



# YOUTH AND THE CITY

LESSONS FROM 13 INNOVATIVE PROJECTS  
FUNDED BY THE CITIES ALLIANCE CATALYTIC  
FUND AND THE UN-HABITAT YOUTH FUND

**“The problem is not whether youth will be able to raise their voices, but rather if cities will be able to respond appropriately to these challenges, provide opportunities and harness their potential for development.”**

*-- Youth: The Face of Urbanisation. CIVIS, No. 6, January 2012*



*Visual representations of projects presented during the Youth and City Learning Event.*

Results from a Learning Event by Cities Alliance and UN-Habitat  
Based on a Report Prepared by Carole MacNeil, PhD  
Co-authors: Judith Mulwa (UN-Habitat) and Lisa Reudenbach (Cities  
Alliance)

November 2016

## Contents

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Executive Summary</b> .....                              | 3  |
| <b>Youth and Development</b> .....                          | 4  |
| <b>Youth and the City Learning Event: Overview</b> .....    | 7  |
| UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund (UYF) .....                     | 7  |
| The Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund (CATF).....              | 8  |
| The Learning Event .....                                    | 8  |
| <b>Key Outcomes from the Learning Event</b> .....           | 10 |
| Youth Definitions and Community Views on Youth .....        | 10 |
| Project Approaches and Lessons .....                        | 11 |
| Recommendations for Policy and Practice .....               | 12 |
| <b>Conclusions: The Role of Youth for Development</b> ..... | 15 |
| Annex 1: Project Overviews .....                            | 16 |

## Executive Summary

This report describes the process and results of a learning exchange event held in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2015, hosted by UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme) and Cities Alliance. It brought together 12 youth-focused projects – six from each organisation – to share their experiences, extract lessons learned, and develop recommendations for engaging youth in development.

Key messages include:

1. It is critical for local authorities to create spaces for dialogue and consultation with youth. This strengthens the relationship between community members and local authorities, and can result in the implementation better public policies.
2. It is important to include youth and communities in policy making processes, through active involvement, consultative processes, or both.
3. Participants felt that it was more important to integrate youth into existing policy platforms and support their participation there, rather than creating separate “youth” platforms through which youth can engage in policy.
4. With the involvement of policymakers in youth projects, and with the involvement of youth in policy, participants felt it important to address the issue of transparency, which they viewed as a responsibility to share information, including information about what decisions are made and how city resources are allocated.
5. The commitment and active involvement of city policy makers in youth programmes and projects is an important factor for the success of youth-led or youth-focused city development projects.
6. Local authorities should create joint funding mechanisms for community-owned projects as a strategy for leveraging what stakeholders are each uniquely positioned to offer, while also building synergies to provide sustainable solutions to existing community needs.
7. Local authorities need to take the informal sector into account as a positive resource for cities. It is a huge part of most countries’ economies, but in many cases, remains an under-utilised resource.
8. National and local authorities must see youth not as problems, but as problem solvers. Young people are experts of their own territories, and local authorities should use (and value) their innovation and expertise in achieving sustainable city development.

## Youth and Development

The world is growing younger and more densely populated than ever before. More than half of the world's seven billion people are under the age of 30, with almost 90 per cent of them living in developing contexts.<sup>1</sup> Looking at Africa alone, 65 per cent of the total population is below the age of 35. There are an estimated 1.8 billion young people in the world aged 10-24.<sup>2</sup>

Globally, young people are on the move, often migrating from rural settings to urban locations, seeking employment and better opportunities. Looking at the demographics in urban settings, particularly in developing contexts, urban populations are very youthful and becoming increasingly so. UN-Habitat projects that by 2030, 60 per cent of urban residents will be under 18.

Informal settlements (“slums”) are especially affected; they are home to a disproportionate number of children and youth who face increasing pressures of infrastructure, economics, security, poor basic services, and environmental issues. These challenges make life harder for all residents of informal settlements, and particularly their large young populations.

On one hand, our cities have a challenge: too many people (too many **young** people, some would even argue), and too few resources. On the other hand, one could just as easily argue the opposite. That is, as our cities are populated with more young people, they find themselves with a tremendous opportunity: they also become filled with more energy, creativity, innovation, skills and knowledge – just what our cities need to solve the pressures and challenges they face.

