



Children, Youth & Environments
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Youth in Urban Development: Bringing Ideas into Action

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Preface

In late 2005, youth leaders working with the One Stop Youth Information Resource Centre in Nairobi, staff of the UN-HABITAT Partners and Youth Section, and several international consultants gathered together on a veranda in Gigiri to talk about the urgency of engaging youth in decision-making in UN-HABITAT, its partner organizations and municipal governments. *Youth in Urban Development: Bringing Ideas into Action* evolved out of that first informal discussion. In June 2006, the paper became the key discussion document for 500+ youth from 52 different countries who attended the UN HABITAT World Urban Forum III's World Youth Forum prior held in Vancouver, Canada, in June of 2006. This paper was used as the basis of the youth resolution presented at the closing ceremony of the World Urban Forum.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce two essential strategies that can enhance the meaningful engagement of youth in decision-making globally: youth-led development and youth mainstreaming. Both strategies are derived from an asset-based philosophy, recognizing youth as leaders in their communities and emphasizing their capacity and interest in contributing to decisions that affect their lives. We intend for this paper to serve as a guide for adults working with youth and youth leaders working with their communities, inspiring a new generation of youth leadership and youth-adult collaboration for the improvement of societies around the world.

Special thanks to each of the lead writers Kevina Power, Darcy Varney and Doug Ragan who went above and beyond the call of duty to produce this paper, and to Karun Koernig who was charged with further articulating the framework for youth led development in UN HABITAT, and prepared and finalized the paper for publishing.

Youth in Urban Development: Bringing Ideas into Action

1.0 Introduction

Inclusion. Engagement. Participation. Many words describe the state of being involved, and they are often used when referring to youth. Researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and community members are beginning to recognize that youth must be more than just passive bystanders in their own development – they need to be fully and meaningfully engaged for their true potential to be realized. Authentic engagement is especially important in many developing countries where those under the age of 25 often comprise up to 75% of the population. In cities, the proportion of youth is even higher and the need for their involvement that much greater. The rapid development needed in these countries requires full engagement by a majority of the population. We are no longer questioning *whether* youth should be engaged, but are now asking *how best* to do so.

How can we determine what meaningful engagement is and how can we assure it is properly implemented in policy and practice? This paper aims to provide a basis for discussion about how to best engage youth in different policy and practice contexts. At a policy level, it advocates mainstreaming youth, as has happened with women, by meaningfully engaging them at all levels of policy development and governance. The second complementary approach advocates the meaningful engagement of youth through promoting youth-led development, a new methodology that provides a pragmatic model for integrating and empowering youth in their communities. We will use research highlighted by case studies that demonstrate programmes, projects and organizations that meaningfully engage youth. The paper will also focus on youth living in urban contexts, as that is where the majority of youth in the world now reside, and will continue to do so in increasing numbers into the future.

“Young people are not only the leaders of tomorrow; they can play a leading role in the development of their communities today. Let us hope that their good works today blossom into lifelong commitments that will benefit all the world's people.”

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General, United Nations

2.0 Background

2.1 Youth in the majority world

The world is more youthful today than ever before. Even as decreasing birth rates and longer life spans are influencing an overall trend toward population aging, in absolute numbers, there are more people under the age of 25 today than ever before – nearly 3 billion, in fact, or half of the total global population. Fully 85 per cent of the world's young people live in developing countries, where they often comprise a large portion of their communities. An increasing number of young people around the world are growing up in cities – especially in the fast-growing cities of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. (Youth Coalition, 2005)

For teens and young adults everywhere, poverty and social exclusion remain persistent challenges: more than 500 million youth live on less than \$2 per day, 130 million are illiterate, 10 million live with HIV, and 90 million are unemployed (UNDESA, 2005). Where the numbers of young people are the greatest, so are the challenges they face – and girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to growing up poor and undereducated, left with few prospects for a prosperous and independent future. Conversely, while youth face great challenges, there are also great opportunities, as countries with a predominately youthful demographic have the potential to thrive economically.

Many significant problems that plague communities today are complex, involve multiple actors and are at least partly the result of past actions that were taken to alleviate the problems themselves – such as the lack of affordable housing in cities, which can be exacerbated by top-down approaches that enrich developers and landowners rather than assist poor families. Dealing with complex issues is notoriously difficult, and the results of conventional solutions can leave stakeholders frustrated. A key benefit of meaningfully engaging young people in addressing the problems their communities are confronting is the opportunity to discover solutions that have not been explored before and that are sensitive to the specific contexts in which they occur. Also, because many of the poorest communities of the world are majority youth, the best way to engage the greatest number, in the most meaningful way, is through a youth peer-to-peer model – youth engaging other youth. This peer-to-peer engagement can bring about a multiplier effect that quickly justifies even a small level of funding for youth projects and programmes.

Involving young people in urban development strategies has significant implications for the health of young populations. Research has shown that youth demonstrating risky behavior and those living in poverty benefit the most from being engaged (Marsh, 1992). Not only are there documented health benefits and social benefits to participation, but being involved at the planning level also increases the benefits. (Komro et al, 1996) By virtue of their prominence in the world's fastest-growing urban areas, young people are being recognized more and more as key constituents, without whom the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals – the eight internationally agreed-upon agenda items for poverty reduction and human development in the first quarter of the new millennium – will be impossible.

2.2 Youth and the United Nations system

Almost every UN agency has a youth programme. The cross-cutting nature of youth issues requires a combination of sectoral (education, health, basic services, and the like) and inter-sectoral approaches, as well as special programmes. One example is the Youth Employment Network (YEN), which was developed in response to Secretary-General Annan's call for increased youth engagement in the year 2000. Launched jointly by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labor Organization, YEN is an example of the kind of collaboration that is required if agencies are to address the complex and multi-sectoral issues facing young people. The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond identifies 10 priority areas for action: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and *full and effective youth involvement in society and in decision-making*. This paper focuses on the involvement of youth in society and decision-making through mainstreaming and youth-led development.

Young people are approaching the United Nations to partner with them. At every gathering, declarations are put forth encouraging action in the area of youth engagement. For example, the document *12 Lessons Learned from Children's Participation in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children*, offers concrete ideas on how forums can become more inclusive, ranging from youth-friendly preparatory planning sessions and selection processes to better materials and follow-up methods (UNICEF, 2004).

The Ad Hoc Working Group of Youth and the MDGs provided an excellent example of developmental advocacy for youth engagement in its April 2005 paper, *Youth and the Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation*, aimed at providing an overview of youth participation as it currently exists and an outline of the ways in which youth

are directly involved and affected by each Millennium Development Goal. Most importantly it outlined many case studies of youth-led actions young people were undertaking to achieve the MDGs in their cities and countries (UNDESA, 2004).

The 2005 World Youth Congress in Scotland provides another example of effective collaboration. After participating together in the Congress, the youth drafted a report titled, *Nothing for us, Without Us: A Youth Led Starter Kit* (Peacechild, 2005) which is a great resource document for deliberations between young people and organizations. The clear and substantive report features descriptions of actionable items that youth have undertaken, highlighting the capacities of young people, and how they are taking leadership roles in solving issues from HIV/AIDS to environment. The report lists key recommendations for the future that were developed collaboratively, in keeping with the tone and objective of the important gathering.

