THE WORLD URBAN FORUM 2006

Vancouver Working Group Discussion Paper

The Youth Friendly

City

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Turning Ideas into Action

In preparation for the 2006 United Nations World Urban Forum (WUF), the Vancouver Working Group (VWG) was created as a partnership of public and private agencies and civil society. It was mandated to initiate a series of research inquiries resulting in the *Vancouver Working Group Discussion Papers for the World Urban Forum.* These papers were prepared by members of the VWG with relevant experience and well-developed resources. It is hoped that these papers will contribute to the development of a thematic framework for WUF 2006 by articulating the concept and content of urban sustainability.

WUF will focus on urbanization as an all-encompassing global phenomenon and attempt to recommend effective actions to achieve a sustainable process of global urban transformation by balancing social, economic, environmental and political goals: *Turning Ideas into Action.*

The Vancouver Working Group Discussion Papers for the World Urban Forum are open-ended segments of a conceptual whole. Each of them will strive towards sustainability thereby transforming urban life into a productive, inclusive and environmentally balanced range of activities. These segments taken together will characterize sustainable human settlements. Sustainable urbanization can only be achieved through a mosaic of sustainable components that will add up to more than the sum of their parts.

All papers received comments from independent peer reviewers and this contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

This paper is part of *Turning Ideas into Action,* a themed series created in preparation for the 2006 World Urban Forum. Together, this series forms a mosaic that sheds light on a common focus: the city. On a global scale, cities have become the dominant form of human settlement, socially, economically, environmentally and politically. The papers begin to examine how cities can continue to be dynamic and inclusive places in which to live and thrive. By illustrating explorations of the city with powerful stories of promising practices, the papers emphasize the assets from which cities draw their strength, and highlight dynamic participatory processes in action. Research for each paper draws on extensive experience in planning and managing cities. Selected lessons provide knowledge to achieve locally relevant solutions and supportive policies at the regional, national and global levels. They demonstrate the complexities of how cities evolve and transform, and challenge assumptions that are often taken for granted. Finally, the papers encourage the reader to view the world from different perspectives and discover successful and innovative solutions appropriate to their relevant conditions.

WUF 2006 will build on Canada's historic leadership in bringing the UN Conference on Human Settlements to Vancouver in 1976. It will also benefit from Canadian experience in improving human settlements at home and abroad. The 1976 UN meeting pioneered a participatory process of member nations and NGO's, and created a worldwide focus for human settlements issues through the establishment of the UN Centre for Human Settlements in Nairobi, now known as UN-HABITAT. WUF 2006 is part of an historic trajectory of UN Conferences and represents the 30th anniversary of HABITAT '76. These papers are intended to initiate an informed dialogue on the scope and scale of the evolving urban agenda through *Turning Ideas into Action* locally, regionally, nationally and across the world.

This paper is one of a series of discussion papers prepared in anticipation of the World Urban Forum 2006.

The papers in this series include:

The Capable City

The International Centre for Sustainable Cities

This paper examines non-traditional forms of governance with an emphasis on consensus that has emerged in a Canadian context and responds to three questions. Are there models of cooperation across jurisdictions that might provide lessons for city regions that do not require mergers? Are there models for management of global common goods – such as watersheds, that do not involve legislative powers? Are there models based on consensus and voluntary agreements across sectors that show promise for influencing decision making related to sustainability? Three Canadian cases are presented: the Greater Vancouver Regional District; the Fraser Basin Council; and the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy. The models are assessed using UN-HABITAT's criteria for good governance. The findings, along with pertinent literature and experience on governance and capacity building, yield observations and recommendations about their application to other cities.

The Ideal City

Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, University of British Columbia

This paper explores the history and force of ideal city planning and the related literary and visual genres of Utopian -- and Dystopian -- speculation. The Ideal City represents a highly significant aspect of human thought and endeavour, usually conceived in response to actual problems as well as intended to effect substantive improvement in the daily social lives of individual citizens. Linked to a thematic knowledge resource intended to establish an interactive website, this paper reviews the main constituents of the Ideal City tradition, examines its impact on the design of urban settlement, including across Canada and in Vancouver, and indicates how such conceptual approaches to the building of a better civic environment and society can contribute to the creation of more sustainable, habitable and civilized cities in the 21st century.

The Learning City

Simon Fraser University

The learning city is a city that approaches sustainable development as an ongoing educational process. This paper focuses particularly on the role of universities and colleges in the learning city, examining the different dimensions of sustainability education and best practices from British Columbia, across Canada and internationally. Lessons from this are applied to envisioning a new Centre for the Learning City in Vancouver's new Great Northern Way Campus.

The Livable City

The International Centre for Sustainable Cities

This paper is a case study of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) in Canada, the host region for the World Urban Forum 2006. Drawing on the literature on livable cities and the region's efforts to bring this concept into practice, the paper poses two central questions: What key factors affect the livability of a city and how does livability relate to sustainability? Livability is defined as "quality of life" as experienced by the residents within a city or region, and the paper concentrates on a case study of

planning for Greater Vancouver including the Livable Region Strategic Plan, the Sustainable Region Initiative, and the cities^{PLUS} 100-year vision for the GVRD. The paper provides lessons for other cities and regions, and concludes that for Greater Vancouver, livability, sustainability and resiliency are three intertwined elements that together will define the quality of life of current and future residents.

The Planning City

The Canadian Institute of Planners

This paper looks at sustainability as a dynamic, continuous process of sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences, and of learning through action. It contributes to this learning process by reviewing key trends and challenges that confront those responsible for planning cities in Canada and overseas. Examples of urban planning innovations and experimentations are drawn from a sample of cities and taken from the perspective of the urban planner who is usually a central actor in efforts to articulate, plan for and implement urban sustainability. The paper concludes with key findings, and offers direction about processes, structures and methods that could enhance the effort to achieve urban sustainability.

The Resilient City

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Government of British Columbia

This paper explores the resiliency of small Canadian communities dependent upon single resource industries by examining how they have coped with the economic and social pressures arising from the closure of their industries. It summarizes how they have managed their transition from communities existing to serve resource exploitation exclusively to communities based on a different, broader economy and suggests lessons from the Canadian experience that may be transferable to resource-based communities around the world.

The Secure City

Liu Institute for Global Issues, UBC

This paper focuses on three key issues: traditional pillars of urban security, threats and forces shaping cities in the 21st Century, and a research agenda to explore relationships between adaptive security, preventive security and human security. Action is called for to advance current concepts of capacity building, resilient design and adaptive planning. Integrated risk assessment that is responsive to community needs for prevention and precaution is recommended, and an enhanced role for individual responsibility and community participation to expand social capital is advocated. The Secure City sets a context for Canada's emerging national urban agenda and a policy framework for global strategies to improve human security in cities throughout the world.

The Youth Friendly City

The Environmental Youth Alliance

This paper explores what opportunities exist for the greater recognition of the rights and needs of children and youth in urban settings through a significantly enhanced role in urban governance and community building. By enabling children and youth to participate fully in their own development and environment, this paper demonstrates the potential among youth for building capacity, and for becoming insightful resources in developing strong and thriving local neighbourhoods and cities.

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Executive Summary

Child and youth engagement in action: The capacity of young people to create inclusive, healthy and vibrant cities.

I Purpose

A child and youth friendly city is one that encompasses all aspects of a child and youth's healthy development including self-efficacy, education, recreation, the experience of cultural harmony and a sense of connection to urban environments.

As this document will demonstrate, child and youth friendly policies are an effective tool to meeting the needs of ever-changing urban communities. Local governments that research, adapt, and utilize child and youth friendly policies invest in the long-term health and sustainability of their cities. Research indicates that when communities and local governments support the full and active participation of young people in their development, the benefits have a ripple effect, improving society as a whole.

This paper links current research, policy-making and successful participatory practices in Canada and globally to highlight the vital role of child and youth engagement in preserving the well-being of the world's children.

In so doing, this paper will demonstrate how young people are ideally situated to:

• address the practical applications of policy-making and planning concerning the

preservation and design of urban environments, such as creating-safe spaces for play, recreation, relationship-building and capacity building;

• educate peers on safety, health and wellness related matters, including issues of crime prevention, food security, and unemployment

• monitor and improve local access to natural resources and municipal infrastructures, including developing richer green spaces, responding to the impact of pollution and waste management and preserving sustainable energies.

Finally, we will discuss how local governments may better involve young people in every dimension of urban development -- including research, planning, programming, advocacy, project management, and decision-making -- as well as in advancing policy initiatives that strive to ensure equal access to the necessities of urban life.

II The dimensions of participation: Integrating research, policy, and practice

In addition to presenting current participatory research, we examine inspiring participatory programming involving young people locally, in Canada, and globally. These programs range from youth-driven community organizations and youth parliaments and shared-decision-making and informal consultative processes. While there are differences between developed and developing countries, particularly in terms of the magnitude and nature of the issues at stake, the experiences reflected in child and youth's participation are comparable. These cross-cutting challenges and insights are presented throughout the paper.

Through this process an effort was made to work collaboratively with multi-sectoral organizations across Canada and internationally. It is recognized that time constraints have forced us to limit the scope and diversity of child and youth-driven programming represented in this paper. Furthermore, though there is an emphasis on Canadian examples due to the location of the World Urban Forum (WUF), the intent is to have this paper open a more in-depth global dialogue leading up to and during the WUF. Children and youth make important contributions across many aspects of city life. This paper discusses child and youth issues and experiences under 4 'types' of cities:

1. Resilient city discusses how, in environments not always designed to enable their resilience, children and youth, not only survive stress, oppression, and adversity, but draw from their marginalization to improve their urban communities.

2. Secure city identifies children and youth threats to safety and security and presents the multiple prevention and intervention measures children and youth are engaging in to safeguard individual and community wellbeing.

3. Capable city focuses on child and youth participation in the context of local government.

4. Livable city chapter examines the involvement of child and youth in creating livable cities through five key issue-areas: water, transportation, food security and space, sustainable technology and innovation, and going 'glocal'.

Each section provides a series of recommendations for defining calls of actions to foster leadership in bringing forward local programs. Special focus is placed on policy and programs that can go to scale and be made more sustainable.