Citizen engagement – including the engagement of **young** citizens – is essential for good governance, which in turn is essential for economic growth and private investment.<sup>3</sup> Young people's participation in the life and decisions of a city is a right and an important benchmark of social inclusion. By building on youths' assets and capacities so that they can have a voice in – and influence on – the institutions that affect them, they are also positioned to make positive contributions. It has been proven repeatedly that young people desire and seek this kind of positive participation.<sup>4</sup>

Launched in 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lay out an ambitious “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.” Comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets, the plan encompasses a broad range of social, economic and environmental issues. Among these, Goal 11

“When national and world leaders talk about promoting democracy, human rights and poverty reduction, leaving cities and young people out of the equation, it is like trying to fight a major forest fire with a garden hose.”

--Erik Berg, former Senior Advisor in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

---

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> UNFPA, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank (2007). Youth-An Undervalued Asset: Toward a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa. Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the 2007 UNICEF study, “Will you listen?: Young voices from conflict zones.”

states, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.”<sup>5</sup> This goal cannot be reached, or even approached, without a plan to include and engage young people. When cities work in partnership with young people, they make great strides toward part of that goal – becoming more inclusive – and they also tap into a tremendous resource for addressing the goal’s other targets related to safety, resiliency and sustainability.

For urban contexts globally, large numbers of youth are an opportunity, thanks to workforce expansion and concurrent falling dependency rates – if countries position themselves to benefit from the demographic boom (i.e., the “bulge”) by investing in human capital development.<sup>6</sup> This implies that policymakers and other decision makers will need to see young people in their cities and communities not as beneficiaries of programmes, but as partners in development, resources to their communities, and agents of positive change.

When young people are engaged in their communities, they make important contributions through the programmes they run, the jobs they create, as well as the skills and knowledge they enhance in others (the social and financial capital they build). Moreover, through their work they learn important insights about the policy-related and institutional changes that need to be made to further enhance the lives of their communities. As cities search for new and creative solutions to the challenges they face, they may discover they have been overlooking a resource that was there in growing numbers all along.



*Students getting water in Bangladesh. Photo: Scott Wallace/The World Bank*

---

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

<sup>6</sup> World Bank (2007). *Youth-An Undervalued Asset: Toward a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa*. Washington, DC.

## Youth in the 2030 Agenda

Youth is an untapped economic resource and needs to be viewed and treated as an asset and driver of safe, resilient, and sustainable cities. With the Habitat III process and the 2030 development agenda, there is an increased interest in engaging youth at local, national and global levels as drivers for positive change to address the root causes of challenges and opportunities.

However, significant gaps remain in understanding how to apply these ideas through policies and practices in the urban context, and ensure global and national policies and regulations apply to the level where people are finding themselves faced with the most pressing and dynamically evolving issues: in cities.

As a key component of urbanisation, engaging youth in shaping the urban development trajectory – whether through meaningful participation in urban planning, informing legislation and regulations or economic policies – enables them to take responsibility and ownership to support the realisation of integrated, inclusive and sustainable cities. This approach utilises youth to achieve a positive correlation between urbanisation and development, effectively placing people and human rights at the centre of urbanisation.

The New Urban Agenda offers the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that policies and actions developed to inform urban development are inclusive. Urban development needs people to remain at the core of its attention, especially since an overwhelming number of city dwellers continue to face marginalization – often because they are deemed too young to be heard and seen.

Within the new developmental frameworks for urban development that are the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, a continued emphasis and momentum needs to be maintained for youth to be considered part and parcel of sustainable urban development. Youth engagement and meaningful participation to create youth-friendly legislative frameworks and urban plans, while harnessing the demographic dividend into urban economic opportunity, will be priorities towards more integrated, sustainable and inclusive cities.

## Youth and the City Learning Event: Overview

This report describes the process and results of a learning and exchange event held in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2015, hosted by UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance.

Youth accounts for a significant portion of the world's population. Working from the assumption that young people create a "demographic dividend" with important contributions to their communities, Cities Alliance and UN-Habitat took advantage of a unique opportunity to learn from leaders of youth city development projects from diverse urban contexts.<sup>7</sup> Both organisations have established funding mechanisms to support innovative city development projects led by and/or focused on young people.

### UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund (UYF)

Since its inception in 2009, the Urban Youth Fund has supported 296 youth-led groups in 75 countries. The UYF empowers global youth by providing grants and capacity building to select organisations in developing countries. Each year, over 8,000 youth-led organisations start the application process to be part of the programme. Approximately 30 are selected to receive a grant of up to USD 25,000 and capacity-building support for the duration of the project, including mentorships for project coordinators.

