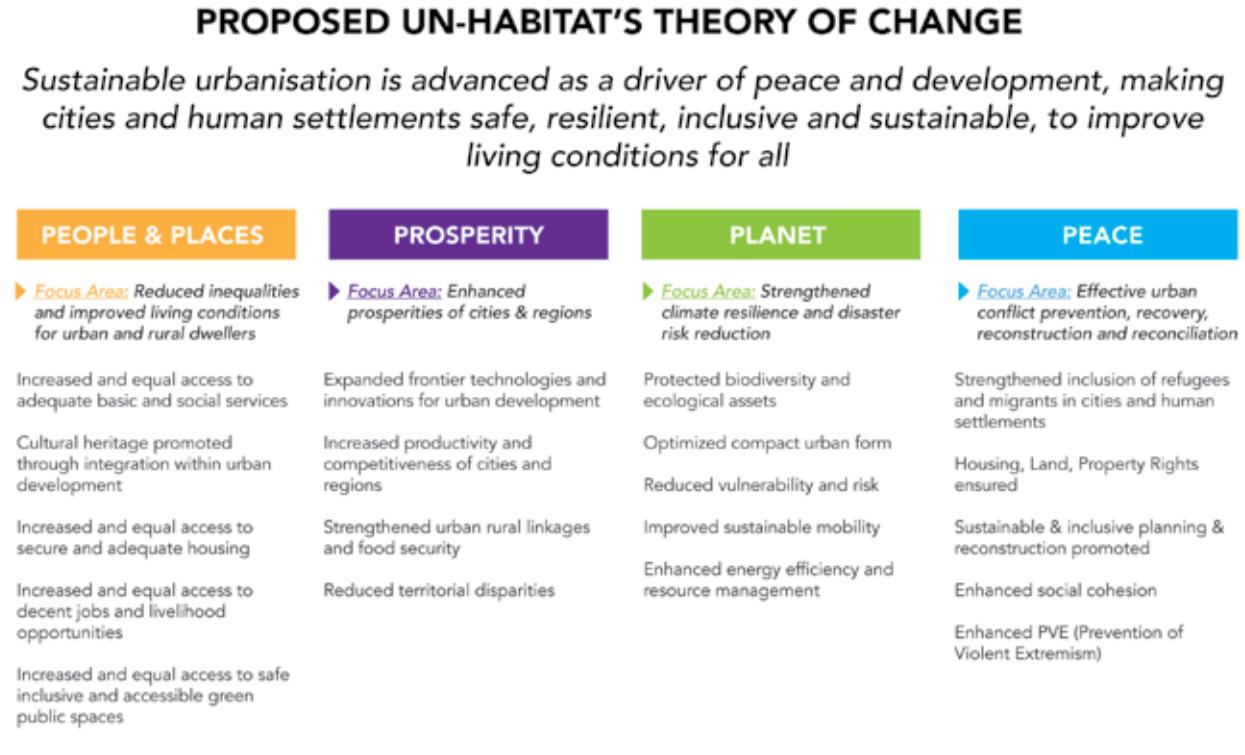


Figure 2



Based on the four pillars framework, one outcome pertaining to each pillar has been chosen to inform local and national governments, international and regional organizations about key interventions (outputs) to engage youth in implementing the New Global Agendas. The outputs are focused on five main areas of intervention, referred to by UN-Habitat as 'drivers of change'. The areas identified are policy, planning, legislation, governance and institutions, and financing mechanisms. Furthermore, the section providing key outputs is followed by case studies intended to show best practices for implementation. It is also worth noting that some of the outputs are cross-cutting and enforce each other, meaning that one intervention can have an effect on another pillar. Figure 3 visualizes the selected outcomes and their associated outputs and linkages.



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# PLAN TO ENGAGE YOUTH

**OBJECTIVE** Sustainable urbanisation is advanced as a driver of peace and development, making cities and human settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, to improve living conditions for all

	PEOPLE & PLACES	PROSPERITY	PLANET	PEACE
	<p><b>Focus Area:</b> Reduced inequalities and improved living conditions for urban and rural dwellers</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Increased and equal access to secure and adequate housing for all</p>	<p><b>Focus Area:</b> Enhanced prosperities of cities &amp; regions</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Expanded frontier technologies and innovations for urban development</p>	<p><b>Focus Area:</b> Improved environmental living conditions while pursuing economic growth and creating public spaces for young urban dwellers.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Improved sustainable mobility</p>	<p><b>Focus Area:</b> Effective urban conflict prevention, recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Enhanced social cohesion and Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)</p>
	OUTPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTPUTS
<b>POLICY</b>	All local governments should be required to devise a youth housing strategy.	Local governments should proactively seek to promote policies where artificial intelligence does not discriminate against young people using proxy (data).	Economic development and sustainable cities are not mutually exclusive. Develop strategies that transform waste management tactics into revenue generating endeavors.	Support the development of inclusive national PVE policies which are aligned with young people's needs and aspirations.
<b>PLANNING</b>	Partner with youth, universities, NGOs and other stakeholders to collect disaggregated data regarding youth and housing in order to create effective policies and legislations.	Make use of information and communications technologies to engage youth in participatory planning.	Make Green space a priority: Set aside land for youth recreation and congregation. Open space is vital for youth.	PVE and CVE national efforts should be inclusive and ensure young people's contribution in designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and following up on peacebuilding programmes and processes.
<b>LEGISLATION</b>		Ensuring that young people are prepared for jobs of the future by writing technology education into local and national law.	Cities can establish a Department of Youth and Community Development that uses the SDGs as a guide. Such an agency can direct its' efforts on: <i>After School, Community Development and Organizing, Environmental Stewardship, Family Support, Literacy Services, &amp; Youth Workforce Development</i>	National Action Plans on PVE should ensure the participation of young people in dialogues, debates and the development of national and local key priority interventions..
<b>GOVERNANCE &amp; INSTITUTIONS</b>	Youth committees should be implemented within local governments consisting of adult members of government as well as youth representatives.	Local universities should stay current on technological breakthroughs so that they can apply innovations locally.		
<b>FINANCING MECHANISMS</b>	Ensure that loans are available for young men and women and implement innovative practices such as but not limited to higher taxation for luxury apartments to make housing more affordable.	Use cryptocurrency technologies, like blockchain to sell municipal bonds directly to citizens, who can invest small or large amounts.	Issue grants and loans for inexpensive waste management practices.	Local and national governments, regional and international organizations should secure and disseminate information on fund streams for youth led PVE projects - for both new and ongoing initiatives.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