The authors of *Youth in Urban Development: Bringing ideas into action* recognize and appreciate the extensive groundwork already laid on the road to inclusive youth engagement. This paper was drafted as a discussion paper for the for the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum III and the parallel World Youth Forum. The paper was distributed at the WUF, and became the basis for the WUF youth final statement which called on UN-HABITAT and other local, national and international institutions to support the mainstreaming of youth and to support youth-led programmes, projects and organizations. The Global Partnership Initiative for Urban Youth was also signed between the Norwegian Government and UN-HABITAT, setting the stage for the advancement of both mainstreaming and youth-led development in the future.

3.0 UN-HABITAT and youth: Setting an agenda

In 1996, at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, participants made a historical breakthrough in the concept of good governance of cities and towns. National governments for the first time formally acknowledged local governments, civil society, business communities, youth, women, and other local stakeholders as equal partners in the decision-making processes around human settlements. The conference resulted in a Global Plan of Action known as the Habitat Agenda, which set a foundation for developing local partnerships to realize safer, healthier, cleaner, and more equitable cities.

Young men and women were invited to participate in the preparatory process for Habitat II as members of civil society. As a result, the Habitat Agenda incorporates the ideas and concerns of youth, guides their future involvement and role in the implementation process, and further commits governments and UN-HABITAT to work in partnership with young people. The provision of training, education and skill-building to prepare them for current and future decision-making roles and sustainable livelihoods in human settlements management and development is stipulated in Paragraph 13 of the Habitat Agenda:

The needs of children and youth, particularly with regard to their living environment, have to be taken fully into account. Special attention needs to be paid to the participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighborhoods; this is in order to secure the living conditions of children and youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment. (UN HABITAT, 1996)

UN-HABITAT's mandate for work with youth is derived from several resolutions passed by its Governing Council. These include resolutions 17/19

of 14 May 1999 and 18/8 of 16 February 2001 on developing partnerships with youth, and resolution 19/3 of 9 May 2003 on *enhancing the engagement of youth* in the work of UN-HABITAT. Resolution 19/3 calls on the executive director of UN-HABITAT to develop a *Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa* in partnership with other United Nations agencies, and to ensure the active participation of UN-HABITAT in the Secretary General's initiative on youth employment – especially within the framework of United Nations Millennium Development Goal 7, target 11, on improving the lives of the least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. (UN HABITAT, 2008)

“At the city level, I encourage governments to formulate and adopt integrated local policies that address youth concerns; and to support the creation of local youth partnership bodies, so that youths become involved in decision-making and youth policies can be implemented at the local level through youth action.”¹

3.1 Engagement through partnership

The *Global Partnership Initiative for Urban Youth Development (GPI)* is a progressive example of UN-HABITAT's move to partner sustainably with younger generations. The GPI is important because it seeks to integrate the Millennium Development Goals with development programmes at the city level, focusing on and working with urban youth in Africa. Consistent with a number of the MDGs, the GPI must be seen as an integrated effort to fulfill the MDGs and their targets. The GPI is also consistent with UN-HABITAT's global campaigns for secure tenure and urban governance, and as such is instrumental in fulfilling the objectives of these campaigns. Ideally, the GPI must be established well within UN-HABITAT's current work programme, incorporating the standards identified in the UN-HABITAT *Youth Strategy* and

¹ Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director UN-HABITAT, Policy Dialogue Series, Number Two: Youth, Children and Urban Governance

evaluated and advised by young people at every level. GPI is focused on coming up with concrete methods and strategies to support youth-led development – such as the strategy of implementing One Stop Youth Resource Centers in cities in Africa and globally.

UN-HABITAT drafted, in 2004, a *Strategy for Enhanced Youth Engagement* (UN-HABITAT, 2004). The objective of the strategy is to present an integrated approach to urban youth development, which will guide the operational activities of UN-HABITAT when working with youth. It provides a road map for the promotion of urban youth empowerment and participation in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The appropriate next step for the organization is to implement all elements of this strategy with young people's advice and guidance along the way. Forums such as these (World Urban Forum and World Youth Forum 2006) are essential to this process of organizational change and evolution. The time to be vocal about the practicalities of partnership with youth is *now*.

UN-HABITAT appreciates the advice of all stakeholders in urban development and organizational evaluation. The Global Youth Congress at WUF II (Barcelona) saw young people recognized as key stakeholders who have valuable advice to give. The WUF III process has demonstrated growth based on this advice, which can attest to the organization's willingness to move forward. Starting in Barcelona, the *World Urban Forum Youth Committee* (WUFY) – made up of Canadian and Kenyan representatives from youth organizations, indigenous youth groups, international bodies, music and events industries, not-for-profit organizations, universities, and government – was established to implement and advise on the youth activities associated with future World Urban Forums. The WUFY programme culminated in over \$900,000 CAN being raised to support the engagement of 30,000 youth on five continents having input into the WUF through the World Urban Café process, and more than 500 youth representing youth-led agencies from

around the world coming to the WUF to request, and in the follow-up Governing Council receive, concrete support for youth-led development and youth mainstreaming. This conference laid the stage for the dual strategy of youth-led development and youth mainstreaming, a strategy that engages youth, cities, UN-HABITAT and other local and international agencies in a transformative process to provide action, policy and governance models for others to emulate globally.

International institutions such as UN-HABITAT, all levels of government and youth organizations have generated examples of good practice in youth-led projects and programmes, youth-adult partnerships and the connections between policy and practice. Our analysis has important implications for UN-HABITAT, development organizations, municipalities and youth-led projects that aim to engage youth in urban processes – most significantly, that engaging young people in urban development benefits both youth and adults and helps create a “public attitude that encourages youth to express their opinions, to become involved and to be part of the decision-making process at different levels.” (Golombek, 2002)

“The capacity for progress of our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contribution and responsibility of youth in the building and designing of the future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account”

*United Nations World Programme of Action
for Youth to the Year 2000*

4.0 Complementary Approaches: Youth Mainstreaming to Youth-Led Development

UN-HABITAT, civil society organizations and many local governments champion the right of young people to take part in decisions regarding their communities, and to be recognized and supported as effective change agents within their communities. Less clear in mainstream global dialogues is *how* young people can influence decision-making and effect change. We propose that one must look both at the policy and governance level – often termed the systems level – while concurrently recognizing youth-led actions at the local, national and international level. Unfortunately, youth-led actions, which have been documented extensively at an anecdotal level, are not seen as part of the system, but often as an aberration or merely youth practicing to become adults – leaders of tomorrow rather than change agents today. This paper refutes that ageist perspective by using emerging research and documentation of how youth are taking leadership roles and effecting positive change.

The first approach we propose is Youth Mainstreaming. Youth Mainstreaming takes it lead from Gender Mainstreaming which was first proposed at the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi (United Nations, 1985). The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality." (United Nations, 1997). Youth

Mainstreaming has a similar focus of recognizing the value of young people, and working to achieve age equity.

For example, though conferences such as the World Urban Forum III provide important opportunities for collaboration and awareness-raising among youth and adults, their time and scope limits the possibilities for reciprocal learning and influence among youth participants and decision-makers. Similarly, municipal-level events in which youth are often invited to participate, such as community design charettes, give adult planners a glimpse of young peoples' interests but do little to engender continued support for youth priorities in larger issues of planning and urban development, nor do they recognize the ability of youth to take leadership and effect positive change. In regard to community development, youth are often "facilitated" in their involvement to positively effect their community through adult-run programmes – i.e. participating in environmental clean-up projects or fundraising for good causes – but not recognized or supported for programmes they undertake themselves, either on their own or in partnership with adult agencies.