III The multiple benefits of child and youth engagement in urban governance

Young people bring creativity, energy, lived experience, as well as practical and localized knowledge to the creation of healthier cities. Moreover, engaged, resilient young people who mobilize in their communities develop resourcefulness, improve problem-solving skills, develop critical consciousness, experience greater autonomy, feel a greater sense of purpose and concern for social justice in and through their communities.

Young citizens, and especially marginalized youth, seek diverse modes of access to civic engagement and community participation. Decision-makers must recognize that a commitment to collaborative processes of engagement may be outside of conventional modes of civic engagement. Policy-makers may have to play catch-up to the critical changes young citizens are making locally to improve their communities. Conversely, participatory processes proven effective by policy makers and researchers may not be communicated to young people, nor to the agencies that represent them. We need to integrate research, policy, and field-level practices to support child and youth engagement in formal institutions as well as to advance sustainable, informal participatory processes.

IV Conclusions

1. Building & Integrating practice, research, and policy

Many initiatives already exist to involve children and youth in local, regional national and international governance, with some key recommendations for governments on how to meaningfully involve youth. There needs to be a more systematic approach to documenting, evaluating, integrating and replicating successful participatory processes. This applies especially to assessing programmatic effectiveness in supporting institutional and governmental policy change. Governments also need to expand and enhance local programs that promote a greater dimension of meaningful child and youth participation to meet basic needs and affirm young people as vital assets and citizens within their communities.

2. Going glocal

Many participatory actions of young people are bound by locality but have global implications and applications and vice versa. We need to explore how to replicate successful local participatory actions in other localities. Canada can take a leadership role in

supporting global initiatives such as the Growing up in Cities project that has both global and local implications and that can promote the child and youth friendly cities agenda more widely. At the local level, groups such as the Environmental Youth Alliance and *Santropol Roulant*, have youth taking the lead in designing and implementing innovative and effective food security programs in some of the poorest urban communities in Canada. These youth-driven programs have been successful in influencing policy at many levels, but they are the exception not the norm. Programs such as these need financial support and institutional recognition to ensure their sustainability and scalability at the policy level.

3. The need for institutionalization: the rhetoric needs to match reality

Children and youth need to access real power by becoming joint partners with governments and institutions. The inclusion of children and youth within adult structures is often carried out in a way that marginalizes young peoples' voices. As explored in this paper, exceptional models of participatory planning and processes do exist, both as stand-alone structures and within government. These processes need to be supported, strengthened, and tailored to meet the unique needs and challenges young people must face to be meaningfully involved in urban governance.

4. Outreach efforts need to recognize and include marginalized populations and invite a plurality of perspectives

Child and youth participation initiatives need to be accessible to a range of involved youth. Innovative outreach strategies are needed to ensure that marginalized children have opportunities for real participation. This requires an analysis of which youth communities are not being heard, and a concerted effort to create methods that engage these communities. Participation initiatives need to recognize, accommodate and validate a plurality of opinions and perspectives.

5. Stronger partnerships with adults and young people lead to effective capacity-building

Child and youth participation initiatives are most successful through engaging equitable adult partnerships. Rather than involve young people in the vibrant, inclusive democratic decision-making processes of the adult world, participatory initiatives with young people provide an opportunity to engage a new generation in new forms of democratic decision-making - strengthening (and sometimes creating) democratic institutions in the process. Adults as well need to learn new participation skills, and be willing to engage in new and innovative democratic processes.

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6. **Diverse forms of participation ensure young people are more actively engaged in their cities**

In addition to involving young people in formal government processes - from elections to urban planning and policy review - decision-makers need to support the full dimension of young people's interests and abilities. To address the needs of all youth, especially those most marginalized, informal processes of participation, such as local community action that focus on experiential engagement, must also be developed and supported. In concert with formal processes of participation, informal modes of access to governance add value to policy and political deliberations.

7. **Promoting positive images of young people helps eliminate barriers to meaningful engagement in their cities**

Social marketing and public campaigns at the local, global, and international level need to focus on the good work being done by children and youth in their cities. Too often, dominant public narratives of young people suggest youth are incapable, lack commitment, and even pose threats to healthy urban living. Such stereotypes inhibit the meaningful engagement of young people in cities by discouraging young people from contributing their assets, accessing services, and thus creating barriers to good urban governance.

Commitments to democratic principles such as active participation, civic responsibility and inclusion require a paradigm shift: from prescriptive modes of intervention to supporting young peoples' innate capacity for transformation and change, while preserving their development and well-being. A more coordinated national and global media effort should advance stories of child and youth survival, resistance, and engagement within civic processes and urban environments that ensure communities are more collaborative, diverse and inclusive.

V Key recommendations

Establish a Local Government Plan of Action for Children and Youth
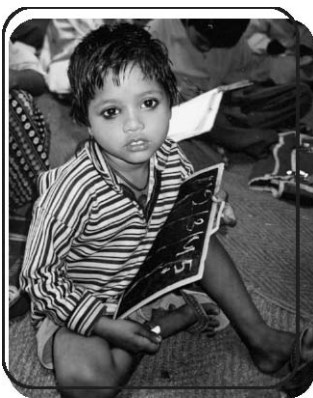
We recommended that each local government, similar to the National Plan of Action called for at the UN Special Summit for Children, establish a Local Government Plan of Action for Children and Youth. This Plan should be tailored to the specific capacities of local governments, but should have a vision that encompasses all levels of government.

Support sustainable, scalable participatory programming and initiatives

Local governments must recognize and support the expertise

and initiatives that children and youth bring to their communities through sustainable programs supporting these initiatives, as well as through institutionalizing this expertise within policy and policy frameworks. Special attention should be given to supporting initiatives in "going to scale" both horizontally (bridging diverse government services responsible for children), and vertically (harmonizing different levels of government policy and practice).

We further recommended that local government advocate with and on behalf of children and youth regarding these local initiatives, and facilitate the uptake of these initiatives into policy and policy frameworks at all levels of government.

Create local government support structures to enable the meaningful involvement of children and youth in policy deliberations

Local government must meaningfully engage with and support child and youth led organizations through recognizing, supporting and involving them in policy development and delivery. To do so, support structures within government institutions should be created that meaningfully involve children and youth in policy deliberations.

It is recommended that local governments identify and promote the expertise and knowledge of children and youth at the regional, national and international governmental level.

We recommend that the academic community conduct further research on the effective and meaningful involvement of children and youth through child and youth-led organizations. Research should also explore aspects of effective and meaningful engagement of children and youth in local government and its institutions.

Initiate child and youth outreach efforts that engage a plurality of voices, especially those populations most marginalized

We recommend that structures created to engage youth by government and its institutions should strive to engage a diversity of youth, especially those most marginalized. By developing a greater understanding of child and youth-driven strategies of resilience, for example, decision-makers can work with young citizens to design more inclusive, effective models protective and intervention. Further, because many child and youth-led organizations engage a multiplicity of communities, local governments need to open a dialogue with young people to learn the tools and best practices of successful participatory programming, such as community asset mapping and other innovative, peer-led initiatives.

Promote capacity-building by supporting informal methods of child and youth participation

All levels of government should support both formal and informal methods of child and youth participation in their communities. We recommend the government NGO, and

academic communities collaborate in conducting research on non-formal methods that promote child and youth input into policy development and implementation. Special emphasis should be placed on successful tools such as Participatory Action Research and Community Asset Mapping.

Develop positive media images of youth and support integrated media promoting child and youth friendly cities

Social marketing and public campaigns at the local level need to focus on the good work already being done by children and youth in their communities. Media campaigns highlighting stories similar to those profiled in this paper would also be a first step to inviting the active participation of children in cities around the world.

A child and youth friendly web site developed for World Urban Forum in Vancouver will showcase examples of successful child and youth-involved programming globally; profile stories of engaged young people in their cities; and provide a searchable database of research literature and programs.

In future phases of site implementation, we imagine the site becoming an interactive environment in which local government, city planners and developers, researchers, and young people can meet in a dynamic space that supports active knowledge exchange and information sharing. The site will also provide practical, concrete building blocks for developing participatory action plans; building sustainable community projects and programming; and conducting issue-based research that invites the full participation of diverse communities.

Finally, it is hoped that this paper will ignite global dialogue concerning the meaningful engagement of children and youth in all dimensions of urban life. Child and youth participation initiatives are becoming more widespread and increasingly effective. In considering current and future actions, we need to implement child and youth participatory practices that integrate research, policy-making, and local programming. Local governments need to develop and strengthen aspects of child and youth policies that are inclusive, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of young people. Such dialogue can only happen with a renewed and invigorated partnership between children, youth and the communities in which they live.

Introduction

"The state of the young in any city is the litmus test for the city's level of sustainability and vibrancy"
– Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN HABITAT

Cities are growing at an unprecedented rate worldwide. This calls for innovative and dynamic programs and policies that can effectively meet the needs of citizens living in urban environments. The proportional increase in the number of children and youth living in cities, as well as their capacity as active citizens continues to be underestimated by local and national governments. In the upcoming World Urban Forum, to be held in Vancouver in 2006, there is an urgent need and opportunity to showcase the capacity of young people to participate in creating inclusive, healthy and vibrant cities.

A call to involving children and youth as architects and agents of change in their cities
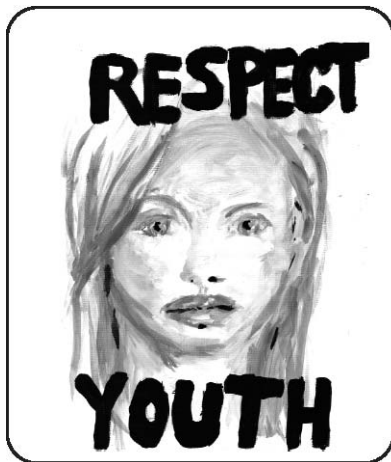
While cities urgently need to provide for young people's needs, this paper focuses on children and youth's participation as the cornerstone for children's well-being and the creation of sustainable child and youth-friendly cities. Provision of health, clean water, hygienic sanitation, safe communities, good living conditions and proper nutrition are central to children's survival, development and protection. Throughout their development, children and youth need to be involved as meaningful partners in the planning and design of these services. Not only because they have a right to a voice in matters that concern them, as clearly stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other UN documents, but because they are the greatest experts on their environment and a powerful resource for social change.