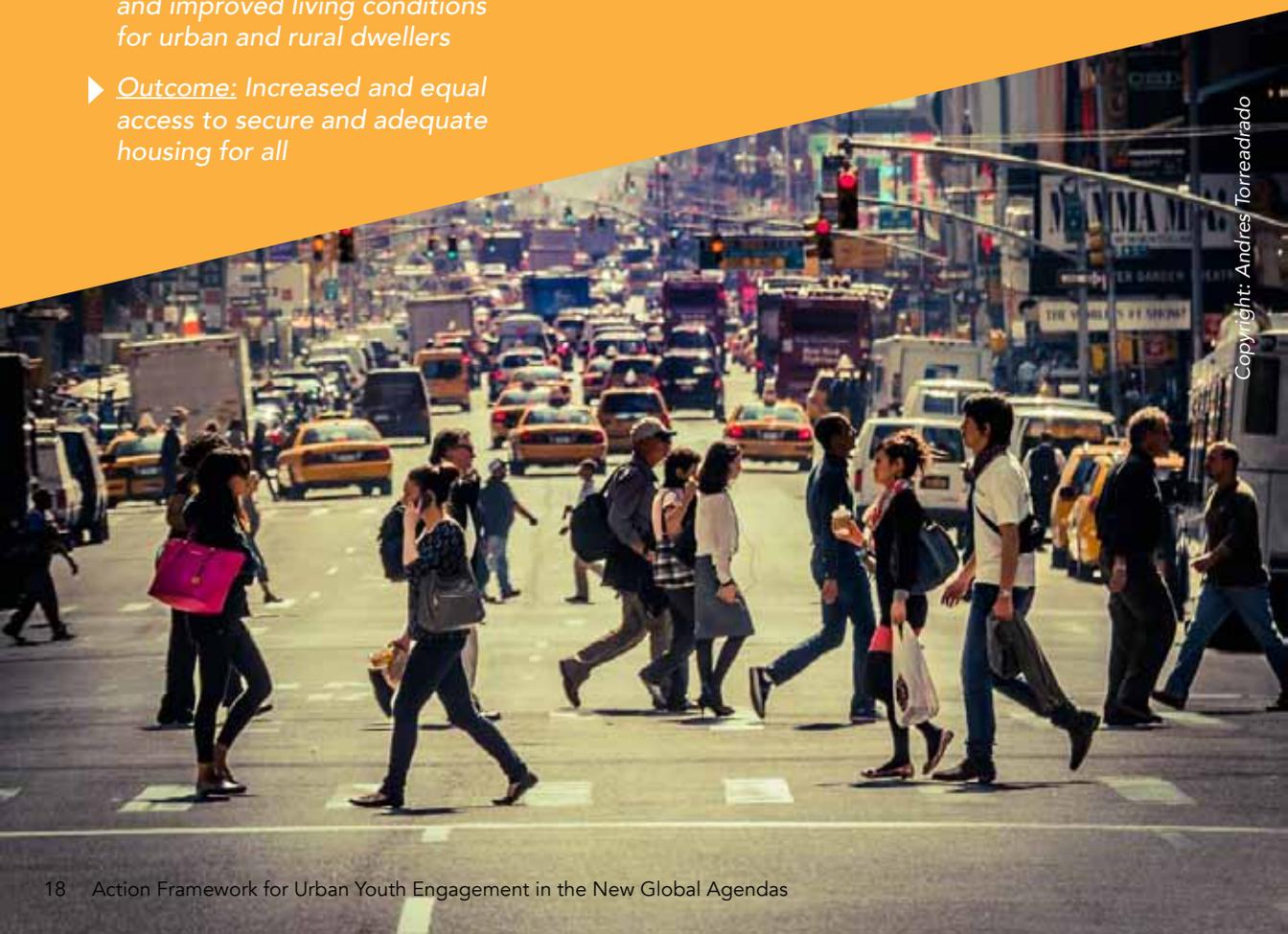


# PILLAR 1

## PEOPLE &

## PLACES

- ▶ *Focus Area:* Reduced inequalities and improved living conditions for urban and rural dwellers
- ▶ *Outcome:* Increased and equal access to secure and adequate housing for all



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## URBAN YOUTH AND HOUSING

The New Urban Agenda puts forward a vision of inclusive cities, where all inhabitants have equal opportunities and access to whatever may be necessary for them to enjoy their rights and freedoms in the city. Keeping in mind the previously mentioned trends and the vision of the NUA, it is evident that more attention needs to be paid to housing. This is particularly true in the case of housing for youth.

The main objective of the 'people and places' pillar is to reduce inequalities and improve living conditions for urban and rural dwellers. Within this pillar one of the main outcomes is increased and equal access to secure and adequate housing thus recognizing that in order to fulfill the NUA's vision of equality and inclusiveness, housing needs to be given greater importance.

When it comes to addressing the issue of youth and housing it is vital to take the following matters into careful consideration: accessibility to housing, restrictions on accessibility to housing, water and sanitation, electricity and how many are forced to live in precarious housing situations. Restrictions on accessibility to housing are the main drivers of the linkage between inequality and housing. Some of these restrictions can be because of financial motives, age, gender, race or etc. An example of a restriction on the accessibility to housing can be found within UN-Habitat's State of Women and Youth in Saudi Cities (2017), where it is stated that, "the economic and financial restrictions are the major source for housing insecurity expressed by women and youth. The limited access to loans for youth and the lack of affordable housing are preventing young women and men from owning a home, which also impacts significantly on the age of marriage." Furthermore, it can be said that the lack of accessibility to housing has a tremendous impact on youth productivity in big cities. In a paper entitled, "Why do Cities Matter? Local growth and aggregate growth," Chang-Tai

Hsieh and Enrico Moretti, "document a significant increase in the spatial dispersion of wages between 1964 and 2009, indicating that worker productivity is increasingly different across American cities. [They] argue that these productivity differences reflect an increasingly inefficient spatial allocation of labor across US cities, and that much of this inefficiency is caused by restrictive housing policies of municipalities with high productivity, like New York and San Francisco." (Hsieh and Moretti, 2015)

However, in order to analyze youth and housing and make significant progress, certain gaps need to be filled. The most prominent gap is that data and information are not sufficiently disaggregated and mainly focus on family units. This does not allow for effective data analysis to occur nor for effective policies to be implemented that are beneficial to youth. This is a tremendous issue seeing as UN-Habitat categorizes youth as anyone from 15 to 32 years of age. It is within this age bracket that many migrate to cities and search for housing of their own. Beyond that, as was previously mentioned, it is predicted that by 2030, 60% of the urban population will be under the age of 18 and most of this percentage will more than likely reside in slums and informal settlements, thus introducing us to another potential problem (Youth Led Development: A Case Study from the Mathare Slum, Kenya UN-Habitat 2015).

Consequently it is important to highlight the fact that changes regarding housing must encompass all forms of settlements including informal ones.

All local governments should be required to devise a youth housing strategy aimed at developing significant housing policies. Such a strategy should and can be formulated with the help of partnerships between local governments and NGOs, stakeholders and/or youth organizations. A strategy could potentially consist of information, focus areas brought about by the analysis of said information, plans on how to address the focus areas, as well as opportunities to engage youth in efforts of youth-led development or to provide a platform for youth to express their concerns and desires. An effective strategy would see the abolishment of inequalities in accessibility to housing, provide information and advice to young people, and ensure that no housing

is considered inadequate. A strategy could look at tackling specific, concrete issues such as but not limited to student housing or housing for young families. The information section would provide detail on how many young people have access to student housing and how much they have to pay. It could also tell us how many young people refrain from attending school as a result of not having accessibility to student housing. Upon analyzing this information a plan of action could be set into place which would eventually lead to effective policies that would tackle the issue of making student housing more accessible which as a result would have a positive impact on employment and other goals present in the global agendas.