The complimentary approach to the systems level Youth Mainstreaming is Youth Led Development. The concept of youth led development was first recognized at the World Youth Congress (WYC) in Stirling, Scotland in 2005. Sponsored by Peacechild International, this conference was a watershed in recognizing the leadership abilities of youth: "Youth Led development (YLD) is born in the faith that young people can contribute constructively to the good of society". (Woollcombe, D., 2007) Closely following the WYC was WUF III, another key event focused on youth led development, which utilized the tagline "Youth as leaders of today AND tomorrow" to advance the concept that youth could take leadership roles not only in the future when they become adults, but in the present. In both these conferences we see a strong commitment to youth leading their own development. The challenge with youth led development is that it is a new concept, with much of the

knowledge and understanding of it being anecdotal (Ragan, 2005). To better understand this concept there is a need to both synthesize the research done on youth that supports youth led development, as well as undertaken new research, so that more comprehensive strategies can be created.

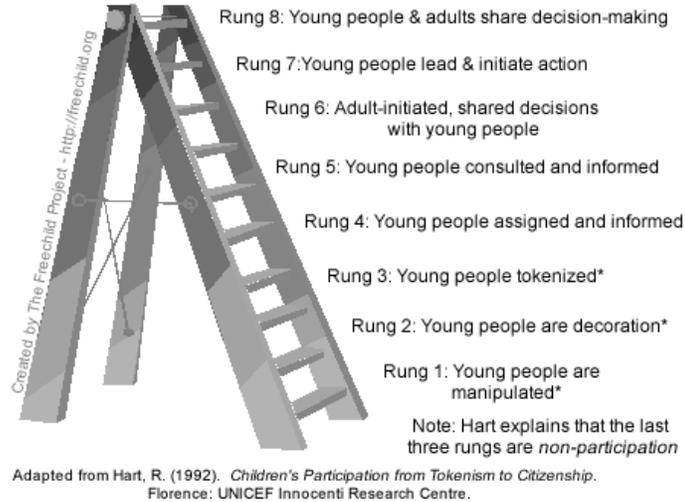
We propose a strategy anchored in youth mainstreaming and youth-led development that can lead toward meaningfully engaging youth from a local to an international level. In regards to youth-led development, we promote the recognition and support of the leadership of youth and youth agencies in many critical areas such as HIV/AIDS, environment, and human settlements, to name a few. In regards to youth mainstreaming, we advocate a system-wide approach to young people's participation in urban development, a broad integration of youth into the structure and activities of development organizations and the convergence of youth interests with those of other members of society.

4.1 The debate – How engaged is engaged?

As mentioned earlier, youth participation has been defined differently in practice and in the research literature. One of the most well known gauges of youth participation is that of Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation (Hart, 1992).²

² We are interpreting "young people" here to include youth that would be up to the age of 24 as per UN definition. Roger Hart CITE SOURCE created this model based on a definition of young people as children up to the age of 18. We find the model can be adapted to youth and so are doing so in this document.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



This model of participation reflects a continuum of “meaningful” engagement, demonstrating that not all engagement is the same or of equal authenticity. It is self-evident that it is better not to manipulate, tokenize or use youth as decoration (“non-participation,” according to Hart). Making choices among the higher rungs of the ladder – levels Hart calls authentic participation – is more difficult: is it better to assign youth roles or consult them? Let them take the lead or share decisions with adults? These questions are often where the conflict arises in youth research and practice, because each authentic level of participation can be beneficial in different circumstances. This paper will focus on the top two rungs. Quality youth mainstreaming initiatives often fall on rung 8 – “young people and adults share decision-making” – as adults dominate institutions, and their engaged and willing partnership is key to the success of any mainstreaming venture. Youth-Led Development, on the other hand, falls primarily on rung 7 – “young people lead and initiate action” – exemplified by agencies and programmes that are primarily run by youth.

New streams of research and practice have emerged to answer the question about what qualifies as meaningful youth engagement. Assets Based Community Development focuses on mapping or inventorying peoples

personal and community assets, a process that lends itself well to youth development. (Kretzman, Mcknight, 1993). What is unique with this stream of research and practice is that it starts with the premise that youth are assets to their community no matter what their social, cultural or economic background. Instead of the needs assessment being the primary tool to gather data, needs assessments are balanced with asset assessments or asset mapping, to give a more holistic and positive picture of youth within the context of their community. Participatory action research methods are used as well, to recognize youth as experts in their community, giving them the responsibility to gather, analyze and interpret their own data in partnership with researchers.

A second stream of research has been that of youth engagement and social inclusion. Groups such as the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (TG Magazine, 2008) and the international UNESCO Growing up in Cities projects (Driskell, 2002) have been researching how to best engage youth, and how engagement affects communities and the psycho-social behavior and well being of youth.³ This research goes a long way in expanding upon Hart's ladder, allowing researchers, practitioners and policy makers a chance to better understand the different qualities of youth engagement, and the impact of that engagement on communities.

This new research has begun to influence the general practice of youth work primarily in the developed world – with the increased focus on mentorship, both peer-to-peer and adult-to-youth, and asset based community development. What is less evident is the influence of this new research on

³ The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, a Canada-based collaboration of youth, academic researchers and youth organizations, has developed a working definition of engagement: "the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, which has a focus outside of him or herself. Full engagement consists of a behavioral component (e.g. spending time doing an activity), an effective component (e.g. deriving pleasure from participating in it) and a cognitive component (e.g. knowledge about the activity)." The Centre of Excellence proposes that meaningful "engagement" moves beyond "participation" in relation to the experience of youth in decision-making. (www.engagementcentre.ca).

youth development practice in the developing world, which is ironic, considering that youth make up such a significant percentage of developing country populations.

4.2 Youth Mainstreaming

Youth mainstreaming is the engagement of youth in governance and policy decision-making. The answer to youth mainstreaming for many organizations and governments is to add on special departments and programmes through which to manage “youth issues”: the perceived needs and problems of young people, which typically include recreation, education and delinquency. Relegating young people to the status of a minority population in need of special services, however, runs the risk of disenfranchising them. Democratic processes require that all stakeholders have access to and are recognized in the full spectrum of decision-making, and young people are stakeholders in every aspect of urban life, from waste management and energy use to housing, employment and transportation. Just as the rights and interests of women have been “mainstreamed” across every development domain, so, too, must young people be recognized as key stakeholders with diverse rights and interests, the exercise of which will enrich the quality of urban life for all. (Bartlett, 2005)

This is not to say that “youth desks” or youth departments embedded within organizations are not important; in fact, they are crucial. They are responsible for monitoring and evaluating youth participation within the organization and externally with partners, providing support for various departments and their engagement efforts with young people, and acting as focal points for young people to receive organizational orientation and training. Youth departments also are responsible for educating their organizations on what works with regard to youth engagement. Borrowing from the gender movement, youth mainstreaming is a necessary process for meaningful engagement. For that to happen, young people need a place to

start within the system that is not limited to one “gatekeeper” office or entry point. A youth mainstreaming approach requires that young people be fully supported to effectively fulfill their roles. This support can include ensuring that youth and adults design and negotiate job descriptions that detail their roles and their limitations if they exist. A youth-welcoming environment fosters trusting adult-youth relationships. An orientation programme that thoroughly describes the organization’s policies and procedures helps support mainstreaming, as does creating new and more challenging opportunities for youth as their engagement is sustained over time. Finally, youth-friendly performance measurement and evaluation procedures are critical for dynamic approaches that remain relevant to each generation of youth coming on board.