Engagement through action: The case for child and youth participation in urban governance

Child and youth participation is in many regards a 'messy' concept. It is difficult to define and hard, in the short-term, to systematically evaluate. Participation is a contextual concept, with its meaning depending on the socio-cultural environment. There is also a political reality in many countries preventing adult citizen's full involvement, let alone children's political participation. For these reasons, cities have

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rarely identified child and youth participation as a guiding principle. This must urgently change, and there are lessons learned to help guide this process.

This paper presents an accumulating body of research highlighting the value of children and youth's participation in that it benefits their own development as well as that of their communities and nations. Young people's participation in local community development provides an opportunity for concrete action, and a greater likelihood of children and youth witnessing the impact of their actions. By supporting child and youth participation, one also addresses one of the critical realities of cities, namely the growing sense of child and youth disconnection and alienation. Meaningful participation provides for meaningful relationships and networks - a key aspect of full and healthy child, youth and adult development.

The goals of the paper

This paper presents inspiring examples of participatory child and youth programs involving children ages 10-24 locally, in Canada, and globally. In addition to presenting child and youth-driven programming, we provide profiles of children and youth actively engaged in their communities. These personal profiles, based on the voices of participants, provide a powerful testament to the commitment of children and youth in improving urban life.
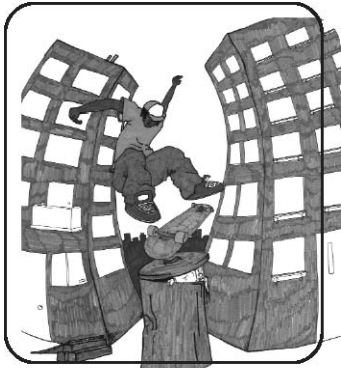
These stories point to ways in which young people can be involved in all dimensions of urban development -- including research, planning, programming, advocacy, project management, and decision-making -- as well as in advancing policy initiatives that strive to ensure equal access to the necessities of urban life. The nature of these examples of child and youth involvement is diverse, ranging from youth-driven organizations, shared-decision-making to consultations. While there are differences between low and high-income countries, particularly in terms of the urgency and nature of the issues at stake, the experiences reflected in child and youth's participation are comparable. There are crosscutting challenges and lessons to be learned on the approaches taken; these are presented throughout the paper. The Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), University of Victoria, took the lead in developing this document, in partnership with a range of organizations working with youth at different levels (see credits). Throughout this process an effort was made to work collaboratively with multi-sectoral organizations across Canada and internationally. It is recognized though that time constraints have forced us to
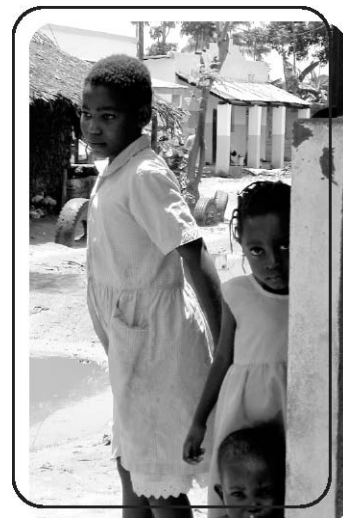
limit the scope and diversity of child and youth-driven programming represented in this paper. Furthermore, given the location of the lead organizations and the World Urban Forum, there is also an emphasis on Canadian examples. We hope the focus on building on our local strengths and practice will inspire change locally, and globally, as well as stimulate discussion among the many dynamic organizations around the world that are engaged in promoting the active participation of children and young people in their cities.

The collective experiences gathered in this paper demonstrate the potential of children and youth to build capacity, to become insightful resources in developing strong and thriving local neighborhoods and cities. The case studies demonstrate the passion and energy of young people when they become meaningfully engaged in the collaborative effort to bring about transformation in improving their world. Based on the rich diversity of experience, this paper charts a course that links research policy and practice in developing greater integration of services that supports the well-being of the world's children and youth and their cities.

Children and youth have diverse needs, and make important contributions across many aspects of city life. In light of this range, this paper discusses child and youth issues and experiences under 4 'types' of cities, rather than under a single city.

1. **Resilient city** discusses how, in environments not always designed to enable their resilience, children and youth, not only survive stress, oppression, and adversity, but draw from their marginalization to improve their urban communities.

2. **Secure city** identifies children and youth threats to safety and security and presents the multiple prevention and intervention measures children and youth are engaging in to safeguard individual and community well-being.

3. **Capable city** focuses on child and youth participation in the context of local government.

> *The needs, aspirations and contributions of young people need to be reflected in the life of the city.*
>
> **Mayor Larry Campbell**
> **City of Vancouver**
> **Inaugural Speech**
> **December 2, 2002**

4. **Livable city** chapter examines the involvement of child and youth in creating livable cities through five key issue-areas: water, transportation, food security and space, sustainable technology and innovation, and going 'glocal'.

We recognize that the coverage of each theme is not exhaustive, nor does each chapter define the city type. Rather our hope is to point to the richness of initiatives and experiences undertaken in recent years among national and local governments around the world. Each section

provides a series of recommendations for defining calls of actions to foster leadership in bringing forward local programs. Special focus is placed on policy and programs that can go to scale and be made more sustainable.

We hope this paper inspires policy-makers programmers (local, regional, federal government, UN HABITAT) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work in partnership with young people in creating child and youth friendly cities that improve the standard and quality of life for children and their communities.

Artwork obtained through the City of Vancouver, Youth Outreach Teams, "Youth As a Resource" Poster project.

Respect Youth Portrait: Vanessa Osler

Boarder on Trash Can: Andy Chung

Keep Growing Piece: Lucy Doytchinova

II Background

This section details the current research supporting children and youth participation in cities and sets the rights-based and policy conventions of child and youth participation within an international context.

1. Demographic shifts: The movement of children and youth in the urban context

2. Setting the stage: Children and youth on the international agenda

3. Principles and dimensions of participation: Defining the meaningful participation of children and youth in their cities

4. Participation and sustainable development: Children, youth and the development of more vibrant, sustainable cities

1 Demographic shifts: The movement of children and youth in the urban context

Current demographic profiles suggest that close to half of the world's population is now living in, or moving to, urban areas. In many cities of the world more than 50% of the urban population is under the age of 19. According to UNICEF, by 2025, 6 out of 10 children in developing countries will live in urban areas. In the Middle East and North America, already 60% of the population living in urban areas is under the age of 25. Families are moving to urban centres in search of education, employment, and a better quality of life.

> *"Cities are the physical expression of societies which build them and the political, social and economic interactions of their inhabitants."*

As a consequence of these demographic trends, greater numbers of children and youth are experiencing higher levels of poverty and social exclusion as they suffer disproportionately from the conditions associated with urban poverty. This increased vulnerability has made them victims of substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, youth crime, sexual exploitation, HIV-AIDS, environmental contamination and economic exploitation.

Girls and boys are also affected differently by poverty and exclusion, with girls suffering from greater discrimination. In addition to the lack of services, many cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes contribute to gender roles that result in girls' receiving fewer and poorer quality services than boys. Policy makers and urban planners need to recognize the enormous gender divide in municipal policy and programming that marginalizes girls and fails to access their untapped wealth of social capital.

How local governments impact the health and development of children and youth

It is important to recognize the great extent to which local governments impact the healthy development and life-supportive opportunities for children and young people. A child and youth friendly city is one that encompasses all aspects of a child and youth's healthy development including opportunities for connection, self-efficacy, and engagement.

As this document will demonstrate, child and youth friendly policies are an effective tool to meeting the needs of ever-changing urban communities. Local governments that research, adapt, and utilize child and youth friendly policies invest in the long-term health and sustainability of their cities.

2 Setting the stage: Children and youth on the international agenda

A child and youth's right to participate has been endorsed internationally in unprecedented ways. The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 and its subsequent near universal ratification stands as a landmark. Significant in the CRC is the level of international dialogue and commitment that has taken place following its ratification.

Article 12 of the CRC states that:

" States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

In 2002, State Parties agreed on a Declaration and Plan of Action, A World Fit for Children, pledging to put children (0- 18) at the heart of their development priorities, and committing to implementing National Plans of Action. Listening to children and youth and ensuring their participation stands as one of the 10 agreed upon objectives and commitments by the international community.

Other significant UN summits and conferences have reconfirmed a commitment to the perspectives and involvement of children and youth. In 1996, the Habitat Agenda asserts in its preamble the special needs of children and youth in being involved in their living environment. Another key UN event supporting youth participation was the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth held in Lisbon, Portugal in 1998, marking culmination of more than a decade-long process undertaken to turn the attention of national and global leaders to matters of importance to young people. The Braga Youth Declaration was adopted in Lisbon as a blueprint for greater youth participation in governance.

A significant example of how children and youth can be meaningful involved in global processes is that of the United Nations environment and development process started at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. Youth were represented at the conference by a process co-sponsored by youth in Canada and Costa Rica called Youth '92. Youth spoke to the gathered world leaders demanding environmental justice for peoples globally. Children were represented in Rio through a historic speech made by Severn Suzuki who moved the world by stating: "My father always says "You are what you do, not what you say". Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grown-ups say you love us. I challenge you, please make your actions reflect your words." Suzuki's statement was mirrored by another generation of children 10 years later at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesberg, South Africa, where 3 children representing Ecuador, China and Canada again challenged "all of us to ensure that through our action we will inherit a world free of the indignity and indecency occasioned by poverty, environmental degradation and patterns of unsustainable development". The sentiment of these children was enshrined in the final political declaration of WSSD, a phenomenal accomplishment for children and youth world-wide.

International models of participation initiated by children and youth

Nations across the world now recognize the urgent need to have children and youth actively engaged in urban governance. In many countries, the implementation of these rights, conventions and the development of emerging models of participation have come from young people themselves, as well as from nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) and international agencies such as UNICEF, UN Habitat, and UNESCO.

Unfortunately, all countries have not uniformly applied models of child and youth participation. This is especially so in the case of municipal governance, which takes many forms internationally. Promising practices such as the Malindi Youth Consultative Council in Kenya, and the Civic Youth Strategy in Canada (discussed in The Capable City Chapter), are the exceptions rather than the rule.