In order for an effective strategy to be put in place and appropriate policies and legislations to be planned and carried out, it is vital for there to be disaggregated data. Currently, there is an immense gap when it comes to data for housing and youth and this is a huge obstacle for progress to be made. Data should be broken down by youth with access to housing as per age, race, income, gender and other such aspects. There should also be information on youth living in slums and precarious housing; this data should include but not be limited to youth living in housing with no access to clean water and

sanitation, youth living in overcrowded homes, and youth living in housing with insecure tenure. The fact that there is very little data to begin with creates an opportunity to partner with youth in order to gather data. Local governments could partner with universities seeing as the cost would be minimal and it would give an opportunity for young people to be involved in the collection and analysis of data that leads to the planning of policies and strategies. While this partnership would only incorporate youth in universities, the information gathered would be beneficial to youth everywhere.

In order for cities to be inclusive, the groups of people living within them need to be fairly represented in the local government. When it comes to youth, this is no different. A youth committee should be implemented within local governments in order to provide the ever growing youth population in cities with a platform to express their concerns and present their ideas. Such a committee should consist of adult members of government as well as youth representatives. These

representatives should be proportionate to the youth population in the city, so the larger the youth population the more representatives that should be allowed to participate in such a committee. Such a partnership between the young representatives and the adults within this committee would be extremely beneficial when it comes to developing effective policies and contributing to, for example, the youth housing strategy.

An example of unaccessible housing is financial restriction. As was previously mentioned, UN-Habitat's State of Women and Youth in Saudi Cities discussed how difficult it was for young men and women to have access to loans. This a significant impediment to young people owning homes. However, loans are not the only problem when it comes to financial obstacles in accessibility to housing. There are many possible routes to overcoming

this restriction, one could be reforming real-estate taxes. This practice could come with a more progressive tax policy, where luxury apartments are taxed at a higher rate. In turn, this would allow local governments to increase the affordable housing stock. Another possible route would be for local governments to require developers to make a certain percentage of all new apartments and condos affordable for youth and students.



# CASE STUDIES

**ASSOCIATED COSTS:** due to the varying purchasing power, it is difficult to assess a real global cost, therefore the following symbols can be interpreted as:

- \$ > low cost
- \$\$ > medium cost
- \$\$\$ > high cost

**TIMEFRAME OF IMPACT:** refers to the time it takes for a project to be implemented and show its first results. It can be interpreted as:

- short-term > within 1 year
- medium-term > 1 to 5 years
- long-term > more than 5 years

## CASE STUDY A: STATE OF SÃO PAULO PARTNERING WITH UNIVERSITY OF CAMPINAS FOR DATA COLLECTION

**Drivers of Change:** Policy, Planning, Legislation

**Actors involved:** Local Governments, Universities, Youth

**Impact:** Short Term

**Associated Costs:** \$

As was previously mentioned, one of the biggest impediments to significant progress in ensuring youth access to decent housing is the tremendous gap that exists in statistical information. Most existing information, with some exceptions, does not make reference to youth, and focuses mostly on aggregate data, such as family units.

- young people that already live on their own, young people that live in indecent housing,
- where most young people are concentrated within cities,
- and other such matters.

While this is undoubtedly important, it does not take into account young:

- people beginning their independent lives,

All of this information is absolutely vital when it comes to city planning, when it comes to making cities inclusive and when it comes to making significant strides in all other pillars.

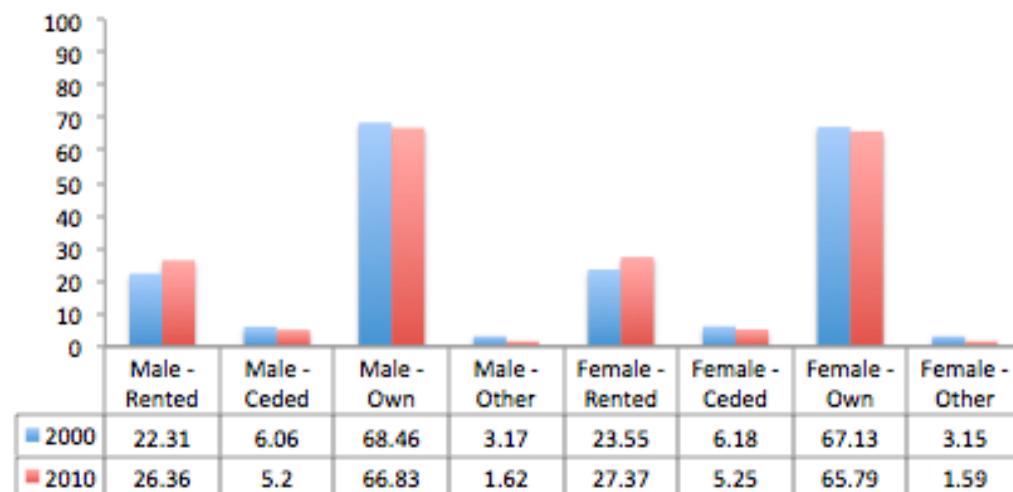
This lack of information creates an excellent opportunity for local governments to partner with youth. More specifically, a potential initiative is the partnership between local governments and universities. Not only would this relieve the workload of local governments allowing them to focus on policy creation and implementation, it would also allow for youth in universities to work together in order to collect significant amounts of data that would eventually aid in the implementation of policies to benefit not only themselves but youth in general within their cities. Furthermore, this would provide a platform for youth to communicate with the local government and suggest possible policies and ideas. Finally, data collection can be an expensive task for local governments, however upon partnering with universities the associated costs would diminish significantly.

In 2014 the State of São Paulo partnered with the University of Campinas to produce a report that maps out youth in the city of São Paulo. This report provides disaggregated information on not only youth and housing, but youth and all other issues relating to cities such as health, education and employment. When it comes to housing, this report provides a very detailed analysis of data that is broken down into age, sex, race as well as data broken down by accessibility to clean water and sanitation. It also maps out youth in slums and precarious housing and shows where they are mostly concentrated throughout São Paulo. It also shows how beneficial the partnership between local governments and university can be.

Figure 4 shows an example of the disaggregated data that they collected and analyzed utilizing the IBGE census.