When organizations and agencies concerned with urban development integrate youth voice and agency into the full complement of their work, they adopt policies that recognize young people as a part of the system as a whole. Youth work becomes a regular line item in organizational and municipal budgets; performance indicators for all departments and programmes include measures of their work with youth; and both adults and youth involved in the work receive and provide regular training and education in the skills they need to learn from each other. Young people consistently seek out opportunities for meaningful engagement in the “real” work of their communities, and many say that they appreciate most the kind of participation that offers quality relationships, clear learning and work objectives, adequate orientation and training, meaningful action in the world, and opportunities for reflection, evaluation and celebration. (Power, 2005)

Adults in youth-engaging organizations and institutions report many benefits, including a stronger commitment and more energy; increased confidence in working with youth; a greater understanding of the concerns of youth; increased sharing of ideas; and a stronger feeling of connectedness to their community. (Zeldin et al, 2000) Working together with adults in development

agencies, city offices and community organizations can afford that kind of rich experience.

“Youth mainstreaming” therefore means *consistent, committed youth-adult cooperation at every level*. Getting it right can take several stages of “rewriting” the integration plan together; a willingness to learn from experiences and adopt new approaches is a key quality of successful ventures. (Hipkind, 2005)

4.3 Youth-Led Development (YLD)

Approaches to youth engagement in community development often take place within the larger community through youth programmes run by youth-serving agencies and institutions such as cities, schools, community centers, service clubs or churches, to name a few. Though well-intentioned and effective to a certain degree, these programmes fall short of the full engagement of youth – most often reaching only rung 6 of Hart’s ladder: “adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people.” Though it is recognized by many youth practitioners that peer-to-peer programming, and sometimes youth-led programming, is an effective way of giving youth true ownership of an issue and thus engaging them fully, very few actually do so.

This is not to say that the youth-serving programmes that are used by these agencies are not effective – they clearly are. They are responsible for engaging the majority of youth globally. Taking a youth-led development approach, however, could enhance their effectiveness. More information must be provided to these agencies so they can begin to practice peer-to-peer and adult mentorship education and training. This will require the training of staff in youth-led methodologies, and the changing of policies to facilitate youth involvement in developing and designing the programmes.

For example, in Vancouver, Canada, the Parks Board became very concerned that youth were becoming less and less physically active, and that they were not using the amenities targeted to them, such as skating rinks and pools. The Parks Board developed a programme, entitled Get Out! (City of Vancouver, 2007), using a youth-led strategy of peer-to-peer programming for youth engagement. Get Out! staff consulted with a youth council from a local recreation centre about their school skating rink that students rarely used. They suggested that if the recreation centre were to extend its hours to late-night skating, and hire a youth DJ from the school to perform, their attendance would go up. The challenges were that the school had banned dances and late-night events because of a shooting of a youth at the school. With a small budget, the staff at the school rink took a risk and modified their policies and practices to accommodate the youths' requests, and engaged the youth council to host the events. After making the changes, the numbers of youth involved in skating skyrocketed. Skating provided a positive alternative to other nighttime activities that had become common among students, including vandalism, violence and drinking of alcohol. (Solorzano, 2006)

Youth engagement in programme design with local institutions is one form of youth-led development, but another is the recognition and support of youth-led agencies. Youth organize themselves in small Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that serve groups from local communities to large multi-national youth-led agencies with upwards of 150,000 constituents. In Nairobi, a survey done at the One Stop Youth Resource Centre in late 2006 found that there were more than 100 youth-led agencies who were either interested or currently networked through the centre. (Wilkinson, 2006) These agencies dealt with everything from empowering girls and young women to theatre, to the support of street youth. The phenomenon of youth organizing is globally ubiquitous and demonstrates the ability of youth to be not only leaders of tomorrow, but also agents of positive change today.

“For your country,

If you plan for a year – sow paddy

If you plan for a decade – plant trees

If you plan for a future – nurture youth”

Proverb quoted in National Youth Policy of India, 1992

4.4 It's all about TRUST – Youth Mainstreaming and Youth Led Development

In both their private and public lives, youth need the ability to be agents of change, to organize their effort in pursuit of goals. (Dreher, 1987)

Developing cities that work in the 21st century demands that individuals and groups be equipped with skills for planning and problem solving within organizational environments. There is a great need for people who can innovate, carry out initiatives and create effective solutions to problems while working with diverse people and institutional systems. (SCANS, 1991)

It is important to consider that the pursuit of inclusive planning processes is not solely about building the experience base for young people – it is also about shifting organizational and governmental attitudes and policies to approach decision-making with youth as a routine practice. Researcher Sheridan Bartlett describes the objective in her recent article, “Integrating Children’s Rights into Municipal Action”: “What is needed is a deeper and broader change in local attitudes towards children and youth that begins to work like yeast throughout a city, raising awareness so that it becomes a matter of business as usual to think in terms of the rights of younger citizens”. (Bartlett, 2005)

There are many organizational benefits of having young people involved in urban planning and development activities, including more effective and context-sensitive problem solving, leadership, communication methods and planning processes. The challenge organizations face today is not whether

they can meaningfully engage young people; rather, it is whether they are ready to embrace the challenge of collective change that is necessary to move away from working in isolation on individual mandates to working together with all stakeholders. An integrated system with a shared vision to adapt practices as needed will be responsive and respectful to youth.

A shared vision for a sustainable future must be built on individuals' vision of society. What this means for decision-makers is that the vision must not be created by them alone; rather, the vision must be created through interaction with individuals living and working in communities. In the next section, we focus on practical means of youth engagement in sustainable urban development, using examples of good practice within the UN system but also, and more importantly, within systems of local and national urban decision-making.

Youth are not the only ones who derive benefits from engaging in development work, but researchers are now stressing that measuring community outcomes will remain difficult until young people become regular contributors to decision-making contexts across multiple organizations and agencies. As more systems and organizations build youth governance into their operating philosophy in the future, a critical mass of expertise will grow and eventually communities will experience a cultural shift.

4.4.1 Peer-to-Peer and Mentorship

Whether achieved through youth peer-to-peer relationships, or youth/adult mentorship, the creation of trust between partners is key to the success of youth-led development and mainstreaming. These partnerships make up the core team from which a programme, project and youth-led agency is built. A key way to engage youth is through the involvement of their peers in peer-to-peer education or training.

“Peer-to-peer” refers to youth educating or training other youth. Peer-to-peer methods have often been used in drug education, dealing with youth involved in the law, or youth who are at risk of becoming vulnerable to unemployment, poverty, leaving school, or other problems that may affect their future opportunities. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention states that peer-to-peer education is:

... the use of same age or same background educators to convey educational messages to a target group. Peer educators work by endorsing “healthy” norms, beliefs and behaviors within their own peer group or “community”, and challenging those that are “unhealthy”.
(Macdonald, 2001)

Peer-to-peer education is successful because it builds on the shared culture of youth and their local experience, and is given in a non-judgmental way. Information is more likely to be seen as credible if it is consistent with and relevant to the culture of a target group (Coggans & Watson, 1995; Gonzalez, 1990; Mundy, 1997).