As discussed in this paper, these and other successful models of participation and rights-based practices need to be adapted to the local context, as well as strengthened and integrated more thoroughly into programming and policy-making. The engagement of children and youth will thus be included as a distinct yet vital part of city governance and operations.

3 Principles and dimensions of participation: Defining the meaningful participation of children and youth in their cities

It is easy to state that child and youth participation is a right, but what does such engagement actually mean at the policy and programmatic level, in field-level practices, or through on-the-ground projects and initiatives? While recognizing that forms of participation vary according to the circumstances, urban governments need to recognize that participation requires an equitable process that leads to sustainable outcomes. Further, in supporting the process of participation, children and young people must be active agents of change in the context of broader community development goals. According to research done by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement in Canada, this active engagement leads to positive health outcomes.

Through formal participation, children and youth are slowly becoming recognized by policy makers as part of the system, rather than as external players with no capacity to engage. Louis Chawla, lead researcher in UNESCO's Children Growing Up in the Cities project, states that: "Participation is a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions … Formal processes of participation deliberately create structures for children's engagement in constructing meaning and sharing decision making."

> **Child and youth participation is a quintessential component of creating child and youth-friendly cities.**
>
> *A substantial body of research demonstrates that the benefits of child participation are multidimensional, essential to a child and young person's own development, and our society as a whole. Overall, child and youth participation significantly improves the quality of the relationships between government institutions and civil society. Child and youth engagement in policy and program design helps initiate programming that encourage young people to realize their full and healthy human development.*

Forms of young people's participation

In the context of the city, child and youth engagement in urban governance is their first civic experience. Too often, the experience is negative due to governments neither acknowledging young people as contributing citizens, nor recognizing children and youth as having legitimate knowledge concerning their communities. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, states that: "No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline."

Meaningful participation begins when the perceptions, ideas and actions of children and youth are taken seriously and recognized as equal to the formal knowledge of adults. Real participation requires both the recognition and redistribution of power. It requires taking actions through creating strong adult and child-youth partnerships that encourage equitable decision-making. A visual tool for evaluating efforts to engage children and youth in decision-making is David Driskell's "Dimensions of child and youth participation"[see fig 1].

Fig. 1 The dimensions of young people's participation
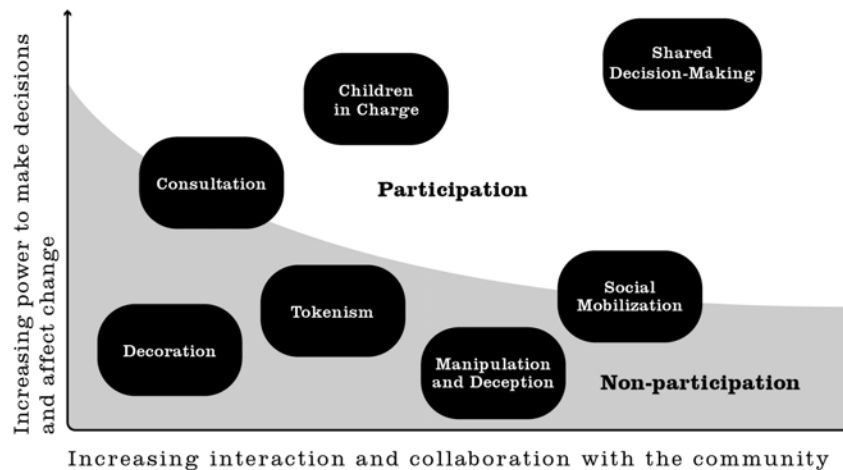
This conceptual framework for participation is based on two primary dimensions. The first measures child and youth's power to make decisions and effect change. The second assesses young people's interaction and collaboration with other people in their community. This framework is particularly important for local governments in order to differentiate between token involvement and true engagement.

This paper does not suggest that children and youth should be given the same decision-making power as adults – they have different capacities, and bring different knowledge and experiences to governance. However, from a perspective of human rights and community development, it clear that children and youth benefit from having more direct influence over their living environments; this in turn enriches their lives and strengthens their communities.

4 Participation and sustainable development: Children, youth and the development of more vibrant, sustainable cities

Resiliency and the involvement of children and youth in their cities

Children's developmental potential can be supported or diminished by the care and attention they receive from parents, friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers and other caring adults. This nurturing component of individual well-being is so strong that evidence indicates that even under situations of extreme adversity children will often show incredible resilience, or the capacity to cope or "bounce back", when relations with one caring person are sustained. This person can be an adult or another child or youth.

> **The multiple benefits of child and youth-driven participation in cities include :**
>
> • *Participation itself is development and is both a means and an end in itself;*
>
> • *Young people can make a valuable contribution to society;*
>
> • *Participation builds effectiveness and sustainability;*
>
> • *Participation fosters learning, builds life skills and enables self protection;*
>
> • *Young people have strong networks amongst themselves; and*
>
> • *Young people's participation builds civil society and strengthens democracy.*

For example, studies show young people who are active in decision-making, who learn from their own experiences and who observe adults engaging in "causes" they believe in, are less prone to depression, hopelessness and suicide and thus are more "resilient". In this document, resiliency is viewed as a key aspect of a healthy city, and a key determinant in ensuring children and youth are healthy.

Moreover, research shows that youth who are active in institutions and programs that directly affect them bring about positive outcomes for both the individual youth, as well as the community as a whole. Engaged youth are less likely to participate in activities that may harm themselves or negatively impact their communities (e.g. drug use, violent behaviour and school delinquency). They are also more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem, get higher grades in school, and show a greater commitment to friends, families and communities.

By establishing structures, policies and programs that support the meaningful participation of children and youth, cities benefit from a diversity of perspectives in building sustainable communities through strengthening individual and collective resiliency.

Conclusion

What distinguishes this document from other policy papers is a content grounded in the reality of young people's experience. The local projects described in these pages speak to the resources of children and youth while recognizing that there are significant gaps that need to be filled. What is common in child and youth practice at the local level, is neither necessarily recognized by government nor the research community. Conversely, what policy makers and researchers have proven effective is not necessarily known by children, youth and the agencies that represent them. This paper seeks to bridge this divide.

Cities as well exist structurally within the context of other levels of government, and as

well within a global context that brings a range of other challenges. In the end, this paper is a call to those concerned about the health of children and youth and the communities they live in to forge new partnerships and equitable relationships, so that collectively cities can move forward to create communities that are child and youth friendly.

The Resilient City

How resilient young people actively engage in their communities to overcome adversity and promote healthier urban environments.

Chapter 1

"*[Cities] are a startling juxtaposition between the despairing and the hopeful, between disorganization and restorative potential. Alongside the poverty and unemployment, the street-fights and drug deals, are a wealth of cultural, economic, educational, and social resources.*"
– **Margaret C. Wang and Edmund W. Gordon**

Children, youth and their families often face seemingly overwhelming challenges in their day-to-day lives. What is most amazing is that often they are able to survive these challenges and thrive. In youth development the term "resilience" has come to the fore to describe this amazing ability of children, youth and their communities to rebound from adversity, to adapt, and to achieve healthy development.

This chapter is a testament to that ability. This chapter is not suggesting that the conditions that bring about resiliency should be taken as a normative state – they are not. The ideal is that all children and youth should grow up in safe, nurturing, and respectful environments. The unfortunate reality is that they too often do not. This chapter celebrates the indomitable human spirit, while recognizing that we as humanity must do more.

This chapter will explore how, in environments not always designed to enable their resilience, children and youth not only survive stress, oppression, and adversity, but draw from their marginalization to improve their urban communities. We will see how resilient, engaged young people mobilize in their communities to develop resourcefulness, improve problem-solving skills, develop critical consciousness, experience greater autonomy, and feel a greater sense of purpose and concern for social justice in and through their communities. By creating the conditions by which resiliency can thrive, we further explore the opportunities and challenges of policymakers to play catch-up to the critical changes young citizens are making locally to improve their communities. We will thus examine the following dimensions of resilience:

1. **Resilience in a rapidly urbanizing world**

1 Resilience in a rapidly urbanizing world

Rapid urbanization, combined with a large demographic shift towards an overall young population in the developing world, has led to an explosion of children and youth in cities. For children and youth globally, the need to be resilient in an urbanizing world has never been greater.

The challenges young citizens face are numerous: the feminization and racialization of poverty; violence in and outside their homes; deteriorating public education; the stigma and isolation of living in inner-city neighbourhoods; discrimination based on age, race, class, gender and sexual orientation; pollution and other environmental damage; persistent un- and underemployment; the gradual destruction of naturally occurring social networks in the community; and the systematic breakdown of cohesive communities that provide young people with purpose and a feeling of inclusion.

Collectively, these forces threaten the healthy development of many children and youth who lack the protective of wealth, safe homes and neighbourhoods, and engaging communities to buffer them. Yet, as we will see, despite their disadvantages and marginalization, children and youth are making substantial contributions to their cities, communities, and neighborhoods.

Nevertheless, the dominant story of children and youth – those that make headlines, that reach the ears of policy-makers, and prevent many youth services from meaningfully engaging young citizens – is that young people are incapable, dangerous, lack commitment, and create too many barriers to good urban governance. It is

their inability to conform to traditional standards of good citizenship, rather than their resilience that forms the dominant plot line of public narratives. Commitments to democratic principles such as active participation, civic responsibility and inclusion may also coexist with attitudes and behaviours that include negative feelings about young people as civic actors and differential treatment of and discrimination against them.

The stories of resilience and critical engagement shared in this document often take place outside of traditional modes of civic engagement. They are stories of survival, resistance, recreation, and renegotiations with civic processes and suggest a need to create communities that are more collaborative, diverse and inclusive. They demonstrate that government infrastructure and administrative practices may lag behind the critical thought and participatory practices of particularly resilient marginalized youth.

2 Resilience in Youth Development: Shifting from 'Clients' to 'Citizens'

Growing the strengths of urban children and youth, "rather than tallying up their weaknesses," requires an intentional shift in thinking. Community engagement specialist, John McKnight, describes the process of seeing children and youth in a developmental perspective as leveraging their assets. When adults, systems, and communities focus on the strengths and capacities of young citizens, they begin to shift their deficiencybased perspectives to a more relevant and meaningful mindset. They no longer view children and youth as "clients or problems" to be solved, but rather as "citizens" who need the structural capacity to contribute to their own healthy development and to the broader community. One reason for this shift in thinking is the growing empirical evidence indicating that many children's problems have common antecedents and these can be better addressed by drawing on assets and enhancing protective factors.