Figure 4: Example of Disaggregated Data from the Report

### Percentage of Youth living in different forms of housing as per gender





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- ▶ *Focus Area: Enhanced prosperities of cities & regions*
- ▶ *Outcome: Expanded frontier technologies and innovations for urban development*

# PILLAR 2 PROSPERITY

## PROSPERITY IN THE URBAN YOUTH CONTEXT

UN-Habitat as well as the City Prosperity Initiative (CPI) uses six ‘dimensions’ as indicators that contribute to the prosperity of a city. In addition to measurements of wealth and wealth distribution, UN-Habitat conceptualized a prosperous city as one that fosters (1) Productivity (2) Infrastructure Development (3) Quality of Life (4) Equity and Social Inclusion (5) Environmental Sustainability and (6) Urban Governance or Legislation. The use of technology and innovation, particularly frontier technologies (like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, drones, and cryptocurrency) to enhance the prosperity of cities is a trend seen throughout the world. Disruptive technologies and innovations have changed the way that cities, and regions operate in the public and private spheres, and youth in particular are well equipped (some referred to as ‘digital natives’) to lead, partner, support and develop the use of frontier technologies to enhance the prosperity of cities.

Some of the key findings of The State of the Urban Youth Report 2012-2013 by UN-Habitat, indicates that (a) discriminatory practices do not promote prosperity, (b) equity enhances the productivity and prosperity of youth, (c) the benefits of urban prosperity are not evenly distributed, (d) as many as 75% of young people rank unemployment, unequal access to education and corrupt institutions as constraints on shared urban prosperity, (e) over 50% rank efficient transport infrastructure as key to prosperity.

These findings help to formulate an image of what prosperous cities could be for youth, and equally important, how cities have failed to live up to their promise, for and according to young people.

It is important to note that while there is an increasing global shift towards urbanization; youth are often the least likely to reap the rewards from the prosperity of cities.

With this being the case, several promising practices have been identified focusing on the outcome of ‘expanded frontier technology and innovations’ which consider youth as key stakeholders in their own development, and in the development of prosperous cities. The quote below summarizes the relation between youth and technology and its connection to enhanced prosperity of cities and regions:

“ An area where young people have an edge is in the emerging information society driven by new technologies. Young people are often the leading innovators in the use and spread of information and communications technologies. They adapt quickly and are generally quite hungry for the great quantities of information, locally and globally, that can be provided through emerging information and communication technologies. ”

(UN Habitat, 2015a)

**POLICY**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related technologies are used to make determinations and predictions in high stakes domains such as criminal justice, law enforcement, housing, hiring, and education, they have the potential to impact basic rights and liberties in profound ways. Policies should be formulated to ensure that biases aren't translated into algorithms and youth are

not automatically disadvantaged by the use of artificial intelligence in this way. Policies can be set to create a system of checks on algorithms to ensure that they are a) avoiding discriminatory practices b) actively searching for and include young people in panels, committees, and boards to include them into the AI development and regulation process.

**PLANNING**

Cities and local governments should work hand in hand with the private sector so that innovative technologies are used at the city and local level for productivity and efficiency. In planning the future of cities, geospatial technology should be used to map local 'assets'

including water sources, public spaces, and other public services/goods relevant to youth. UN-Habitat has piloted programs that use Information and Communication Technology for Participatory Urban Planning to engage and include youth in the process. [See ICT Case Study]

**LEGISLATION**

As new technologies and innovations emerge, lawmakers must be innovative in their approach to regulate industries like automation and AI. Lawmakers should be proactive and know that new laws will be needed to manage the new digital arenas, and the changes that innovations will bring. Legislation should govern how data is gathered and used to in order to protect the privacy of citizens. This includes how government can and should use innovative technologies

to create more efficient processes and laws. Furthermore there is a need for legislators to think about tax planning in relation to digital services. Digital labor platforms need to be regulated to ensure that they conform with local wage laws and employer/employee rights & responsibilities. E-hailing apps, like Uber, Lyft, and Ubermoto should be regulated to ensure that they enhance the prosperity of the city. [See E-hailing app case study]

**GOVERNANCE & INSTITUTIONS**

Government insitutions should work to mitigate errors, blind spots, and unintended consequences of the use of frontier technologies and innovations by staying up to date and informed on how technologies can reinforce human bias. They much then work to counteract and avoid when possible such unintended

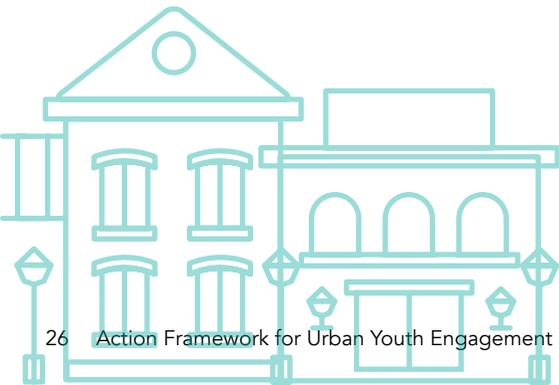
age bias against young people. Local institutions such as universities should keep abreast of technological advances and partner with other universities to exchange information and/or innovative research findings. [See Semi-Aerobic Waste Management 'Fukuoka Method']

**FINANCING MECHANISMS**

There are many ways that cryptocurrencies are being used to enhance the prosperity of cities. By learning from other cities, the use of Crypto currency & blockchain technologies can be used to advance local agendas like in

the case of Berkley, California or Buenos Aires Argentina in which cryptocurrency was used to to finance local and city projects by recreating the sale and use of municipal bonds as 'micro-bonds' to fund public projects.

**DRIVERS OF CHANGE**





# CASE STUDIES

**ASSOCIATED COSTS:** due to the varying purchasing power, it is difficult to assess a real global cost, therefore the following symbols can be interpreted as:

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- \$\$\$ > high cost

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## CASE STUDY A: ICT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

**Drivers of Change:** *Planning*

**Actors involved:** *UN Habitat, Mojang, Local Youth, Private Enterprise*

**Impact:** *Short-term*

**Associated Costs:** \$

In four cities; Nairobi, Mexico City, Les Cayes, and Kirtipur youth were engaged using information and communication technologies (ICT) as a way to increase participation in urban planning, accountability, and policy formulation. UN-Habitat in partnership with Mojang, the makers of the popular video game Minecraft (which allows players to build in a 3D world)– developed a technology similar to the game, called ‘block by block’ to involve youth in the design of local urban spaces. Using the information that young people are up to 3x more likely to be online than the general population, they used the online game to encourage civic participation (Ben-Attar & Campbell, 2015; Using Minecraft for Youth Participation in Urban Design and Governance, UN-Habitat 2015).

In the Kibera Slums of Nairobi, Kenya Minecraft was used as a way to test the plans for a public space [sports field]. Based on citizen participation and feedback, technical plans were produced for the construction work. This participatory process fostered social inclusion for the youth which is a defining factor of a prosperous city. A similar but longer participatory process used Minecraft to engage citizens of Les Cayes, Haiti in the redesign of the urban waterfront project. The Minecraft model of Plage de la Touterelle designed by a group of teenage girls, was selected as the first area of intervention. Here, equity of opinion, social inclusion, and infrastructure development are the defining factors that led this to be a successful practice to enhance prosperity

UN-Habitat designed a competition in partnership with Aldea Digital and the Minecraft program that asked for a redesign of a town square ‘Plaza Tlaxcoaque’ in the historic center of Mexico City, Mexico. The Competition gained the participation of 7,429 young people in Mexico City, with a winning entry by a 12-year-old girl. This example also demonstrates not just the ability of social inclusion to affect the prosperity of a city but also how the use of the emerging technology like Minecraft for Participatory urban planning can reach far and wide (7,429 participants), and engage even the youngest citizens. Other cities, have used this process like Kirtipur, Nepal where UN-Habitat organized a four day Minecraft workshop to involve young people in the design of a public park.