Projects encouraging gender equality or involving partnerships with the government or the private sector are particularly encouraged.<sup>8</sup> And in 2013, an e-learning component was integrated into the capacity development focus area to extend beyond the project coordinator to the larger youth group.

### About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. For close to 40 years, UN-Habitat has worked in human settlements throughout the world, focusing on building a brighter future for villages, towns, and cities of all sizes.

Because of these four decades of extensive experience, from the highest levels of policy to a range of specific technical issues, UN-Habitat has gained a unique and a universally acknowledged expertise in all things urban. This has placed UN-Habitat in a strong position to provide answers and achievable solutions to the current challenges faced by our cities. UN-Habitat is capitalising on its experience and position to work with partners to formulate the urban vision of tomorrow.

---

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see: [www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org), and <http://unhabitat.org/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see: <http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/urban-youth-fund/>

It also works to ensure that cities become inclusive and affordable drivers of economic growth and social development.

## The Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund (CATF)

The Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund provides grant support for innovative projects that strengthen and promote the role of cities in poverty reduction and in sustainable urban development. The CATF has two major strategic objectives: (1) To catalyse urban transformation processes that promote more inclusive cities by connecting cities and their innovative ideas to Cities Alliance members, and (2) to facilitate the sharing of the knowledge and learning distilled from innovative project experiences on global urban challenges<sup>9</sup>.

In recognition of the urgent need to address the ‘youth bulge’ in cities, the CATF 2012 Call for Proposals focused on “Youth and the City: Challenges of and Visions for Demographic Change.” This thematic focus signaled Cities Alliance’s strategic decision to put itself at the forefront of efforts to integrate youth into sustainable city development. The six projects chosen through the CATF call each received a grant of up to USD 250,000, used to promote youth engagement, support youth employment, and improve urban habitats.

### **About Cities Alliance**

The Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. Members include multilateral development organisations, national governments, local government associations, International NGOs, private sector and foundations, and academia.

Cities Alliance supports cities, local and national governments and their partners in the developing world in addressing the challenges of rapid urbanisation, and to harness the benefits and opportunities they represent for all citizens.

## The Learning Event

The Learning Event was designed with multiple, reinforcing goals in mind. First, to create a forum for exchange between UN-Habitat’s Youth Fund grantees and the Cities Alliance’s Catalytic Fund grantees by bringing together six youth-led and/or youth-focused projects funded by each organisation. During the forum, participants would be guided through a process for discovering and capturing the lessons learned from the projects across a range of contexts and focus areas. They would consider questions such as, What are the things that youth groups, NGOs and other stakeholders can do to support and promote youth participation and youth projects in Africa and elsewhere? Capturing these lessons learned would be useful for the projects involved and provide guidance for future youth-focused projects.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.citiesalliance.org/catalytic-fund>

Second, it would also serve as an opportunity to explore the implications of lessons learned for local authorities and other policy makers by asking questions such as: How can policies more effectively leverage the talent and skills of young people and encourage their participation in city development? How can the experiences of these projects be used to make future projects more successful and city development policies more inclusive? What are the necessary framework conditions that will aid local authorities in promoting and supporting youth participation and projects in Africa and elsewhere?

With the diverse projects and contexts of the two funds, the Learning Event provided a unique opportunity for learning on a broader scale in three main areas:

- The challenges and success factors of youth-led development and/or development projects focusing on youth;
- The opportunities for innovation in youth projects; and
- The types of political, economic, or other support most needed to build on what young people are trying to accomplish in their communities.

*“When thinking about policies it’s very important to allow space for youth to participate in the planning, not just in implementation. They should be involved in the first stages, when we are planning cities and development for youth.”*

*--Cyrille Rolande, Act for the Youth of Yaounde*

The Learning Event was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 25 to 27 November 2015, just prior to the Africities Summit.<sup>10</sup> One project leader from each of the 12 selected projects participated, as well as two project leaders from a youth-led development project based in Johannesburg. In total, 13 projects – from Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Peru, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe – were featured. The event included two-and-a-half days of structured workshop and a half-day site visit to a local youth-led development project.

Project leaders presented case studies and practices, with a focus on addressing diverse social, economic and political issues with potential value for current or future projects. The process was designed to be very participative and interactive, drawing on the participants’ rich experience. A variety of methods and group exercises were used to discuss highlights, challenges and problem-solving strategies from the various projects, as well as to extract lessons learned and success factors. The results were then turned into recommendations for other youth projects and policy makers.