The "client" label as it relates to young people, suggests needs and deficiencies; the notion of citizenship, however, suggests strengths and capacity to contribute. Moreover, many resilient children and youth know, through their own lived experiences, that the world is not fair and safe for everyone. Part of their ability to adapt and recover in their own lives lies in their realization that they have a substantial role in making things better for themselves and others. When adults and adult systems fail to provide the range of supports that contribute to healthy adolescent development, resilient young citizens fill the gaps for themselves and their peers by creating their own critical communities.

3 Resilience as Re-Creation: Young Citizens Create Critical Communities

In Canada, Aboriginal children and youth are more likely than their peers across the country to be born into poverty, to suffer poor health, abuse and neglect, incarceration, and placement in the child welfare system away from their families, and often, their communities. They live in a country with a colonial history, and live out the legacy of this oppression through inaccurate representation of themselves as a people in the education systems and mainstream media.

Particularly in the Western world, the media has long been acknowledged as purveying social values and influencing young people's notions of themselves and their world. Yet, despite the media's attempt at objectivity, racism regularly creeps into words, pictures and ideas. The impact on Aboriginal youth in Canada is profound; they see the media as playing an important role in further demeaning and silencing their communities. A growing number of Aboriginal youth in urban centres are choosing to express their resilience through various media.

Redwire Native Youth Media, Vancouver, Canada

In 1997 Redwire Magazine grew out of a grassroots Native youth activist group. Redwire became Canada's first-ever aboriginal youth-run magazine, telling their stories in their own voices. Young urban Natives came together using media to promote social justice, build communities of understanding, and create their own systems of representation. Using media was a way to counter the stereotyping about Native people in the media, and a way to fight the continued oppression and cultural erasure of Native people. Redwire operates with Native youth staff, writers, artists and publishers in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside, the most economically depressed urban area in Canada. Believing that "our voice is our weapon," resilient youth created this award-winning quarterly publication to give Aboriginal youth across Canada, a chance to heal, to have voice, and to express themselves.

By recreating media into a forum that young urban Natives can speak from, Redwire both provides insights into the state of youth in their community, and challenges their community's youth to take control over their own ideas and stories, and to contribute to the public understanding of social justice. Their messages are often rebellious, brave and passionate, but it is a critical process that helps them realize their power and identity as Native youth. Redwire helps challenge the ways in which Native people, and Native youth in particular, are treated in the broader political realm.

Project R.E.E.L. (Redefining Expression, Education, and Leadership), Montreal, Canada

Using media as a tool of resilience seems to be a global development for many marginalized and racialized youth. In Montreal, Quebec, for example, Black youth face similar challenges of poverty, racial profiling and criminalization, and pervasive negative media stereotyping. Through Project R.E.E.L. (Redefining Expression, Education, and Leadership), a local group of English-speaking youth are using the medium of film to purposefully combat the helplessness and hopelessness Black youth often feel in response dominant media messages and to challenge the mainstream with their own representations of Blackness.

Growing Up in Cities media projects, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Johannesberg, South Africa

In Buenos Aires and Johannesberg media is also the tool of choice for resilient working-class and squatter settlement children to use their personal marginalization to deepen a broader dialogue about community change. In these Growing Up In Cities projects, city kids, age 10 to 14, use photography to document their daily lives for public engagement. In Johannesberg children used video as a tool for tell their story, raising awareness about what it is like to be a child in a squatter settlement, and bringing pressure on the local government to deliver the urban services that had been promised in a resettlement area.

4 Resilience as Resistance: Young Citizens Reclaim their Communities

Like the Native and Black youth in Canada, and the children in Argentina and Jordan, Mexican children are engaging in ways to push boundaries and shake barriers. Resilience often lies in the power to resist and reclaim as well as to recreate. Consider the resistance movement waged by the people of Tepoztlán, a village of 14,000, 43 miles from Mexico City. Drawing on their strong Indigenous tradition of mobilizing the interests of the collective, children, as integral partners in the community, participated fully in the Tepoztecos' resistance to defend their homes in the biological corridor, a protected area, from the onslaught of international tourism development projects.

In the face of environmental threat, risk and fear, young Tepoztecos participated in night watches, marches and demonstrations and daily meetings in front of the City Hall. They even became victims of state violence in opposition to their cause. Because these children belonged to a community that valued and respected their capacities to contribute, they stood firm in their belief that the rights to the land were for those who lived it, worked it

and protected its ecology. In the end, Tepozteco children experienced their own power as this resilient community won its resistance struggle when the global tourism project was finally cancelled.

5 Resilience as Re-negotiation: Young People Challenge the Social Contract

As the demography of much of the world's population shifts in age towards a younger generation, what are the implications for social, political and economic engagement?

Even as North America experiences a graying of its overall population, Aboriginal peoples are experiencing the opposite trend. Aboriginal children and youth are fast becoming the majority in their communities. These demographic shifts are creating a new window of opportunity for policymakers to capitalize on the strengths of their young citizens. Engaging them in the policy agenda, community life, and the development process is critical to the sustainability of urban areas.

The engagement of diverse, resilient young people cannot happen neatly in conventional ways. In manifesting their resilience, young people are often ahead of policy-makers in critical thought and practice. Further, children and youth often witness and experience critical social and cultural progress with dramatic speed outside the political sphere, so that governments must play an opposing or catch-up role. As leaders in the process of development, young people may be the most valuable resource in determining the conditions of family, school, neighborhood and community environments.

Conclusion

Years of social science research indicate that young people have a natural participatory drive to engage with the human and natural world. They seek more relevant, interactive and participatory forms of engagement than periodic voting in electoral politics allows for. Young citizens today seek multiple arenas for mobilization, expression and civic engagement. By developing a greater understanding of child and youth-driven strategies of resilience, decision-makers can work with young citizens to design more inclusive, effective protective and intervention models. These models of resilience in action require a collective responsibility and commitment to collaborative processes of engagement that may be outside of conventional modes of civic engagement. Such strategies of active

engagement exist in urban environments globally and require policy-makers to be open to supporting experiential, challenging and emerging participatory processes that are inclusive of multiple perspectives. Most of all, fostering resilience in young people requires a fundamental paradigm shift from prescriptive modes of intervention for at-risk or marginalized young people, to support for their innate capacity for transformation and change in overcoming serious challenges to development and well-being.

"Our ideas are hope for a different world, for change"

Founded in 1997, Redwire is the first Native youth-run magazine in Canada and remains committed to operating with Native youth staff, writers, artists and publishers.

Passionate and political:
Redwire magazine makes history.

By Tania Willard, Manager, Redwire Native Youth Media Society

I grew up living between two worlds: one of my ancestors, of my Secwepemc heritage, and my white side. Life was always a push and pull for me, being outside the mainstream yet also trying to negotiate with the force of mainstream culture. I think being of mixed blood allows me to see things a little differently. I find life full of irony and paradox and it touches me as someone who has lived inside this paradox. So I paint my world.

When I moved to Vancouver after art school, I was searching for other Native youth who were doing creative things. I came across Redwire Magazine, founded by Nena and Billie Pierre in 1997. It was exciting. In these pages were images, essays, and poetry that expressed exactly what I was dealing with in my art. The work was provocative, powerful. Finally, here were the Native perspectives that I wanted to hear that mainstream media ignored.

I was born on a reserve and later moved to a small town in BC's interior so my perspective on the world is different. My family taught me to respect and honour people's differences but it's difficult to enter the mainstream world when you hold a different set of beliefs and traditions. At school, we learned about the Iroquois and the Huron but we never studied our own heritage, the history of the land we were on, the history of the

Secwepemc people, my own roots. Our history was silenced, our stories and histories filtered through other people's lenses.

When young people can't express themselves they become frustrated; when Native youth can't express themselves it is part of the oppression of our people, the silencing of our history, the slow erasure of our culture, and we need to change that. Redwire Native Youth Media gives Native Youth a platform for their ideas. Expressing ourselves is part of healing our generation. For Native youth living on and off reserve, or in non-native families across Turtle Island (Canada), Redwire is a meeting ground in which we learn from each other, voice opinions, share our experiences. We are passionate, critical, political, outspoken — and this energy comes across on the pages of Redwire.

Redwire helps build Native youth pride by honouring the diversity of our voices and our need to remain connected to our land and to our communities and to negotiate living in this modern world. The issues we continue to struggle with — land rights, poverty, the ecology, our natural resources — also effect everyone in this country. We need to initiate change. And change begins with imagination.

As an artist I have a responsibility to communicate. Artists open their minds and hearts and take a critical look at the issues that other people take for granted. Creating art helps me to understand myself and the struggle of oppressed and exploited people around the world, I then try to communicate that learning.

In Native culture we believe that youth are guardians of the future so that when we make choices, we are safeguarding the lives of our grandchildren. So whether we choose to live a traditional lifestyle, or become an artist in the city, we want to decide the future for ourselves. We want to be heard by our governments. We want to have self-determination. Because if you don't believe you can change the future — why would you care? Native youth need to drive change, to participate in the decision-making. Then we will be involved, invested, and committed because there's something in the process that's meaningful to us.

[1] (Wang and Gordon 2004)

[2] (Wang and Gordon 2004)

[3] (Boss 1999)

[4] (Boss 1999)

[5] (Kretzman and McKnight 1993)

[6] (Campbell 2002, 5)

[7] (Parker 1996)

[8] (Pittman, Irby and Cahill, 1996; Rajani 2001)

[9] (Winfield 1994 37-38)

[10] (Blackstock 2003)

[11] (Murdoch 1998)

[12] (Barnard and Smith 2003, 98)

[13] (Thomas de Benitze et al. 2003, 5)

[14] (Purdy 1999)

[15] (Shonkoff and Phillips 2002)

[16] (Barnard, Campbell and Smith, 46-47, 55-58)

[17] (Barnard, Campbell and Smith, 55)

[18] (Thomas de Benitze al. 2003)

Photo credit: Nicholas Cohen, Kids and Bikes, page 24

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Redwire Native Youth Media, Vancouver, Canada. Website: http://www.redwiremag.com

The Secure City

How young people use peer-based programs and prevention models to create secure urban environments

Chapter 2

"In order for young people to truly experience social justice, we must create a society in which young people are full citizens, empowered to contribute and make decisions. Youth Participation is an idea whose time has come..."