## CASE STUDY B: E-HAILING APPS

**Drivers of Change:** Finance Mechanisms, Policy, Legislation

**Actors involved:** Private companies, consumers, policy makers, legislators

**Impact:** Long-term

**Associated Costs:** \$\$\$

UN-Habitat's, World Cities Report of 2016 uses UberMoto and other e-hailing apps as a model or promising practice of the use of information and communication technology to achieve improved sustainable mobility. In cities like Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo where the cost of car ownership is high, trends show a cultural shift away from auto-dependency. The use of e-hailing apps is a game changer, particularly for youth, since youth are 3x more likely to be online and make use of emerging technology (Innovation, Technology and Youth UN-Habitat 2015). This transportation innovation

appeals to youth as both consumers and providers of the service. In this way, the e-hailing apps foster productivity, quality of life for the consumers and providers (now hold jobs) and equity and social inclusion. It is important to note that although some companies are piloting the use of self-driving cars to replace drivers, this particular suggestion is only referencing the use of the e-hailing apps in the status-quo. It is not implicitly suggesting the use of self-driving cars which brings, its own set of challenges which includes the replacement of much-needed jobs.

## CASE STUDY C: GIS ASSET MAPPING

**Drivers of Change:** Planning, Policy

**Actors involved:** Local community members, local government

**Impact:** Medium-term

**Associated Costs:** \$

In two African cities Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and in the Korogocho slums of Nairobi, Kenya the use of Geospatial Asset Mapping technology has enhanced the quality of life of the people that live there. Youth have used GIS technology along with other emerging and innovative technologies to map water and other city services along with youth

friendly spaces. After mapping the resources young people are motivated to share the information amongst each other. This is another great example of how equitable distribution and access to what UN-Habitat describes as the 'commons' can lead to enhanced prosperity for a city.

## CASE STUDY D: SEMI-AEROBIC SANITARY LANDFILL

**Drivers of Change:** Policy, Financing Mechanisms

**Actors involved:** Local University, Local government

**Impact:** Long-term

**Associated Costs:** \$\$

Kiambu County, Kenya the innovative Fukuoka method of solid waste management was piloted to create the first semi-aerobic sanitary landfill in Africa. This innovation furthered urban development by allowing the use of this innovative method to provide a solution for an unsustainable solid waste management problem in Kiambu (outskirts of Nairobi). Youth labor was used in conjunction with technical experts from Fukuoka city and

Fukuoka University to construct the landfill. A strategy is in place to ensure that the technology and innovation of the Kiambu landfill is shared and replicated by providing training in the Kenyan University to engineers, managers, policy makers and county workers in the construction, operation and maintenance of semi-aerobic sanitary landfills (Urban Impact, Issue 3, August 2016).



# PILLAR 3 PLANET

- ▶ *Focus Area: Improved environmental living conditions while pursuing economic growth and creating public spaces for young urban dwellers.*
- ▶ *Outcome: Improved sustainable mobility*

## URBAN YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A key component of achieving the SDGs requires striking a balance between socio-economic growth and sustaining the planet's ecosystems, resources, while fighting climate change. The crucial requirement is to "promote sound environmental management that underpins the sustained achievement of inclusive economic development and prosperity, while delivering human security and resilience." (OECD 2016).

As we have highlighted, the planet has rapidly urbanized over the past century, with the urban population projected to comprise over 70% by 2050 (UN ECOSOC, 2014). This trend presents daunting challenges. Cities are responsible for between 60% of the planet's energy consumption and generate 70% of the human-induced greenhouse emissions and global waste. (The New Urban Agenda, 2016). Cities of the world generate over 720 billion tons of waste every year (UN DESA, 2015)

What's more, environmental hazards in cities are particularly harmful to the urban poor. Environment-related infections and parasitic diseases thrive where there is a lack of clean drinking water, sanitation and drainage, and where air quality

is poor. It is estimated that 7 million people die prematurely each year due to air pollution (WHO, 2014), with many of those deaths occurring in cities. An estimated 863 million people live in urban slums (UN-Habitat, 2014) suffering from poor air quality and lacking access to clean water and proper sanitation. Youth are particularly vulnerable as well, as they comprise a disproportionate share of the urban population. Therefore, the negative consequences of urbanization falls mainly on their shoulders.

Despite these disquieting statistics, there is reason for optimism. Urban youth are taking charge and leading the way in creating economic and environmentally sustainable change. One notable case study from Nairobi, Kenya, offers an example of youth-led, small-scale, inexpensive, and easily replicable action that cross-cuts every pillar in the 2030 Agenda.

### POLICY

In an urbanizing world, waste management practices will be vital to ensuring sustainable growth. Economic development and sustainable cities are not mutually exclusive. There is profit in sustainable waste management practices such as recycling, reuse, to repair. Such

policies have a cross-cutting dimensions and can impact each pillar. By supporting small-scale community-based initiatives in water, sanitation and waste management, local municipalities can ease their already over-taxed capacity.

### PLANNING

Make green space a priority: Set aside land for youth recreation and congregation. Participatory and inclusive planning empowers community

stakeholders and creates a built-in sense of project ownership. Hold community meetings, public forums and integrate the viewpoints of youth groups.

### GOVERNANCE & INSTITUTIONS

Cities can establish a Department of Youth and Community Development that uses the SDGs as a guide. Such an agency can direct its' efforts on: After School Activities, Community

Development and Organizing, Environmental Stewardship, Family Support, Literacy Services, and Youth Workforce Development.

### FINANCING MECHANISMS

Integrate the informal recycling sector through loans and grants. This sector can provide jobs to large numbers of people and reduce urban waste management cost by decreasing the amount of waste that would have to be collected and disposed by governments. Cities in the developing world have informal sector recycling, reuse and repair systems which

are reaching recycling rates comparable to those in the more developed nations, at no cost to the public waste management sector. Small-scale door-to-door recycling service and waste collection can have a tremendous impact, at a miniscule cost. If properly supported, the informal sector can compliment public waste management departments.

## DRIVERS OF CHANGE



# CASE STUDIES

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## CASE STUDY A: YOUTH LED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NAIROBI

**Drivers of Change:** *Planning, Policy, Government and Institutions, Financing Mechanisms*

**Actors Involved:** *Youth, Local Governments*

**Impact:** *Immediate and Long Term*

**Associated Costs:** \$

Mathare is an informal community in Nairobi which is home to between 600,000 and 800,000 residents. Mlango Kubwa, a smaller neighborhood within Mathare, is home to nearly 40,000 people and is defined by non-existent sanitation services, few job opportunities, and a lack of public space.