---

<sup>10</sup> Africities took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 29 November to 3 December 2015, with the theme “Shaping the future of Africa with the people: the contribution of African local authorities to Agenda 2063 of the African Union.”

## Key Outcomes from the Learning Event

### Youth Definitions and Community Views on Youth

The definition of youth in the various contexts of the projects was neither singular nor fixed. One context might use an age range different from another to generally describe “youth;” but even within a particular context, those who fell into the category of “youth” might change, depending on other socio-cultural influences such as marriage, children, ownership of property, role within the family, or other factors. This is consistent with other research that shows just how fluid the concept of “youth” can be, across contexts, but even within a given context.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, as participants had experienced, not all youth are marginalised in the same ways or to the same degree as others; some young people may be less able to participate, less heard, and less represented. Thus, just as “youth” is not a homogenous concept, the participation – or the exclusion – of youth cannot be categorised in a singular way.

How youth are perceived varied in the different settings as well. According to some participants’ experiences, youth were viewed as danger, not resources. For others, youth were seen as resources, but not necessarily for development. In some cases, participants felt that they were seen in terms of numbers and used for political purposes, then ignored once their “use” had been fulfilled; this situation was often exacerbated by the youth themselves, who were not organised or willing to participate.

**“Communities felt invisible and they lacked a voice. Through the participatory mapping project, we built a platform for community voice.”**

*--Michael Uwemedimo, CMAP  
(Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform)*

In other cases, participants described youth who had used more forceful means to make themselves heard, such as demonstrations, which could lead to clashes with authorities rather than engagement and dialogue. But in other cases, youth were seen as resources, and were relied on by the community and by local authorities for a variety of development roles. Still, in many cases, youth were talked about as “the future” of the country, and not seen as part of current development policies, plans, or processes. Participants complained of the lack of formal mechanisms to involve youth.

The discussion about the degree to which the city provided a conducive environment for the project yielded interesting discussions and differences in experiences. For some, support came more easily from the national level than the local level; for others, it was the opposite. Sometimes, support came easily at the beginning, but waned; for others, support built over time. The relationships between “youth” and “adults” and the boundaries between the groups varied as

---

<sup>11</sup> The United Nations generally defines “youth” as those aged 15-24, although adjustments may be made in programs depending on definitions used in a local or national context. The Youth Charter of the African Union defines youth more expansively as those aged 15-35. The World Bank, by contrast, has moved away from numerical definitions toward a more descriptive definition of “youth” as the period between the dependence of childhood and the independence of adulthood.

well. In some contexts, the boundaries between youth and adults were less defined, and what mattered more was the focus of the project. In other contexts, however, intentional effort needed to be made toward strengthening the intergenerational partnership. What many projects shared, however, was the experience that cooperation with local authorities and with the larger community was important, and many expressed a desire for strengthened relationships in both directions.

## Project Approaches and Lessons

The participating projects included a wide range of innovative approaches that were successful in effectively involving youth in policy development and urban planning, in partnership with local authorities. The projects created meaningful roles for youth in all programmes that related to their needs and aspirations. They successfully empowered youth through small-scale enterprises for wealth creation, as well as social and environmental activities. Additionally, they were able to build the capacity and involvement of youth in an ongoing way and thereby built programme sustainability through capacity development and increased motivation of youth participants.

These successes were achieved through different approaches. The political, cultural or economic involvement and integration of youth was accomplished through different forms, such as the creation of spaces for exchange, building of partnerships, or mentorship. Additionally, creating a dialogue with different stakeholders, such as communities, governments and the private sector, was key. In terms of innovation most projects emanated from the youth themselves, but involved members from the whole community. In other words, innovation and inclusion went hand in hand.

**“If we form practical partnerships with the local municipality this will help with the integration of young people in our cities. When we act from the ground up we can mobilise young people and grab the attention of local governments; then they will want to partner with us.”**

*-- Motebang Matsela, South African SDI Alliance*

As main challenges for their projects, participants identified project sustainability, capacity of recipients, and the limits of volunteerism. The assumption that projects can achieve their goals entirely through volunteer efforts is not always realistic. Especially in the context of poverty, volunteerism has its limitations, as people balance the demands of earning a livelihood with community work. Project sustainability is an ongoing issue for all projects, as funding opportunities are often short-term, or fragmented, while the projects are working to address issues that are long-term in nature. Instead, approaches and funding need to be longer term, context-specific, and integrated. Another main challenge identified by the participants was that it is critical to ensure that recipients of support (e.g. microloans) have the capacity to absorb and manage that support appropriately, including skills in financial and risk management.