- Anne B. Hoover and Amy Weisenbach, Youth Leading Now!

As the majority of the world's people continue to concentrate their homes and livelihoods in cities, both the anxiety about threats to human security and the actual breaches of this security have increased. This is especially true in relation to issues of disease, violence, hunger, and poverty. Given their vulnerable status in society, children and youth are amongst the most immediate victims of these contemporary human security threats. Since young citizens are not a homogenous group, their vulnerabilities increase in association with gender, race, geographic and class location, immigrant status in particular.

Young citizens are not just victims however, and many are engaged solution-makers securing their own futures. The children and youth who work on human security issues have chosen to wade into these complex and controversial areas to critically change the adverse conditions in which they, their peers, and their community members live. In their action-oriented work, these young citizens are contributing to the reframing of two contemporary debates: how to address the critical and enduring problems that threaten human safety and security; and, defining what is the role of young citizens in building secure, sustainable urban environments.

In an urbanizing world, the threats to safety and security are well known; what remains hidden is the multiple prevention and intervention measures children and youth are engaging in to safeguard individual and community well-being. The most resilient prevention models tend to be youth-driven, asset-based, inclusive and empowering. As such, policymakers have an urgent and vested interest in recognizing and supporting young citizens' participation in building human security. Their contributions are critical to securing a viable future in urban life worldwide. This chapter will examine child and

youth-driven promising programs and prevention models in three key areas of global concern:

1. **Peer Prevention: HIV/AIDS and Securing Health**

2. **Girl Power: Building Safety and Security for Girls and Young Women**

3. **Youth-led Intergenerational Change: Building Food Security**

1 Peer Prevention: HIV/AIDS and Securing Health

UNICEF Right to Know projects

In a country most known internationally for conflict and strife, teams of young people across Bosnia have engaged approximately 2500 adolescents, aged 11 to 18, in expressing their views about HIV/AIDS prevention issues in a by youth for youth Participatory Active Research (PAR) process. These young citizens are trailblazers, leading the first-ever youth-lead program in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In one of 16 countries adopting a UNICEF Right to Know project, the young Bosnians have taken responsibility for creating an efficient HIV/AIDS prevention communication strategy.

The 70 young people participation from the three cities of Tuzla, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, know that children and youth are experts in their experience and have ideas about how best to change the attitudes and behaviours of their peers to reduce harm. The PAR questionnaires and individual interviews gave adolescents the opportunity to give voice to their experiences and to identify behaviours that lead to infection risk and human rights violations. In the process, youth speak openly with their peers about risky behaviour in ways that they cannot with parents, teachers and other adults in their lives. In Tuzla, the youth team has combined youth activities – street basketball tournaments, street dances and film nights, for example – with their opinion poll research in order to connect with other children and youth and distribute prevention information and condoms. As the youth communications team devises the best communication strategy and moves on to implement this strategy in partnership with government institutions, the impact they are already making is significant.

Based on current rates, it is projected that by the year 2005, HIV will infect more than 100 million people worldwide. Currently, 95% of people living with and dying of HIV/AIDS reside in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the hardest hit regions, experts indicate that one in four adults are dying from AIDS; as the adult prevalence rate increases worldwide, the demographic shift towards a younger global population is intensifying.

Engaging youth prevention efforts as an integral part of this effort cannot be overstated in the face of this growing, multi-faceted health and security threat, and United Nations' commitment to cut prevalence rates by 25% among young people around the globe by 2010. In a 1995 European Commission survey of adults and youth (80% of respondents were between ages 15-24), young people were found to be better informed than adults about HIV transmission and protection. In most European cities where youth and adults often live in separate worlds, young people are necessary partners in reaching their peers.

Youth Community Outreach (YouthCo) Aids Society, Vancouver, Canada

YouthCo is Canada's only youth-driven HIV/AIDS agency. The energetic and committed staff at YouthCo work to involve youth ages 15 to 29 from all communities in addressing HIV/AIDS and related issues. YouthCo also provides peer-driven educational initiatives and support services to youth infected with and/or affected HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C. Combating stigma, embarrassment, and fear around issues of sexual health is easier to do in an environment where youth respect and interact with their peers. Evan Jones, Executive Director at YouthCO explains why their peer-based, prevention models are so successful: "Youth is a difficult time of transition. They may be transitioning in and out of school systems, home, paid work, volunteer work, or entering into spaces of having to negotiate being sexual for the first time. . . We help them make their own educated decisions about securing their own health."

YouthCO follows the principle and practice of harm reduction by providing accurate information on health issues and by helping youth discover underlying issues that may lead to harmful or risky behaviour. In YouthCo's dynamic environment, youth help other youth recognize and address the interrelated factors such as self-esteem, access to housing, culture, education, gender and poverty, that influence health and well-being.

Collective advocacy and youth-driven political work that represents youth interests and helps negotiating healthier choices sends a very strong message to decision-makers: Young citizens are taking responsibility for their own health and safety and are well-positioned to champion strategies of prevention and harm reduction to peers.

Girl Power: Building Safety and Security for Girls and Young Women, Canada

Gender-based research points to a connection between gender-specific spaces and the combative and preventive programming on the diverse threats associated with growing up female. In this context, POWER Camp, a Canadian young woman-centred

organization, emerged to inspire, promote and support the creation of sustainable, empowering critical education opportunities for girls and young women.

In January 2003, POWER Camp National launched the Girl's Club Inner City Partnerships to create a culture of support for girls inside schools. In Montreal's Verdun Elementary School, grade 6 girls are being supported by young women in "taking space" – two big classrooms that they have filled with their colour decorations, lively conversations, energy, fears, big questions and big ideas. Claiming physical space is the first step to claiming space in the dominant educational, social, cultural, economic and political structures in which girls and young women struggle to develop. Herein lies the heart of the POWER Camp prevention approach: popular, critical education begins with girls and young women's lived experiences and moves to capacity building and collective action. POWER Camp's processes engages and empowers girls and young women with the confidence and tools they need to promote their own health and wellbeing as part of challenging societal barriers including institutionalized racism, homophobia, poverty, sexual and structural violence.

The intersections of race and/or poverty with gender continue to exacerbate women's and girl's vulnerability to violence. Women account for almost 50% of HIV/AIDS cases around the globe. One in three women will suffer violence in sometime in their lives; two million girls under age 15 are brought into the commercial sex trade annually. Economic globalization is leaving the legacy of persistent poverty for more and more women, trapping them on the periphery of society without the sufficient means to escape.

Microenterprise training program for young women, Venezuela

In a Venezuelan woman's prison, another story of youth-led prevention emerges to stop cycles of economic deprivation and violence. The young, first-time offenders enter prison because of drug-related crimes that were committed to help them end the economic violence in their lives. Demonstrating the resilient power of one, Virginia, a 25-year old inmate, used the knowledge and confidence she gained in prison through a microenterprise training program, to create opportunities for others to escape the severe economic crisis that often defines the lives of Venezuelan women. Finishing the program that helped her rebuild her values and recover her potential, Virginia used her developing leadership to inspire other inmates to desire more for themselves. Virginia worked with Cendif to bring the microenterprise training program to her new prison, using her manuals and bi-weekly orientations from Cendif to train 25 new detained women. Participation in Cendif's program gave the inmates access to bank loans in prison to start their own microenterprises that they can continue upon their release.

Having witnessed the impact of her own power, Virginia is now starting a new training program for a second cohort of inmates in her San Juan prison. This young woman is creating the building blocks towards her own economic security, and contributing to the building of others'. There are many more examples of young people addressing their own complex challenges, in collaboration with their communities, to stave off threats to human security and sustainability.

2 Youth-led Intergenerational Change: Building Food Security

East African Youth Coalition

Urban governance – the broad process of public decision-making in cities – plays an important role in ensuring urban food security. With little access to such governance, young citizens find themselves poised to inherit staggering problems of

> *Only 21% of city councilors across Canada are women, so it is very important to get girls and young women engaged in local government processes, and running for civic office, so they can create policies and programs which will lead us finally towards girl and women friendly cities.*
>
> **Ellen Woodsworth**
> **Councilor, City of Vancouver**

environmental degradation and food insecurity when, as adults, they are finally invited to make decisions. For young people like the East African Youth Coalition, this practice of democratic ageism is unacceptable.

Combining their expertise from their home countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda), the Coalition initiated a resolution for the 2002 World Summit on Social Development. The

East African youth issued a powerful call to governments to include youth in decision-making at all levels in order to foster youth empowerment and create formal processes for achieving more sustainable, accountable governance for society.

Santropol Roulant meals-on-wheels program, Montreal, Canada

In wealthy nations like Canada, where the threat of hunger often falls below the political radar screen, an award-winning youth-driven organization is taking on the food security challenge. Operating out of a busy storefront office in the heart of Montreal, Santropol Roulant is the largest independent meals-on-wheels program in the province of Quebec, Canada. Creating a unique model for building intergenerational community, Santropol engages young citizens aged 16 to 35 in addressing the health and food security needs of seniors and other Montrealers living with unemployment.

Youth often enter Santropol "active volunteerism" program as adolescents. By preparing and delivering food, and rebuilding meaningful intergenerational relationships with seniors, Santropol Roulant provides a social context for the important issue of food security. For many adolescents, this experience is often their first political exercise of their citizenship. By taking an active role in reinforcing the health of communities, many young volunteers deepen their understanding of the issues of poverty and social justice and go on to promote advocacy in other organizations. This participatory, youth-inclusive, meaningful process resonates with young citizens in a way that spurs their desire to be part of broader community governance.

Conclusion

These promising practices, advanced by young people typically excluded from traditional political processes, exemplify the need for youth to create their own alternative spaces for local governance. These models tend to be youth-led and inclusive, strength-based, affirming and generative. They create space, build trust and respect, and connect their prevention efforts to underlying, core issues such as equity gaps of age, race, gender, social and citizenship status and geographic location. They recognize and develop strategies to address the intersections between sexism and violence; poverty and crime; conflict and HIV/AIDS; democratic ageism and youth insecurity. They engage young people, from the critical entry point of their own lived experiences, and prepare them to play a vital role in creating safer urban environments in their local, national, and global urban communities.