In 1997, a local youth soccer club formed the Mathare Environmental Conservation Youth Group (MECYG), which aimed at creating employment opportunities for Mlango Kubwa youth; addressing the sanitation crisis; and creating much needed public spaces for community youth. The group created a door-to-door refuse collection service which charged neighborhood participants a small monthly fee. MECYG's business model followed a very simple yet effective approach: recyclable plastic items are collected then sent to a nearby processing facility where they are shredded and converted into furniture and other household items. Those products are then sold back to the community, generating further revenue.

The organization was able to clear so much public space of garbage that they lobbied local politicians, eager to secure votes, to finance the construction of soccer fields and youth orientated community centers, which were non-existent prior to the group's effort. These gathering spaces became vital in fostering community. Furthermore, the group's work has cleared a substantial amount of garbage from the neighborhood, which was previously plagued by diseases.

In addition, the group has become an influential political force within the community and has

successfully lobbied the local government for civic improvements. The urbanization trend is most burdensome on local governments as they often lack the capacity to cope and provide services. What's more, the community often has little interaction with its local government, that is especially true of young people. Forging bonds with local government, like MECYG was able to do, is an important step in creating a more responsive government and training the next generation of leaders.

Finally, MECYG helped to increase residents' sense of safety and security. Parents often complained that their children were drawn to criminal activity because of the lack of economic opportunity in Mathare. Pick-pocketing and muggings were commonplace. MECYG's collection program offered work for youth who would otherwise not find it. Furthermore, the group began a neighborhood watch program; congregating in public spaces and conducting nightly patrols that gave residents a sense of security that was not being provided by the police.

MECYG embodies a program which cross-cuts across each pillar. For 'People and Places' it creates open spaces for people to recreate in. For 'Prosperity' it creates jobs opportunities for youth. For 'Planet' it offers waste management solution. For 'Peace' it addresses a common complaint among residents that youth are involved in criminal activity because of lack of economic opportunity. In support of 'Partnerships' the group has become an influential political force and an active partner with its local government.

## CASE STUDY B: GEOSPATIAL MAPPING FOR IMPROVED WASH ACCESS IN NIGERIA

**Drivers of Change:** Policy, Planning, Government and Institutions

**Actors Involved:** Local community members, local government

**Impact:** Medium term

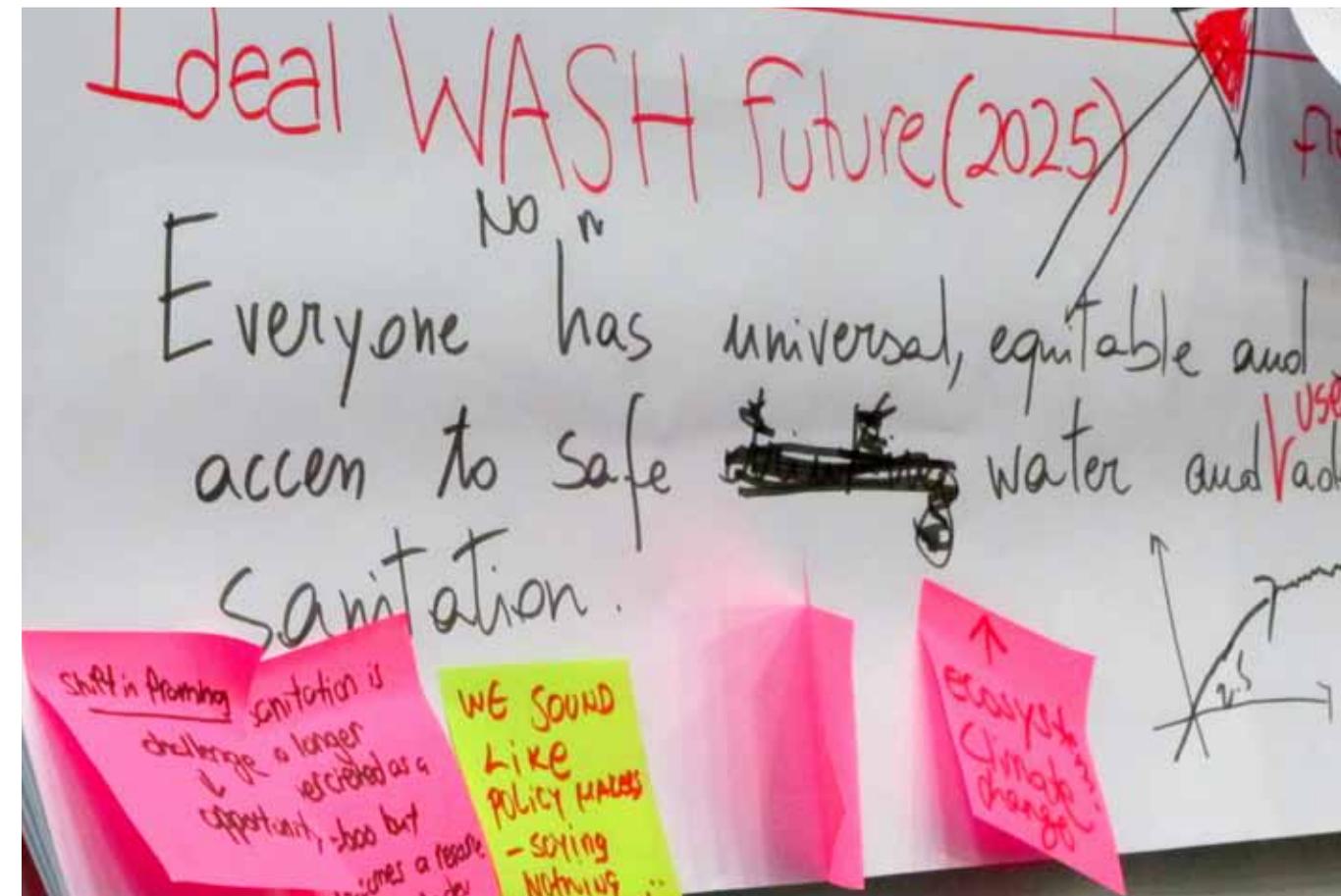
**Associated Costs:** \$\$

The provision of safe, accessible water and sanitation services for the poor has corresponding positive effects on public health, the economy, and the environment. Evidence from Nigeria has shown that those sectors of the population with the worst water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions (WASH) are also the ones most at risk of attaining diseases due to inadequate health. (Andres et al (2017).

Prior to geospatial modeling, attempts to measure access to water and sanitation produced only modest level of information at the sub-national level – rarely were high-resolution maps for entire countries available. It was nearly impossible to judge water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) access at the country level or to identify areas in greatest need of investment.

A recent project by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources of the Government of Nigeria with support from the World Bank offers a unique example of how geospatial mapping can not only provide detailed information on WASH access, but generate accurate projections for areas where information is lacking by use of model-based geostatistical (MBG) prediction.

This project allowed policy makers and implementers to analyze, at a detailed level, the geographical characteristics of access to WASH across the country and tailor their services based on this information. Geospatial mapping and MBG can make it easy to target basic services in various regions of the country that are underserved by WASH, resulting in a reduction in disease and environmental degradation caused by poor sanitation practices. Furthermore, improved WASH infrastructure makes economic investment more attractive.