Youth-led Development goes beyond peer-to-peer education, moving on to peer-to-peer designed and implemented programmes, such as the recently held the UN HABITAT Global Partnership Initiative for Urban Youth Development (GPI) Environmental Entrepreneurship Programme in Nairobi. These programmes build on the strengths of peer education, but in addition have a peer-designed and implemented programme. (UN HABITAT, 2005). Key to peer-to-peer work is mentorship.

Mentorship is a structured and trusting relationship between an adult or older youth and a young person in which the mentor provides guidance, support and encouragement to the mentee. Mentoring can help youth achieve anything from finding a career that interests them to getting better grades at

school, experiencing new social activities, and learning essential life skills. Mentors can help youth find work experience, or if they are business mentors, they can help youth learn more about the organizations and professional resources needed to succeed in that area. A mentor is someone youth can talk to in a non-judgmental way.⁴

Mentors in youth-led development often play the role of partners in programme and organizational development. For example, in the GPI Environmental Entrepreneurship programme (EEP) a team of adult mentors and youth peer leaders was created to design, implement and evaluate the programme. The adult mentors were individuals who had worked in the field of entrepreneurship and youth programme development. The mentors' role was not to design the programme by themselves but to work with the youth, gaining insight into youth culture and the reality of work for a youth in Nairobi, while sharing their experience with programme design and development. The mentors, youth peer educators and youth participants rated the youth/mentor team as highly valuable to the programme.

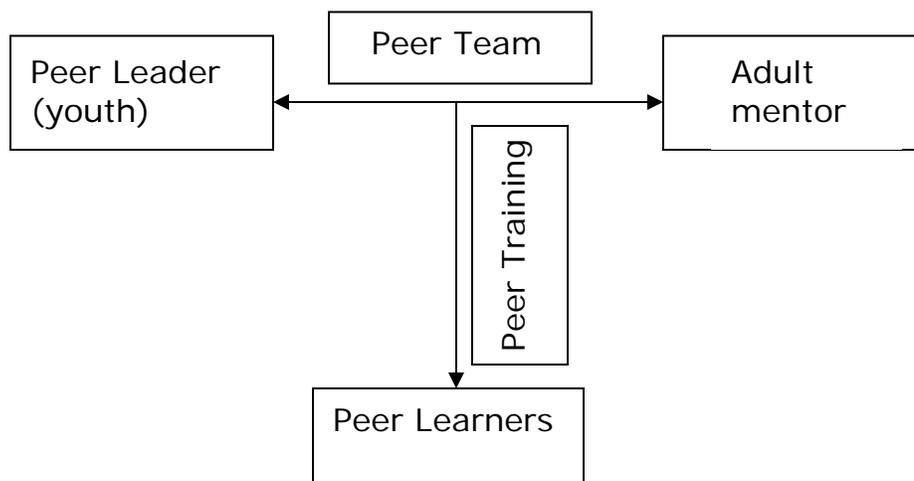


Figure 1: Diagram of the GPI *Environmental Entrepreneur Peer Team*

⁴ Researchers at the Search Institute (www.search-institute.org) identified "adult role models," "supportive relationship with three or more other adults," and "adults in community valuing youth" as essential to youth's health and well-being (Benson, et al., 1998).

EEP followed the above model, with **peer leaders (youth)** partnered with **adult mentors**, making up a **peer training team**. Youth-led programmes and projects often take many forms and use many different methods. The following sections will outline some key tools for youth engagement, and examples of youth-led programmes.

4.5 Factors for success – Youth-Led and Mainstreaming strategies

People are driven to engage in development by their passion and energy, regardless of age. Recognizing young people's energy as integral to development is the first step in the engagement process. This underlying assumption is our starting point in outlining factors for success in both youth mainstreaming and youth-led development.

Mainstreaming success

Comprehensive systems of engagement in organizations and communities, together with committed leadership and good governance, pave the way for meaningful youth participation in decision-making and programme design, implementation and evaluation. (World Bank, 2005) Engaging youth in governance and supporting them in youth-led activities involves implementing particular strategies for success.

In regard to mainstreaming youth, *What Works in Youth Participation: Case Studies from around the World* (2002) offers the following as indicators (Golombek, 2002):

- ✓ Prioritizing institutionalized youth participation in settings and practices that young people experience on a regular basis, such as the household, schools, and local government.
- ✓ Supporting youth organizations that maximize the space for democratic participation, such as issue clubs, sports teams, or student government.

- ✓ Fostering youth involvement in governance structures and processes, including local government, chambers of commerce, NGO boards, and associations.
- ✓ Stimulating a real public dialogue about children and young people's participation at the community, national, and global levels (57).

These indicators are focused on the engagement of youth in already existing organizations and/or governmental structures. According to Hart's ladder, this approach would fit on rungs 6 or 8 – "adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people"; or "young people and adults share decision-making" – incorporating a direct role of youth within an existing adult system.

Youth-led development is typically evaluated with a different set of indicators and is less government and policy oriented and more front-line and community development oriented. UN-HABITAT has taken a lead in developing indicators for youth-led development through the development of its GPI programme. GPI partners from four cities in East Africa came together in Kampala, Uganda, in May 2007 and identified five different indicators of youth-led programmes:

1. Youth must define their own personal and community development goals and objectives.
2. Youth must have a social and physical space to participate in development.
3. A structure of adult and peer-to-peer mentorship must exist.
4. Youth must be role models in helping other youth to engage in development.⁵

⁵ A fifth indicator: "Youth must be integrated into local and national development programs and frameworks" was developed but is pertinent primarily to the GPI context.

These characteristics are key to the development of successful youth-led programmes or organizations.

4.5.1 Mainstreaming and Youth-Led Development: Two paths to youth inclusion and engagement

Though the indicators for youth mainstreaming and youth-led development are similar and complimentary, there are subtle yet profound differences in how youth are engaged and the possible outcomes of that engagement. Youth mainstreaming often refers to youth engagement in already established structures (i.e., local and national governments or youth councils). The outcomes of youth mainstreaming are often focused on the meaningful participation of youth in dialogue on policy and political issues important to them and their community, in for example a local youth council. Youth mainstreaming is based on the need for strong adult/youth relationships, which may bring about both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, policy and policy frameworks can be affected (i.e., a policy that supports ongoing youth involvement in planning processes, or a policy that supports the incorporation of children and youth input into the development or redevelopment of school grounds). Sometimes these policy changes encourage institutions to give resources to support the actualization of the policy. On the negative side, they can lessen youth voice and impact because of the need to moderate the youth position so it will be accepted by the institution with which they are engaging. In the next section, you will find the case of the Hampton Youth Planners from the USA as a good example of youth mainstreaming.

Youth-led development is often linked to the creation of separate youth organizations or projects, including independent programmes, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).⁶

⁶ For this paper the difference between a CBO and an NGO is the level of official, i.e. governmental, recognition. CBOs are often not registered with the government and

The outcomes of youth-led processes are more community development and/or advocacy oriented, engaging youth in projects that directly address issues such as HIV/AIDS or improving the environment. Youth-led development is based on the need for youth independence, which as with youth mainstreaming may bring about positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, youth effect change through community action based on the perspectives of the young people involved. These actions are solutions-oriented (i.e., cleaning up a degraded area or educating youth on HIV/AIDS, and sometimes influencing policy and policy makers). On the negative side, youth-led development in representing youth opinion is often advocacy-oriented and can cause conflict between institutions and youth. In the next section, you will find the Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association (KAYA) in Vancouver, Canada, as a good example of youth-led development.