Only a sustained partnership of young people, community, and government may fully address the growing threats to urban well-being. Policy makers need to support youth-driven prevention and peer-based models and develop coordinated and collaborative responses to helping young people address the needs of human security for themselves and for generations to follow.
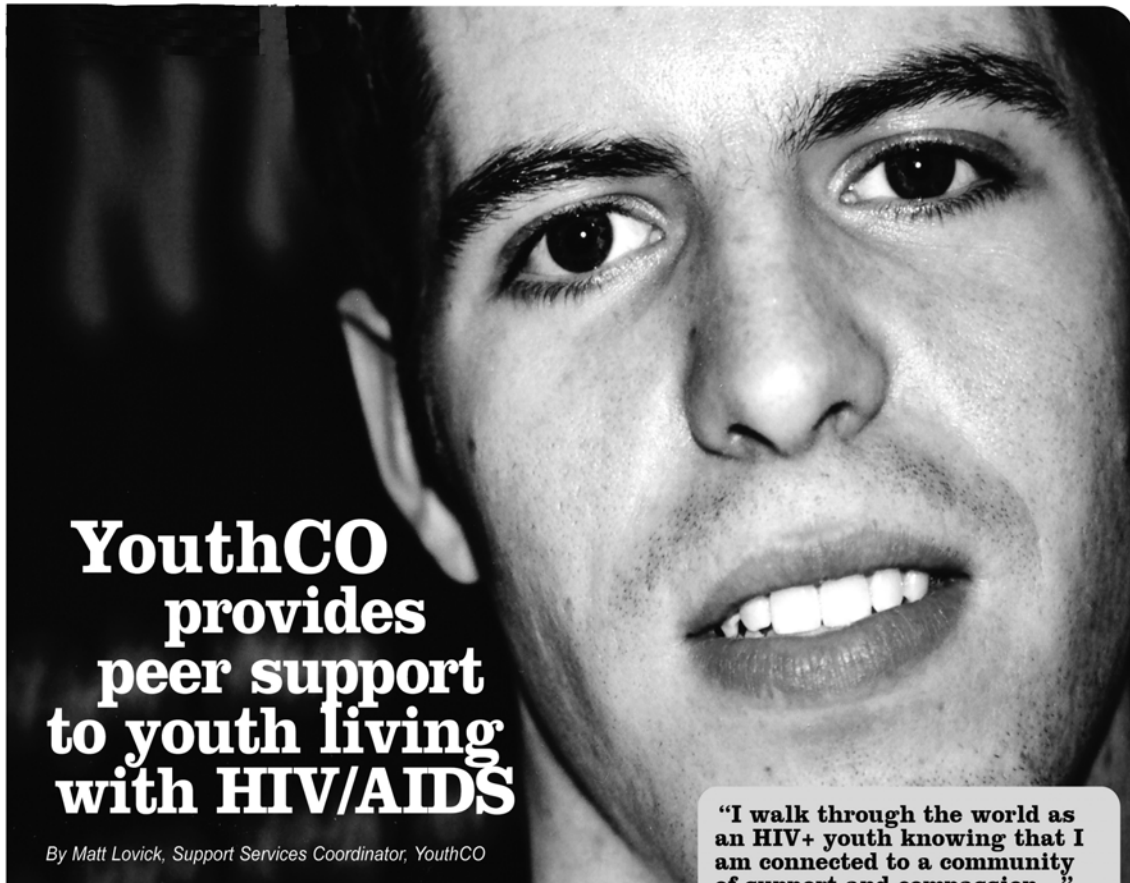
YouthCO
provides
peer support
to youth living
with HIV/AIDS

By Matt Lovick, Support Services Coordinator, YouthCO

"I walk through the world as an HIV+ youth knowing that I am connected to a community of support and compassion..."

YouthCo is a non profit organization working to involve youth ages 15-29 from all communities in addressing HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and related issues. YouthCo provides educational initiatives and peer support services to youth infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C (HCV)..

My name is Matt Lovick I am HIV positive (HIV+). Many people are taken aback when they hear that. They find it hard to believe that a healthy twenty-two year old could have the virus that can cause AIDS. Part of their discomfort, I think, is that they feel sorry for me. Even pity me.

I was infected with HIV about two years ago, and have thought about its presence in my body every day since then. Regardless of how people see me as an HIV+ queer youth, I am proud of who I am, HIV and all. Despite the guilt, shame, and fear that threatens to dampen my positive outlook, I walk through the world as an HIV+ youth knowing that I am connected to a community of support and compassion, and that I am part of a powerful story of human survival. But for many positive youth, the experience is one of shock and isolation. Discovering they are HIV+ feels more like a death sentence.

Many youth feel shame, guilt, confusion, and profound fear. They endure discrimination and rejection from family and friends who are terrified of HIV. And many positive youth become overwhelmed by the task of managing this complicated illness. But no matter

how the world responds to us, finding out we have HIV+ transforms our lives in a profound, world-shaking way.

It took me 6 months after I learned I was positive to find YouthCO. In June of 2003, I attended a Canadian AIDS Society forum for people living with HIV/AIDS in Montreal. Being in a room with hundreds of other HIV+ people was one of the most emotional, powerful experiences of my life. After the initial feelings of glory at being in a room full of people just like me, I realized that in one important way, they weren't like me. They were all much older. In a room of 300 people, there were about 6 people under the age of 30. As the week in Montreal progressed, and I spent more and more time with this small group of HIV+ youth, I learned the importance and potency of peer support. When I returned to Vancouver, I joined the board of directors of YouthCO, and six months later, found myself coordinating the Support Program.

I jumped at the chance to create a space for youth in Vancouver that offered the amazing support I received in Montreal. YouthCO's Support Program is for HIV+ and/or HCV+ (Hepatitis C) youth between the ages of 15 and 29. It operates under a peer-based model and organizes supportive social events, discussion groups, recreational activities, and retreats for positive youth. As an HIV+ youth and peer support worker, I've seen first-hand how creating a space for positive youth changes lives.

So often, newly positive youth walk through the doors at YouthCO with fear and confusion on their faces. Being able to talk to a peer support worker, later attend a support dinner, and possibly a retreat, can often change the way they approach the challenge of being HIV+/HCV+. Positive youth sit down together, some newly infected, others more experienced with infection, and share their stories. They hear their fears and dreams echoed by one another, and realize they are not alone. They share lived experiences and take solace in the empathy that only other positive youth can offer. I see youth regain their confidence and pride — feelings often lost when they first learn they are positive.

While people find it shocking and upsetting that youth are infected with HIV, it doesn't change the fact that many of us are positive. Every day we fight discrimination for being youth, and then face even greater prejudices, fears, and sometimes disgust for being HIV+. YouthCO provides HIV+ youth with the skills, support, and desire necessary to survive in this world. Our story builds on the strength of our peers. And our story is one of human survival.

"We feel listened to. The teamwork games really help us listen to each other and help each other and we don't leave anyone out."

"We could always feel normal and did not have to try to be somebody else. You can be yourself at Girls Club"

- Girls' Club participants

Launched by POWER Camp National, Girls' Club is a weekly lunch hour program for girls based at Verdun Elementary School in Verdun, Montréal.

Making Space for girls

By Sarah Mangle, Facilitator, "Girls Club" - POWER Camp National

Girls' Club makes space(s). Space for eating together and hanging out, Space for big questions, Space to talk about ideas that are taboo. Space to dance however we feel, Space to dress up, to learn, to play. Space in our hearts and minds. A space that no one is ever forced to attend, but attends out of choice. The Girls come when they want to.

I began volunteering at Girls' Club in January 2003 when POWER Camp National and Verdun Elementary School collaborated to initiate a lunch hour school program that adapted the POWER Camp approach to creating girl-specific spaces.

The Girls' Club Space looks like this: Two big classrooms decorated by girls' drawing and art, sunlight streaming in. There is a chalkboard with space for anyone to write whatever they feel like. There are markers, paper, and string. There is coloured cardboard hanging, signed by all the girls and facilitators, listing the ways we agree to interact in the space.

The Girls' Club Space feels: Stuffed with potential. The room is filled with support, love, loudness, quiet conversations, critical thinking, fun, art, energy, action, big questions, truth(s). It's a space that makes room for Girls' lives, the real ones, lives that don't fit comfortably into boxes. Because Girls' lives are complex and demanding: they face difficult peer dynamics, patriarchal media messages, body image challenges; they confront complex intersections of race, poverty and violence in their everyday lives. Girls Club opens up spaces, big and wide, to allow Girls to explore all aspects of their lives.

The POWER Camp approach has been especially relevant in an inner city school setting where many of the girls face multiple levels of violence. Many girls that participate in the project face difficult and at times explosive situations at home, in the schoolyard and in the classroom. Many of the girls have trouble fitting in and have no place to go that is their own. Girls Club provides them with their own space; this has a profound impact on the participants.

> *"Behavior and learning in the classroom improved. The girls who participated in Girls Club improved their grades."*
>
> **- Verdun Elementary School personnel**

The Girls share stories of courage, anger, sadness, fear, joy, curiosity. They participate in arts-based activities such as dance, drama, jewellery making, face and body painting, book making, photography as well as workshops on AIDS and sex education, communication and decision making skills. They connect with each other and with facilitators who bring inspiration, support and grounding to the space.

As a facilitator I am challenged to learn and grow in the space as well. Together with the girls, we challenge our assumptions, deconstruct barriers and explore action strategies for change.

Girls' Club has grown since last year; we now have a total of seven facilitators and 28 girls. Together, we are starting from our own experiences and working towards a larger arts based project that we will share with the school and community. This is our change initiative. We will be motivated to get further involved in our communities, continue to think, dream and act in big ways that feel good.

Girls' Club works because we build trust. Trust between POWER Camp National and Verdun Elementary, Trust between The Girls and the Facilitators, Trust among the girls, and trust within themselves.