# PILLAR 4 PEACE

- ▶ *Focus Area: Effective urban conflict prevention, recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation*
- ▶ *Outcome: Enhanced social cohesion and Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)*

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN PVE

In Africa alone, 65% of the population is below the age of 35, with the Sahel having the highest proportion of youth in relation to the total population. In 2016, over 407 million young people (aged 15-29) resided in areas affected by conflict and violence. This suggests that approximately 1 in 4 youth globally are affected to some extent by conflict (IEP, 2).

Studies have shown that while a minority of young people are engaged in extremism the majority of youth do not participate in violence. On the contrary, the Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes that young women and men play active roles as agents of peace and contribute to maintaining international peace and security. Young people's participation is an essential condition to the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacebuilding efforts. Youth assimilate

change easier, they are quick learners, idealistic, innovative, future-oriented, and willing to take risks.

Empowering young women and men to live up to their potential and become active citizens in their communities and in the world is a cross-cutting theme both in the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. The response to violent extremism needs youth participation at all levels. To effectively address the drivers of violent extremism, youth must be seen as partners in designing and implementing relevant programs and policies. In accordance to UN-Habitat's strategic framework and the 2030 Agenda's fourth pillar on peace (which entails effective urban conflict prevention, recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation), the following promising practices and drivers of change to support youth in preventing violent extremism (PVE) have been identified:

### POLICY

Support the development of inclusive national PVE policies which are aligned with young people's needs and aspirations and are in accordance with international human rights frameworks and other key policy documents. Where policies are in place, local, regional and national governments should facilitate mechanisms that enable young leaders to effectively participate in peacebuilding activities. It is essential to engage young people to design local and national policies and partner with them to implement corresponding action plans.

One example of such intervention is Somalia's National Youth Policy which underscores youth radicalization and violent extremism as one thematic priority. Its strategy include key priority interventions such as delivering alternative training, employment, rehabilitation and reintegration programs targeting youth in conflict with the law; promoting the participation of youth in community policing; developing safe spaces for youth in rural and urban areas, etc. [See **Case Study B**].

### PLANNING

PVE and CVE national efforts should be inclusive and ensure young people's contribution in designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and following up on peacebuilding programmes and processes. This will create a sense of agency, will decrease polarization and will promote social inclusion. To this end, youth

participation can be ensured through local and national Youth Councils and a unit dedicated to youth and PVE/CVE within the Ministry of Youth. These agencies will provide young people with PVE/CVE and peacebuilding trainings, resources (guides, toolkits and other knowledge based materials) and financing mechanisms.

### LEGISLATION

There is very limited legislation on youth that is binding to states. The most important pieces of legislation are, generally, human rights conventions. In countries affected by violent extremism and radicalism, governments should establish legally binding legislation which could significantly influence political will and resolve the barriers to the implementation of existing

tools such as policies, recommendations or resolutions. Examples of good practice include Denmark, Finland and Norway's National Action Plans on PVE that call for engaging youth as actors in their own education by calling for the establishment of a national dialogue corps and organizing dialogue conferences and debates (Women's Alliance for Security and Leadership).

### FINANCING MECHANISMS

It has been noted that youth led PVE efforts require both government support and financial assistance. Long term effective interventions end up entailing high costs which can hardly be met in areas where economies have collapsed. Youth projects to prevent violent extremism require sustainable and secure funding both from local and national governments, regional and international organizations. Initiatives by the European Union (EU) and UN-Habitat are telling. EU's Erasmus+ programme to support

education, training, youth and sport ensured a budget of 14.7 billion euros for 2012-2020 for grants, research, policy debate, exchanges, studies and trainings (European Commission). Likewise, UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund provides grants for up to \$25,000 and capacity building to selected organizations in developing countries. When financing mechanisms are established, information on accessing funds should be disseminated among all youth organizations.



# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY A: BUILD TRUST BETWEEN YOUTHS AND GOVERNMENTS

**Drivers of Change:** *Planning, Financing Mechanisms*  
**Actors involved:** *Youth, Youth Organizations, Government Officials*  
**Impact:** *long-term*  
**Associated Costs:** \$

The successful mobilization of young people both in conflict and peaceful areas are dependent on offering youth a constructive platform for engagement and work with local and national governments. One of the push factors driving youth into violent extremism is their marginalization from policymaking and the absence of avenues to influence local and national politics. Moreover, many young people do not trust their governments and accuse them of corruption, nepotism and lack of accountability to their peoples. This further makes youth more prone to engage in violent extremism as fighting in the name of an ideology which recognizes and integrates them appears more compelling and rewarding. Assessments in Yemen, Kosovo, Kenya, Kashmir and Tajikistan show that government corruption is among young people's top grievances (Mercy Corps, 6).

Considering the growing youth population, it is crucial for governments to see young people not only as potential spoilers of peace, but also as agents of peace. They must integrate their vision, demands and efforts in peacebuilding policies and activities. Closing the divide between governments and youth is possible only by ensuring there is a strong dialogue between the two. To this end, the credibility of agencies such as UN-Habitat may be ideal in setting up a platform for dialogue along with a protocol of collaboration. The organization of joint workshops on civic education for governments officials and youth may serve as one such platform.

Similar programs in Kosovo and Timor Leste generated an increase of young people's trust in government and enhanced the capability governments to engage young people in community development activities. In Timor Leste more than 5000 youth leaders participated in joint workshops with government officials. They received mentoring, small grants and benefited the support from local councils to implement community development activities. The partnership between youth and local governments grew stronger: youth reported that they engaged more frequent with government officials which increased confidence to work in partnership.

A stronger partnership between governments and youth, as the one created in Timor Leste harnessed young people's leadership potential and inspired the next generation of leaders to create fair political systems which are free from social, economic and political corruption. A closer relationship with local governments can help young people feel engaged in rebuilding their societies via peaceful means rather than taking an extremist approach and will increase their confidence in local governments.