Most of the projects used some form of structured dialogue or stakeholder meetings as a strategy for overcoming different kinds of challenges encountered during project implementation. These dialogues were used to build interest in the project among diverse stakeholders, assess the performance of those involved with the project, and to inspire people's participation and maintain their motivation and commitment to the project once they become involved. In addition, participants identified other key strategies for overcoming challenges, such as:

- Information sharing, including technical, organisational, and financial information about the project, or information about the issues being addressed by the project;
- Negotiation, e.g. with vocational training centers or other types of community partners for support and involvement;
- Funding, e.g. not depending solely on volunteer efforts, but obtaining funds to create jobs for project members;
- Media engagement, e.g. involving the media to get issues onto the radar of policy makers; and
- Using intermediaries, e.g. having project members serve as “ambassadors” between different stakeholder groups.

Participants identified different tools and strategies that had led them to successes. Stakeholder analyses were seen as key to understanding what matters to the people involved and the particular context. Taking time for monitoring and evaluation of progress throughout the process was also considered as crucial for project success, as well as a solid risk assessment and management, a transparent selection process for beneficiaries and a bottom-up approach for involving participants, community members and other stakeholders.

## Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Participants developed a series of policy or policy-related recommendations for local or national policies that would support youth-led development and youth projects.<sup>12</sup>

### 1. Space for dialogue and consultation

It is critical for local authorities to create spaces for dialogue and consultation with youth. This will strengthen the relationship between community members and local authorities. For youth to be able to use these spaces they need empowerment, information and organisation. Youth city

---

<sup>12</sup> These policy recommendations became part of the conference presentation that took place at the Africities Summit several days later (“Youth and the City: Youth Participation and Contribution Towards Inclusive Cities in Africa”), and were also further developed into the official policy recommendation statement that was submitted as a part of the conference proceeding. It provided a basis for dialogue with policymakers, grounded in an analysis of the real experience of youth projects in diverse contexts throughout Africa.

development projects need local authorities to be reliable and proactive partners. Not only does youth participation positively impact the community, but the actions and involvement of youth in cities can result in the implementation of better public policies.

## **2. Include youth in policy-making processes**

It is important to include youth and communities (via Community-based Organisations and/or youth projects) in policy making processes, through active involvement, consultative processes, or both. There is a need for an intentional framework to bring youth to the table and strategies for youth mainstreaming into municipal plans, which also involves an institutionalised approach for the local authority to involve youth. The participants agreed that in many cases where youth were involved in policy or other civic leadership processes, their participation was not being fully recognised or valued. They suggested that greater involvement of policy makers could help highlight the actions that youth are taking – for example, through these kinds of youth projects – and the results that they are accomplishing in their communities.

## **3. Integrate youth into existing policy platforms**

Participants felt that it was more important to focus on ways to integrate youth into existing policy platforms, and support their participation there, rather than creating separate “youth” platforms through which youth can engage in policy. However, they were also clear that such representation of youth may need support to participate effectively in these policy-making processes. To achieve meaningful representation, it was seen important to support youth through a variety of strategies. This included: mentoring; capacity-building or training; help with self-organising; and help with forming alliances or collectives among youth or community associations.

## **4. Greater transparency**

With the involvement of policymakers in youth projects, and with the involvement of youth in policy, participants felt it important to address the issue of transparency. For example, they suggested that youth want to be able to utilise city spaces and access economic opportunities. However, they need access to information. They also suggested that there is a mutual responsibility with regard to taxes, and that the other side of paying taxes is a watchdog role of seeing how taxes are spent. Transparency, then, means a responsibility to share information, including information about what decisions are made and how city resources are allocated.

## **5. Partnerships with local governments**

Additionally, the commitment and active involvement of city policymakers in youth programmes and projects is an important factor for the success of youth-led or youth-focused city development projects. Participants also felt that local governments need to build partnerships to leverage their resources more effectively. This might happen, for example, by encouraging private sector engagement to youth-led or focused empowerment programmes through CSR (corporate social responsibility) programmes and/or tax benefits.