There are strong links between the two strategies – one strategy can lead to the other. For example, the One Stop Youth Resource Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, would be considered a concrete outcome of a youth mainstreaming strategy by the City of Nairobi, UN-HABITAT, civil society and youth-led CBOs to address the need “to develop and optimize opportunities for youth participation and growth” in Nairobi. (Nairobi City Council, 2008) Yet, the outcome of the launch of the One Stop was the creation of a space where youth-led agencies flourished. The utilization of these two strategies has created both a dynamic and sometimes conflict-rife space, with those promoting the youth-led strategy that advocates for what youth want coming into conflict with those promoting a mainstreaming strategy, which often does not represent what youth want. The success to date of the One Stop, which is now being modeled across East Africa, would lead one to believe that a new model that incorporates both mainstreaming and

have a lesser degree of formal structure. NGOs are often formally registered with the government, and thus a more formal governance structure.

youth-led development is emerging. This could be the topic of future papers on this subject.

In looking at the different indicators for mainstreaming and youth-led development, our analysis reveals specific factors for success regarding youth engagement in urban development processes, which fall into four main categories: *broad-based support, resource allocation, and interpersonal connections*.

In the next section, we break these categories down and explore practical possibilities for implementation. We then describe four organizations that are working with young people, two from developing countries and two from developed countries; two dealing with mainstreaming of youth and two that are youth-led agencies. We seek to provide contextual perspectives on the results and commitments that can be achieved by engaging young people as stakeholders and leaders in all development systems.

5.0 Implementation of the strategies – Factors for success

As mentioned above, for youth-led and mainstreaming strategies to be successful, efforts require evidence of *broad-based support, resource allocation and interpersonal connections*. These conditions are a stated ideal, and are not all present in most situations. A survey done recently by the Growing up in Cities project of municipalities in Canada showed that while there was a strong desire to engage youth, there was also a lack of resources and training for staff and often a lack of political will. (Power, 2003) Nonetheless, there is a growing understanding of the need to engage youth, as demonstrated by the recent World Bank reports that focus on youth, and an intention to channel more resources towards creating these conditions.

5.1 Broad-based support – Youth as assets

The support of youth as leaders is clearly one of the key conditions for youth-led development and mainstreaming to exist. This starts with the view that youth need to be seen as assets in the development process. All stakeholders involved in development should be aware of the different dimensions of youth participation – from consulting youth on their opinion to supporting them to run their own programmes – and understand that they are important development partners that are involved in many sectors, and that they have leadership capacities that need to be recognized and nourished. In the GUIC study, a majority of city respondents agreed that youth should be involved in municipal affairs ranging from budgeting to consultations on issues impacting youth. (IICRD, 2005)

The following are four *broad-based support* conditions for youth-led development and youth mainstreaming that create an enabling environment:

1. Organizational understanding of youth involvement
2. Youth-affirmative policies and performance indicators adopted by organization
3. Funding support for youth programmes
4. Methods for accessing decision-makers

For both youth-led and youth mainstreaming strategies, there is a need for human and financial support, a positive policy environment, and access to decision-makers so as to effect long-term change.

5.2 Interpersonal connections and contacts

Interpersonal connections and contacts are important for any venture, but are even more critical for successful youth-led and mainstreaming strategies. A characteristic of marginalized groups, whether they are youth or women, is their challenge in creating positive relationships with decision-makers. For

youth, the challenge often results from the negative perception of youth in society, because of their representation in the mainstream media, (Gigli, 2004) but also because youth have comparatively fewer opportunities than adults to access and develop relationships with influential adults.

The following are three *interpersonal connection* conditions for youth-led and mainstreaming, respectively, that create an enabling environment:

1. Mentors to support youth within the organization
2. Reflection and evaluation
3. Orientation and training for adult and youth staff and youth participants

For both youth-led and mainstreaming strategies, there is a need for mentorship by adults, time to reflect and evaluate on accomplishments and challenges, and training and orientation for staff and volunteers. The different environments in which the two strategies unfold mean that youth-led agencies have less support in developing and implementing policies and undertaking meaningful reflection and evaluation. A study on youth-driven agencies supports this contention, with few youth-driven agencies having developed policies in the area of human resources or volunteer management. (Ragan, 97)

Youth mainstreaming strategies often provide more access to mentors, evaluation resources and training. At times, though, such benefits can come with strings attached, as the youth often don't have control over the budgets for the resources they need, and this can mean that they either don't happen or the training is not applicable to their priorities.

5.3 Resource allocation

Human and financial resources are important for both strategies, and again, because networks and experience may be limited, resources are sometime

hard to come by. Funding is typically directly linked to the mentorship and support of adults.

The following are three *resource allocation* conditions that create an enabling environment for youth-led and mainstreaming strategies:

1. Internal funding for programmes and projects
2. Office and programme space within organization
3. Resources for documentation, monitoring and evaluation

For both youth-led and mainstreaming strategies, there is a need for core (operating) and programming funding that pays for the office and programme space and resources for documentation, monitoring and evaluation. The institutional environment of a youth mainstreaming programme means that accessing resources is often not done by the youth directly, but by organization staff members. Office and programme space is often provided for. The upside of this is that youth within an institutional environment have more resources, and are thus sometimes able to do more than those working in youth-led agencies. The downside is that there are certain things they cannot do – often in areas that involve advocacy.

Conversely, youth in a youth-led environment have more freedom to advocate for certain issues, but have fewer resources to do so. Space is one of the key issues for youth-led agencies – without it they are severely constricted in undertaking community projects and programmes, and are thus hindered in fulfilling their mandates.

As the above review of the factors of success for youth-led and mainstreaming strategies suggests, both strategies work within different environments and achieve different outcomes. Without means of mainstreaming youth into institutions, youth in the long run would be unable to effectively engage and influence those things in the domain of institutions

such as policy and issues of governance important to them. Without means of supporting youth-led development, youth would be less able to effectively engage in local development and actions that directly address issues of importance to them.

What is self-evident, yet challenging to current modes of thinking, is that the ideal situation is to have youth-led development and mainstreaming happening at the same time, both complimenting one another to achieve development goals. For this new strategy to happen, commitment must come from mainstream institutions, youth-led agencies, and youth in targeted communities. There is a risk of tensions between the two strategies harming the relationships of the groups involved. More study is required to discover how both strategies can better be brought together to create an effective and accepted model in a variety of contexts.

6.0 Case study analyses

The case studies that follow are analyzed using each of the factors for success described above. Each programme exhibits several factors for success; challenges and obstacles are also apparent in the absence of specific attributes.

The cases were chosen by the authors of this paper based on our knowledge and experience and are provided for discussion and further analysis; they are not intended to comprise a representative sampling of the youth engagement efforts currently active in different parts of the world. Readers are encouraged to share their own programmatic and governmental experiences and knowledge to contribute to a greater understanding of what works and does not work in authentic youth engagement and mainstreaming activities.