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## CASE STUDY B: CREATE SECURE SPACES FOR YOUTH LED PVE EFFORTS

**Drivers of Change:** Finance Mechanisms, Policy, Legislation

**Actors involved:** Youth, Youth Organizations, UN-Habitat, local governments, Youth Ministries, other civil society organizations as relevant

**Impact:** long-term

**Associated Costs:** \$\$\$

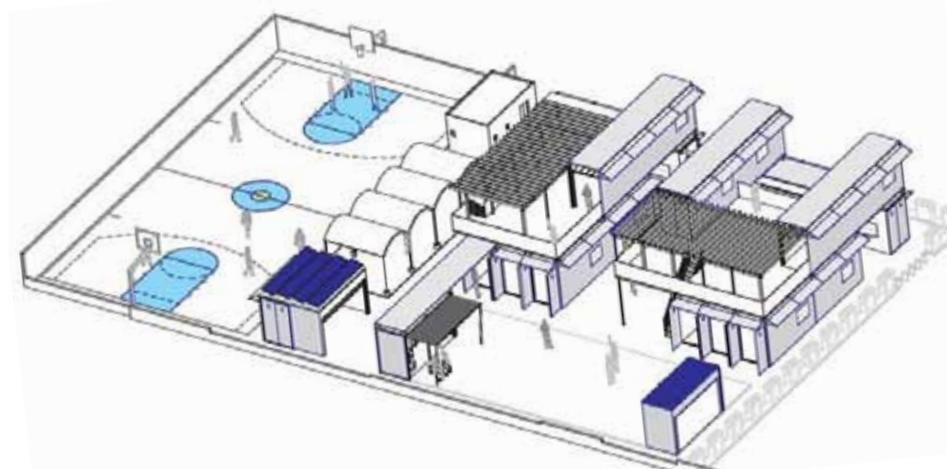


One Stop Youth Centre in Kimisagara, Rwanda

Despite numerous factors undermining their work, young people's role in preventing violent extremism has been crucial in building social cohesion and reducing the expansion of violence. However, when young people operate in areas with high security risks, they often lack support from national and/or local governments and do not possess the necessary capacity and expertise to develop PVE activities. In Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger, youth expressed that among the main problems facing youth initiatives are: lack of funding, lack of capacity, lack of coordination among various youth actors, security challenges to move personnel and materials during the implementation of programs, lack of government support, crackdown on youth groups by security operatives, etc. Lack of capacity among youth organizations is affecting the quality of their work. In Niger, more than 268 Communal Youth Councils do not have the capacity and skills to deliver PVE programmes (Ekpon, 21).

Young people may have the drive and potential to prevent violent extremism but operating in an insecure environment and not possessing capacity and training disincentivizes them from joining youth organizations working on PVE.

Creating youth centers or peace houses which are properly secured and equipped with training rooms, computers, playing fields would provide young people the necessary space to develop peace activities, trainings, educational modules, youth mentoring, ensure access basic health services and promote inclusion and social cohesion through sports regardless of financial position, ethnicity, prior skills or gender. For instance, the One Stop Youth Centers established by UN-Habitat across different African cities provided a neutral space for young people, particularly the marginalized, to interact with each other in a safe and supportive environment (UN-Habitat, 2013a, 5). The One Stop center in Kigali, Rwanda is used by 1000 youth per day and one of its big impacts was reflected in the a decreasing rate of arrested youth - from 50 to 10 young people per week. The centers offer entrepreneurship training, employability and life skills training, civic education, sports, entertainment and health among others. UN-Habitat and Youth Ministers should expand this good practice in cities, particularly in areas which are lacking safe spaces. Safe youth centers are imperative to contribute to improving community security while facilitating youth led PVE initiatives.



One Youth Stop Centre in Mogadishu, Somalia

## CASE STUDY C: PROMOTE EXCHANGES BETWEEN YOUTH WORKING ON PVE

**Drivers of Change:** Policy, Legislation, Planning

**Actors involved:** Youth, Youth Organizations, Youth Ministries, other civil society organizations as relevant

**Impact:** long-term

**Associated Costs:** \$\$\$

Generally, most of the capacity, resources and knowledge on youth preventing violent extremism is concentrated in the capital or the major cities of a country. In larger cities young people are more aware of funding opportunities and have the capacity to better organize and advocate for support from the local government. In Colombia, for instance, the further from the center of the country young people are, the harder it is for them to enjoy the same resources and support from local councils. Moreover, young people in big cities tend to experience conflict differently than those living in smaller urban or rural areas. One survey on Somaliland Youth Violence and Youth Role in Peacebuilding shows that whereas 51% of urban youth believe lack of employment is the major cause of youth violence in Somalia, only 11% of rural youth perceive this to be the case. 50% of rural youth believe clan-based conflicts are the major cause of youth violence, compared to only 1% of the urban youth polled (Somaliland National Youth Organization, 12). These views show that urban youth's experience of conflict is relatively different than that of the rural youth. Likewise, in large urban settings young people enjoy more access to resources, information and better capacity, while smaller urban and rural areas incur greater difficulties to develop activities.

In this regard, exchanges between urban and rural youth working on PVE should be promoted and supported within countries. Temporary youth exchanges would enhance youth partnerships, build social cohesion, spread awareness of different drivers of conflict and diffuse knowledge, best and worst practices amongst youth organizations. Moreover, the active interaction between urban youth and rural communities will help reduce the divisions and polarization in communities. For instance, Liberia's National Youth Service Programme, initiated by the Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports, was a program aimed to have national youth volunteers serving in its four counties for one year, in fields such as: health, public administration, peacebuilding, leadership, and conflict resolution. As a result, youth became more willing to volunteer and parents increased their support for children to volunteer and participate in rebuilding Liberia. This led to the programme becoming part of Liberia's national reconciliation policy and country's development plan (IANYD, 2016, 26). Despite not being an exchange program of practices, the Liberian case is a promising method which underscores the positive outcomes of having young people exposed to different realities within their own country.



From the initial policy analysis, it was evident that youth are generally depicted as either a vulnerable group or beneficiaries within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and The New Urban Agenda (NUA). Although youth participation in decision making and implementation processes is commonly accepted by the UN Member States (both in the General Assembly and the Security Council), at the national and local level, governments are still hesitant to approach youth and include them as partners in advancing sustainable urban development and peacebuilding.



Built on the five pillars for sustainable development highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, the promising practices and case studies presented in this report offer practical solutions which intend to close the gap between the norms and commitments expressed in the SDGs and NUA, and their implementation. By doing so, we addressed a variety of timely issues such as:

- ensuring access of affordable housing for youth,
- thinking of inclusive ways to engage youth using frontier technologies and innovation,
- improving climate resiliency through youth-led initiatives and
- supporting youth to become agents of peace in their communities.

This document offered examples and strategies for local, national governments, organizations and other stakeholders to harness youths' energy and to create strong and reliable partnerships with them. Partnering with youth will benefit both governments and young people. On the one hand, including youth in decision making processes encourages them to become active community members and be more engaged in democratic processes such as voting. Moreover, constant collaborations will build trust between the two. On the other hand, leveraging young people's creativity, enthusiasm, energy and fresh perspectives will only benefit governments when attempting to develop local or national programs

“ Involving youth—as collaborators, team members, leaders and decision makers—in addressing the day-to-day issues that affect them offers a broad range of benefits to both young people and the community, from greater community connectedness and social awareness of the individual to enhanced participatory decision-making and democratic governance in community institutions. Such involvement also sends youth the message that their participation has intrinsic value.”

(UN DESA, 4)

In order to build and enhance partnerships, formal spaces need to be created for youth engagement. First, policies that target youth directly are imperative in formalizing relationships with youth and acknowledge their right to be seen as partners. Second, policies need to be followed by commitments that ensure young people are part of the planning process. They must be recognized as partners and be supported to organize and participate in governance. Global trends of unemployment and urbanization, the growing youth population, intergenerational inequalities, exclusion of young people from economic, social and political life are all problems that can be addressed by promoting youth's participation and civic engagement.

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