## 6. Joint funding mechanisms for community-owned projects

Participants discussed the importance of joint funding as a critical strategy for supporting youth participation in city development and in policymaking. Local authorities should create joint funding mechanisms for community-owned projects as a strategy for leveraging what stakeholders are each uniquely positioned to offer; while also building synergies to provide sustainable solutions to existing community needs. Joint funding can also build and strengthen partnerships if/when there is transparency on all sides.

## 7. View the informal sector as a positive resource

Local authorities need to take the informal sector into account as a positive resource for cities. The informal sector has provided young people with opportunities including informal jobs. It is a huge part of most countries' economies, but in many cases, remains an under-utilised resource. Yet, for many youth, it is not easy to capitalise on the skills and experience gained in the informal sector and migrate into the formal employment sector

## 8. See youth as problem solvers, not problems

Finally, national and local authorities must see youth not as problems, but as problem solvers. Young people are experts of their own territories, and local authorities should use (and value) their innovation and expertise in achieving sustainable city development.



*The workshop concluded with a site visit to the community of Duduza in Johannesburg, where young people affiliated with the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP) are tackling unemployment as well as drug and alcohol abuse within the community.*

## Conclusions: The Role of Youth for Development

The Learning Event provided a unique opportunity for collective learning about the roles of youth in city development, particularly in development efforts led by young people. Young people are finding ways to change their cities for the better. They are innovating and creating change. They are encountering challenges, to be sure, but also finding creative strategies for overcoming those challenges. They are also finding “successes that would inspire others.”

Opportunities such as this Learning Event create a forum to leverage the learning that is happening at the local level about what works and what doesn't, to share creative solutions, and to push the solutions beyond one context to multiple contexts. Even more, the hope is that opportunities such as this provide a forum not only to learn from projects, but also to move from programme level to policy level so that local and short-term work can begin to impact national and longer-term visions and policies.

It was clear from the Learning Event participants that representation of youth in city development and policymaking is a serious issue in most communities. Moreover, remedying the issue will take more than will or desire; it will take strategy and specific mechanisms that lead to institutional change. Symptom change must be replaced with system change.



*Young people from the community of Duduza in Johannesburg*

System change will require new and creative approaches, and the inclusion of diverse community stakeholders. We know from years of experience and documentation that youth have a great deal of the former to offer when it comes to city development.<sup>13</sup> As for the latter, one only has to look at demographics. Given that young people are the largest demographic group in many city contexts, especially in developing contexts, the inclusion of youth would seem to be an obvious prerequisite for any city development effort or policy.

Moreover, youths' long-term welfare is linked to the long-term welfare of the community in which they live and work, and vice versa. It makes practical sense to support their long-term investment and engagement. The fact that youth are still excluded from so many policy processes and other decision-making processes in communities reveals that there is still much work to be done to support cities in learning to engage an important and under-utilised resource for their communities. It is hoped that the results from this Learning Event can be one contribution toward that goal.

---

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the Global Youth-Led Development Series, published by UN-Habitat, available at: <https://issuu.com/unhabitatyouthunit>

## Annex 1: Project Overviews

| Name of Project                                                                                                                                                | Country, City                              | Implementing Organisation                                 | Funding Source                 | Project Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Social and economic integration of young people in 4 neighbourhoods of N'Djamena</b>                                                                        | Chad,<br>N'Djamena                         | ESSOR                                                     | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | Improving the social and economic integration of 1,000 young people in Walia, Dembé, Chagoua and N'djari neighbourhoods in N'Djamena through implementation of socio-educational, training and professional integration and capacity building schemes of community organisations in these areas. |
| <b>Support centre for the integration of youth in Nouakchott (CAP Insertion)</b><br><br>(Centre d'appui à l'Insertion des jeunes de Nouakchott)                | Mauritania,<br>Nouakchott                  | Communauté Urbaine de Nouakchott                          | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | The main objective of the project is to provide Mauritanian national and local authorities with innovative and effective ways of solving the problem of youth unemployment.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Increasing young people's participation in slum upgrading and development</b>                                                                               | Sierra Leone,<br>Freetown                  | Sierra Leone Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)     | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | The project aims to empower young slum dwellers for the social and economic transformation in slum communities in Freetown.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>UrbaPEJ-Dalifort: Support to sustainable urban social development of neighbourhoods and associations, and the promotion of youth employment in Dalifort</b> | Senegal,<br>Dalifort                       | Enda ECOPOP                                               | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | UrbaPEJ-Dalifort project aims to foster the socio-professional integration of young people and to combat urban poverty by enhancing community life and improving the urban living environment and public security in Dalifort, in the outskirts of Dakar.                                        |
| <b>Better living through street art and youth policies</b><br><br>(Mejora de la vivienda gracias al arte de la calle y las políticas de juventud)              | Peru,<br>Trujillo                          | Red de Aliados para las Sociedades Abandonadas RASA JOVEN | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | The project aims to promote social and economic integration of urban youth at risk in selected marginal areas of the city of Trujillo through the development of their artistic skills and urban upgrading projects.                                                                             |
| <b>URBAN FUTURES: Participatory youth mapping &amp; urban planning initiative</b>                                                                              | Nigeria,<br>Port Harcourt,<br>Rivers State | Stakeholder Democracy Network UK                          | Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund | The project aims at organising and training the youth in Port Harcourt to become key leading actors in promoting dialogue and consultation among local and national stakeholders to build alternatives to evictions, engage in participatory planning and contribute to the setting up of new    |