6.1 Hampton Youth Planners (Hampton, Virginia, USA)

The city of Hampton, Virginia, USA, has become a model for youth engagement in urban decision-making. Since undergoing a community-wide strategic planning process to create proactive approaches to youth-friendly neighborhoods in the early 1990s, Hampton has developed “a comprehensive system of youth engagement in the community, and a local government willing to support meaningful roles for young people in decision-making”. (Carlson, 2005)

The city’s success in mainstreaming youth ideas and concerns across its decision-making structure is the result of identifying youth as resources, seeking genuine youth input into planning processes, developing cooperative strategies for youth skill building, training young people in group process and project management skills, and giving young people the space and time to contribute their ideas to ongoing city planning and development. Caring adults have also been instrumental in Hampton’s success in creating a multigenerational decision-making structure.

6.1.1 Broad-based support

Youth-affirmative policies and performance measures

The Hampton City Council formed a Coalition for Youth as its first step toward full youth engagement in 1990. The Coalition, comprised of community leaders, recruited a Youth Task Force of 25 young people and initiated a two-year strategic planning process with the aim of creating a more youth-friendly city. The youth and adults worked together to create a “youth agenda” for the city, and the City Council adopted the group’s policy statement, *A Community Commitment to Youth*. The policy statement states in part that:

All young people in Hampton are entitled to be seen, heard and respected as citizens of the community. They deserve to be prepared, active participants in community service, government, public policy or other decision-making which affects their lives and their well-being (Carlson, pg214).

The city adopted commitments to youth in six key areas: honoring diversity, care and nurturing, safety, health, education, and partnership in the community. To help the city carry out its commitments, the Coalition for Youth contracted with a youth-serving agency, Alternatives, Inc., that began training neighborhood groups of young people on how to engage in the city's decision-making processes around neighborhood development.

Models for accessing decision-makers

In 1996, young people participating in the redevelopment process for one of the city's neighborhoods so impressed the Director of Planning that he "decided they deserved a formal and ongoing role in all future planning efforts" (Carlson, pg214). The Hampton Youth Planner Initiative began with the recruitment of two teenagers and is now a regular part of the city's Planning Department. Every year, two high school students – one male and one female – are recruited and selected by their peers to work 15 hours per week after school in the Planning Department, reporting to city officials and to the Hampton Youth Commission. The Youth Planners have played an instrumental role in the development of the city's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and other important strategies, as well as concrete outcomes. Writes Cindy Carlson, director of the Hampton Youth Coalition,

The Youth Planners meet weekly with adult staff in a meeting that over the years has become a true partnership; all parties feel equal investment to the success of the Hampton Youth Council and share in the decision-making as well as the responsibilities (Carlson, pg 218).

The entire decision-making structure of Hampton incorporates youth engagement as a matter of course. “Six boards and commissions – from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to the Citizens’ Unity Commission – incorporate young people as advisors or voting members,” writes Carlson, “thus ensuring that the youth agenda has a voice in important city issues” (Carlson, pg 218).

6.1.2 Resource allocation

Provision of adequate funding

The Youth Planners are given a portion of the Planning Department’s budget for their work and are paid a stipend. Writes Carlson,

As established in the original meeting between Youth Planners and City Council in 1996, each year Council appropriates \$40,000 with which the commissioners can fund community-based youth-led initiatives that further their goals. Each year the Youth Commission’s Appropriations Committee determines the types of grants, up to \$2,500, it wants to fund. Over the years – through establishing criteria, soliciting and reviewing proposals, and monitoring grant awards – they have appropriated over \$100,000 in support of projects ranging from youth conferences to bike rodeos (Carlson, pg218).

Provision of appropriate physical space

The Youth Planners work alongside adult planners in the Planning Department.

6.1.3 Interpersonal connections

The Hampton Youth Planners benefit from *quality relationships* and opportunities for reflection and evaluation with their peers, adult planners and community members. They have clear *learning objectives* in the form of the community plan and other planning priorities on which they provide

youth perspectives; and they are well *oriented and trained* within the system they serve. “Adult roles resemble coaches or guides,” writes Carlson. “They add their experience and expertise to discussion while encouraging young people to take on leadership roles” (Carlson, pg 221).

Meaningful action

The Youth Planners are working for their city in a real, sustainable and fully integrated manner. Young people serve as planners, organizers, advisers, policy-makers, advocates, citizens, and vital change agents in the city. The city of Hampton has developed a strong system for youth engagement in decision-making at all levels; its success depends upon “strong youth and adult partnerships and ongoing attention to the importance of adults viewing young people as resources” (Carlson, pg 221).

For more information about the Hampton Youth Planner Initiative, see the Hampton Coalition for Youth website: www.hampton.gov/foryouth; or Carlson’s article in the special issue of *Children, Youth and Environments* on governance: www.colorado.edu/journals/cye.

6.2 One Stop Youth Information Resource Center Model

The One Stop Youth Information Resource Centre Model has its roots in a partnership started among the City Council of Nairobi, UN-HABITAT, civil society, and youth living in Nairobi. The “One Stop” was launched in August 2003 with an overall aim to provide career and employment support and advocacy services to urban youth, aged 15 to 24, residing in Nairobi – especially those most vulnerable to poverty, crime, and victimization. To develop and optimize opportunities for youth participation, involvement and growth, the project offers activities and services in the following areas:

- ✓ Employment and entrepreneurship
- ✓ Reproductive health and HIV/ AIDS
- ✓ Drugs and substance abuse, counseling and rehabilitation referrals

- ✓ Governance and advocacy
- ✓ Information and communication technologies
- ✓ Environment

The Junior Council of Nairobi has its secretariat at One Stop. This council of young people supports the provision of opportunities for youth to acquire a greater knowledge of local government structures. Together with One Stop, they assist the city council in solving problems and accomplishing goals for youth living in the city. Each member from the council works with community-based organizations in his or her respective community.

The centre receives inquiries from all types of people: youth and their parents as drop-in visitors, regular users, and referrals. Since its opening until 2006 One Stop has registered 750 job seekers; 125 young people have been accessing the entrepreneurship programme, 672 underwent various training sessions, 844 underwent various counseling sessions, 30 of them with serious personal needs and who needed urgent guidance.

6.2.1 Broad-based support

Everyone within the organization knows how he/she can involve youth within the framework of their organization's policy and field of action

The Centre staff, volunteers and partner organizations have been trained widely in the area of youth engagement by receiving technical training sessions. Once trained, they educate their peers on employment related issues, environment, and information technologies, to name a few.

6.2.2 Resource allocation

Provision of appropriate physical space

As is the case with many youth-led organizations in the city of Nairobi, there generally is a lack of financial resources for One Stop. Yet, One Stop has managed its programmes and services over the past three years with consistent support from its various partners. The City Council of Nairobi has

provided full-time staff to the Centre for coordination, outreach and administration. UN-HABITAT has provided office space within its Partners & Youth Section for volunteers to access the internet and local and international phone lines, and to gain direct access to United Nations staff and project directors for advice and mentorship. Different UN agencies have funded numerous "celebration and awareness" activities at One Stop coinciding with major events (World Environment Day, International Youth Day, and the like).

Training partners, such as Companionship of Workers Association, offer free trainings and job referrals at the Centre for Nairobi youth. Most of the targeted youth live in informal settlements. Hope Worldwide offers daily voluntary counseling and testing (HIV/AIDS) services at no cost. The One Stop has also supported many youth-led initiatives in the city of Nairobi.

6.2.3 Interpersonal connection

Existence of positive communication channels

One Stop staff, volunteers and partner organizations work together to provide support, opportunities and education to not only youth, but also to women, civil society, and community-based organizations. Volunteers have participated in exhibitions, important functions and hosting of international days. Youth have held on-site support sessions and provide free HIV testing services; information is disseminated to youth in their neighborhoods by young volunteers at the Centre and through written updates (SMS messages, newsletter and emails).