|                                                                                                                                                                                         |                     |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                         |                     |                                             |                             | government policy frameworks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Voices from Below</b>                                                                                                                                                                | Zimbabwe<br>Harare  | Young Voices Network Zimbabwe (YVN)         | UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund | The project's aim is to enlighten the youth on their rights in governance participation, engage the youth with the local leaders and develop responsible leadership. Through its training, the project managed to directly reach out 120 young people and 22 Hatcliff local leaders who worked together in solving community problems such as homelessness.                                                                                                 |
| <b>Youth in Micro-Enterprise for Change (Y-MEC)</b>                                                                                                                                     | Ghana,<br>Tumu      | Action for Sustainable Development (ASUDEV) | UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund | The project's aim is to alleviate poverty among the youth. With a target of 100 disadvantaged youth, the project will impact entrepreneurship/apprenticeship skills and later give the successful trainees loans to start up their own businesses. Moreover, the beneficiaries are enrolled into a Youth Savings and Loans Associations (YSLAs) that is connected to a bank that assists them to raise funds to repay the loan and expand their businesses. |
| <b>Creation of a waste recycling centre in "commune VI" in the District of Bamako</b><br><br>(Création de la filière de recyclage des déchets dans la commune VI du District de Bamako) | Mali,<br>Bamako     | Association Soleil d'Afrique (A.S.A)        | UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund | This project aims at the creation of employment for young people in the District of Bamako through the recycling of garbage. The project will facilitate the construction of a centre in which the waste plastic bags will be recycled and a gallery to enhance public participation.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Act for the disadvantaged youth in Yaoundé</b><br><br>(Agir Pour Les Jeunes Defavorises de Yaounde)                                                                                  | Cameroon,<br>Douala | All Women Together (AWT)                    | UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund | The overall objective is to contribute to improving the living conditions of disadvantaged youth in the district of Yaoundé 2, by training underprivileged youth in small occupations and by supporting beneficiaries in the development of income generating activities.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Slum Women Economic Empowerment Program –SWEEP</b>                                                                                                                                   | Uganda,<br>Kampala  | Century Entrepreneurship Development Agency | UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund | The project aims at empowering the youth specifically the young single women living in the Kawempe slum, Kampala Uganda. The project impacted entrepreneurship, social and life skills to the single women who faced the challenges of unemployment, sex exploitation and poverty. In addition, Village savings and Loans Associations VSLs were established in helping the beneficiaries in fund saving and expansion of                                   |

|                    |                               |                                |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    |                               |                                |                                          | their businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Slum Soccer</b> | Kenya,<br>Nairobi             | Mathare Youth<br>Environmental | UN-<br>Habitat<br>Urban<br>Youth<br>Fund | Slum Soccer aims to improve open urban spaces in one of Nairobi's most densely populated informal settlements, Mathare. With a population ranging between 80,000 and 180,000 the area lacks any adequate and safe spaces designated to children's play.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Yona Yethu</b>  | South Africa,<br>Johannesburg | FEDUP & Yona<br>Yethu          | N/A                                      | Yona Yethu is an organisation initiated by a group of 8 young people who had the same goal, which was to change the environment they live in, without any remuneration expected. In addition, these young people belong to the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP).<br><br>The project seeks to address the issue of unemployment within the community, as well as waste management and recycling of waste. |