One Stop is an interesting example of young people motivated not by personal gain, but by the creation of systemic change. This Centre, after four years running with very few financial resources, has been successful in changing the way young people see their environment. Recently, there have been challenges such as the possible relocation of the centre, and conflicts between the youth and the city staff. The resolution of these issues is still

ongoing, but the mere existence of the site has encouraged other cities in East Africa through the GPI programme to replicate its successes.

6.3 Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association (Vancouver, Canada)

The overall vision of the Knowledge Aboriginal Youth Association (KAYA) is to enhance effective ways of maximizing opportunities for urban Aboriginal youth to become active and informed advocates within their community. KAYA's mandate is to, as a youth led organization, advocate for aboriginal youth voice, representation, and participation in decision-making processes. The organization encourages youth voice and the development of valuable communication and decision-making skills, enhancing the inherent right to free, prior and informed consent. KAYA has offered programmes in the areas of arts, empowerment of young women and girls, and advocacy. Some examples are:

- ✓ *Kwayastut Multidisciplinary Art Studio*: Three main United Nation Millennium Development Goal programmes are delivered through the art studio, which include a mural project, a photo exhibition project and a documentary video project.
- ✓ *Friendship Underground*: Classes are operating to educate and train marginalized youth in the physical and cultural elements and influences of urban hip-hop culture, break-dancing and the synergies of movement disciplines including gymnastics, martial arts, and cultural dance.
- ✓ *KAYA Recording Studio* provides aboriginal youth mentoring opportunities for developing artistic, music and audio performance skills. Their project known as the "We Team" coordinates recording projects through the studio. The We Team recently released its inaugural album project.
- ✓ *End the Silence of Violence*: This programme works to empower and increase the leadership of Indigenous young women and girls. The programme has three components; consultations, trainings

and a media campaign on addressing issues of violence that young women and girls experience.

KAYA participates globally through active partnerships with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), Partners and Youth Section UN-HABITAT and the International Indigenous Youth Network.

6.3.1 Broad-based support

Youth are understood as assets to development

Internally, KAYA's operational structure is a youth-led structure which partners with adults and elders, who work together to support one another in addressing individual and group challenges. They share knowledge and experience, and provide a mechanism for reciprocal mentoring. Young people are represented at all levels in the organizational structure and in levels of decision making on issues that affect them. Externally, KAYA advocates for mentorship in all levels of community systems (organizations and decision-making bodies) so that Aboriginal youth can build their capacity to participate in processes that affect them.

6.3.2 Resource allocation

Provision of adequate funding and consistent budget lines

KAYA is delivering and supporting project funding to local community youth projects focused on developing inclusive environments. Currently, KAYA receives support from the federal and provincial governments and the city of Vancouver. The project hires knowledgeable indigenous youth: three full-time and two part-time youth mentors. The staff provides training workshops, information sharing for organizations, facilitation for community events, youth groups, advisory councils, and board committees, and will attend meetings relevant to youth issues.

Provision of appropriate physical space within the organization

On a daily basis, KAYA provides an informal drop-in space, meeting facilities, and individual peer mentoring and support for youth on site. KAYA has two locations within the inner city of Vancouver. Increasing youth engagement is accomplished by offering cost free training, workshops and incentives. As was identified in the youth led indicators from the GPI programme, space that youth can call theirs is key to youth-led projects.

6.3.3 Interpersonal connections

Positive communication channels

On the local level, KAYA is the principal leader of a working group that connects urban Aboriginal youth within the 21 municipal regions of Greater Vancouver in order to better collaborate amongst themselves in addressing social, economic, and political arenas. Through KAYA, young urban youth advise and connect with municipal police departments, aboriginal councils, education bodies, and shelter forums.

Reflection and evaluation

Provincially, the organization serves as the lead youth organization within the Vancouver Coastal Aboriginal Planning Committee, working on a path of developing “child and family authority” into Aboriginal control. KAYA has consulted with the Ministry on Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation on the development of a Provincial Aboriginal Youth Engagement strategy, as well as with the former Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women Services regarding youth participation and inclusion.

Nationally, KAYA represents youth engagement within the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (NUAS). This body works to create partnerships, including federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal governments, which work to address issues of urban poverty, homelessness, housing, and economic development for urban Aboriginal communities throughout 12 Canadian cities.

Meaningful action

Working in partnership with many diverse development organizations, KAYA is able to provide aboriginal cultural sensitivity trainings to elected officials, enforcement personnel, schoolteachers, support workers, teachers, social workers, and student groups. Growth in the organization's membership, staff, programmes, and services demonstrates the value that the city places in their contributions. Young people involved in the work are rewarded through quality relationships, sustainable impact on the city's infrastructure, and ongoing employment. KAYA values youth and reflects youth-led development by allowing them to design and drive forward their ideas and advocates for their ideas to be implemented at all levels.

7.0 Conclusion

We began this paper, and our group inquiry, with the question: how can youth best be engaged at the local, national and international level to further their communities' and their own development priorities? In the first part of the paper, we demonstrated that there is a need to meaningfully engage youth around the globe, especially in cities in the developing world, where youth comprise the dominant and growing demographic, and where they are facing daunting quality of life challenges. Our inquiry led us to the research literature, where we learned that engaged youth are healthier than marginalized youth, and that authentic engagement allows youth to contribute to the accomplishment of local and global targets, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Yet, given all of this information, we are left with an even more pressing question: why is authentic youth engagement still the exception rather than the rule? The answer may lie in the fact that authentic youth engagement requires concerted efforts and innovative partnerships that remain outside the realm of recognized funding and institutional structures. Our analysis reveals three trends that promise to positively impact change in this regard.

One, some international agencies such as UN-HABITAT are developing, using and committing to strategies and policies that authentically engage youth. Two, the place where youth engagement actions are most effective is often at the local level, and since most people around the world now live in cities – and youth often comprise the majority of urban populations – local government and civil society must take heed of young citizens' priorities. Third, more strategies for engaging youth are coming from and directly involve youth, in the form of youth mainstreaming, a practice that involves a partnership between youth and adults within the context of institutions such as local, national and international governments and youth serving agencies; and youth-led development, where youth are organizing themselves and getting the work done.

Youth-led development and mainstreaming are key strategies. We believe that there is a growing movement to recognize the key role youth can and should play in advancing the sustainable development of our global community. The recognition of this need, as demonstrated by the recent reports by the World Bank (World Bank, 2005), and the call to action led by UN-HABITAT, local and national governments (UN HABITAT, 2004), underline this growing movement. It is now the responsibility of these agencies, and youth and youth serving agencies, to keep the momentum moving forward, and to develop and implement the strategies that will fully engage young people as productive and effective citizens.

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The EYA is a global agency focused on the promotion of healthy physical and social environments for youth. The EYA, based out of Vancouver, Canada, has for the past 17 years worked on engaging youth at a local level in community service programs. In the last 5 years EYA has begun The two key staff member from EYA who have worked on this document are Doug Ragan, Senior Advisor and Karun Koernig, Senior Manager. Doug received a fellowship to undertake his PhD in Architecture and Planning at the University of Colorado, and works as a Youth and Community Development Specialist with the Children, Youth and Environments Center. Karun is the project manager for the UN HABITAT Urban Entrepreneurship Program and one of

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