1 (City of Toronto 2004)

2 (Saric et al. 2004)

3 (Zulic 2004)

4 (Saric et al. 2004)

5 (Food an Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

6 (International Crisis Group 2001)

7 (UNICEF)

8 (Svenson et al. 1998, 1617)

9 (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2004)

10 (Jimenez 2004)

11 (Botelho)

12 (The East African Youth Coalition 2002)

13 (Barnard, Campbell and Smith 2003, 40-41)

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The Capable City

MAYOR

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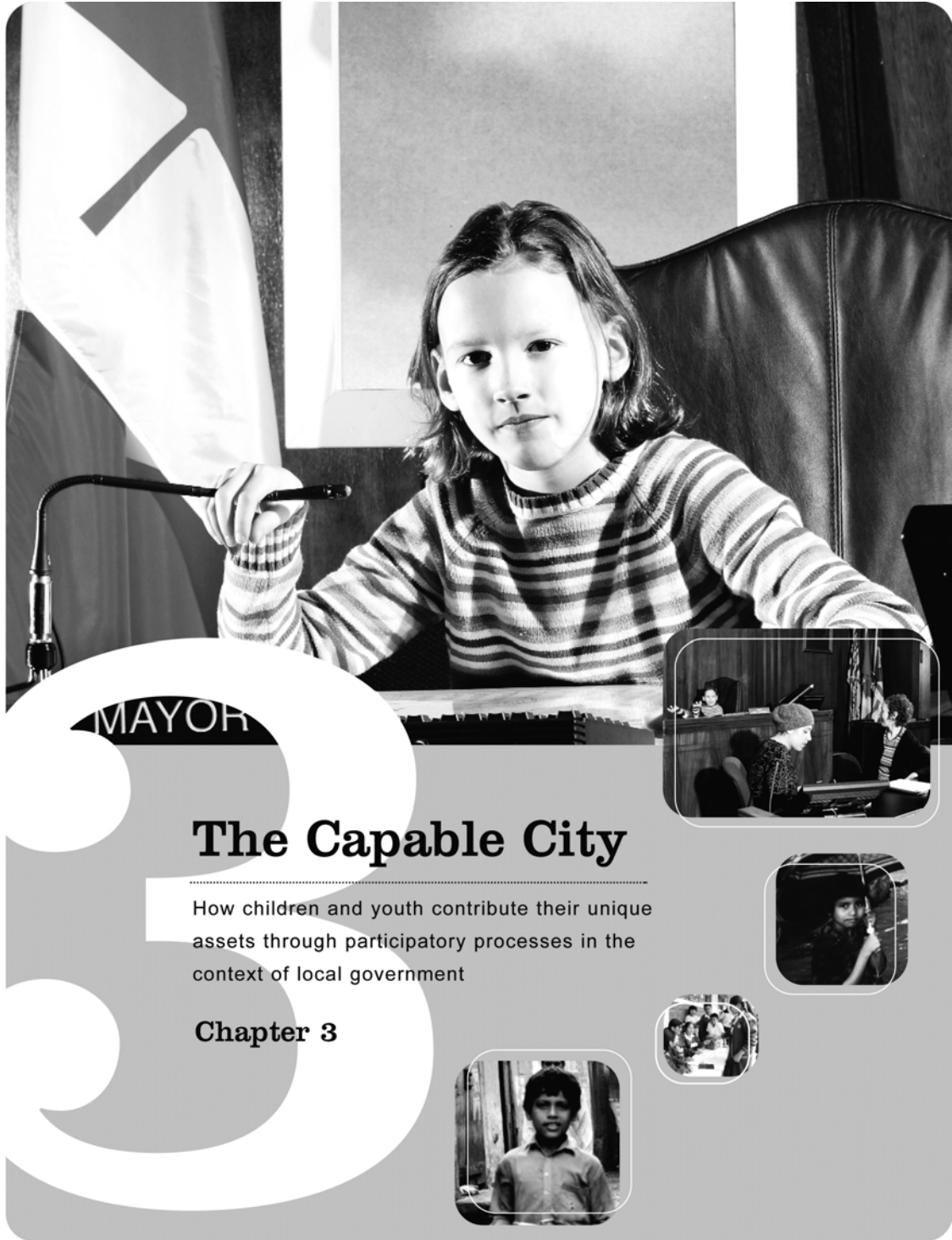
How children and youth contribute their unique assets through participatory processes in the context of local government

Chapter 3

"Youth Participation … requires that youth should participate in political decision making on all levels, and young people must be enabled to organize themselves in youth NGOs, students unions, trade unions, political parties, and in the creation of mass media, in order to fully participate in political, economic, social and cultural life."
- **Braga Youth Action Plan, World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Portugal, 1998**

"Young people are in the best position to know what is needed and the best way to offer programs to youth. They keep the organization relevant and provide future leadership."
- **Uzma Shakir, Executive Director, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians**

The Habitat Agenda international policy document, adopted at the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1997, advocates the importance of finding meaningful ways for children and youth to contribute their unique assets through participatory processes. In this chapter, we will focus on child and youth participation in the context of local government. In particular, we will examine:

1. **The inclusion of children and youth in government**

2. **Key Indicators of successful child and youth engagement in local government**

3. **Global examples of promising child and youth participatory programming in local governments**

4. **Exploring community asset mapping as an exemplary model of child and youth participation in action**

1 The inclusion of children and youth participation in government

As Louise Chawla, International Coordinator of the Growing Up in the Cities project, relates, "the inclusion of children and youth represents a new frontier in policy development." So why are people doing it? Aside from the generic answer that good public policy is contingent upon the involvement of affected stakeholders, there are some specific reasons why it is important to involve children and youth.

Using the example of involving children and youth in community planning processes, the research points to the following key benefits:

• Supports long-run community sustainability: as the members of our society with "the longest future of any group, they [children and youth] direct policy making toward the long-term."

• Develops a sense of belonging, and a sense of belonging has been shown to reduce the incidences of risk taking behaviour amongst children and youth.

• Enables children and youth to contribute their highly localized expertise to community planning processes, drawing attention to changes in their local environments that might be missed by adults.

• Enables children and youth to experience active citizenship at an early age, preparing them for a lifetime of active citizenship.

• Provides children and youth with direct access to skills and attitudes around sustainability that affect their ability to act as stewards of the environment across the generations.

Having children and youth participate in local government offers a range of benefits, both for the individual child and youth, and for society as a whole.

How local governments can engage children and youth meaningfully

There are a number of areas in which local governments can involve children and youth, ranging from community planning and budgeting to environmental monitoring and job creation. These are 'content domains' (subject specific). Within each 'content' domain of municipal activity, there are also a variety of activities that create 'entry points'--places where local governments can engage youth. As described below each of these areas has immense potential as well as challenges.

Research and consultation: Most cities allocate at least some of their resources to public consultation. In creating child and youth friendly cities, engaging young people in research and consultation is essential to ensuring that the perspectives and voices of young people are heard. This research needs to be imaginative and sensitive. It is important to develop ways of involving children that build on their own strengths, and that pays attention to their own use of language, developmental level, and social reality. Depending on the situation, through participatory action research processes such as community asset mapping, or more formalized research

> "Some of the specific things an organization can do to include young people are structure meetings that are user-friendly, and accept young people as they are. Food is important. We now alternate what we serve to suit their tastes, so we have pizza often. It's important to be cordial toward youth, supportive, and seek their comments."
>
> **- Ron Rock, Executive Director, East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club, Canada**

by youth such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews, young voices are heard and their contributions legitimized for policy and research audiences. Research with children, however, remains challenging because of the constant need to mediate communication and power relations between adult and child researchers.

Governance: Governance refers to the structures and processes local governments use to make decisions about the allocation of resources. For young people, the most common types of involvement in governance are through advisory committees and/or through councils, working groups, policy teams, etc. Structures are put in place for young people that emulate and parallel to those of adults. These formal structures can be very effective in that they institutionalize child and youth participation. Having closer access to power children and young people have a greater capacity to have input and make change. Often, however, these structures are not provided with real power so that children and youth do not become joint partners with government or institutions.

Project design, delivery, and evaluation: Research demonstrates that the involvement of youth in the design and delivery of programs results in positive health and educational outcomes for youth. Peer-to-peer program models in particular are recognized as one of the most effective ways of engaging children and youth. Many cities are starting to engage children and youth in program design, delivery and evaluation, with varying degrees of success. More research, analysis and support is needed to apply existing good practices in programming to the similar challenges faced in engaging children and youth in governance.

Despite the growing body of evidence which suggests that child and youth involvement is beneficial and that local governments and institutions recognize a need to involve children and youth, the experiences remain anecdotal and piece-meal. The many promising practices identified here need further research, evaluation, and documentation in order to make the most of participatory program delivery and ensure more fluid participatory processes.

The next section will posit some indicators of successful child and youth engagement in local government. Following this review, we will highlight promising practices of engaging youth in local governments, organizations, and other institutions.

2 Key indicators of successful child and youth engagement in local government

A review of promising practices that involve child and youth engagement in local government points to key indicators for success. These indicators, while still preliminary,

provide a useful framework for our review of participatory programming around the globe.

In the *Capable City* key indicators of successful participatory initiatives seem to be:

a) **Inclusion –** special care is taken to "include girls, the youngest, and those from marginalized groups".

b) **Experiential learning –** a range of structured and informal opportunities to contribute exist, which enable children and youth to "assume graduated levels of responsibility and independence in decision-making" (including participatory action research).

c) **Localization –** activities are rooted in the lived experiences, spaces and places that children and youth inhabit.

d) **Adult-youth partnerships –** strong networks and relationships with adult supporters; clear roles and decision-making spheres that allow each partner to contribute their unique assets; shared decision-making power where possible and appropriate.

e) **Institutionalization –** local governments champion the inclusion of children and youth as routine practice; strong political commitment.

f) **Capacity-Building –** concrete steps are taken to strengthen the ability of youth and adults to participate in the work at hand and work together.

Preliminary research suggests that government programs and institutions that incorporate and/or demonstrate these indicators are successful.

3 Global examples of promising child and youth participatory programming in local governments

The examples included below are a selection of projects from Vancouver and around the globe that are reviewed through the lenses of the key indicators of successful child and youth engagement in local government.

Inclusion

Many decision-makers struggle with ensuring that the voices of traditionally marginalized youth are heard and seriously taken into account. Two projects have been

successful in overcoming this common challenge: (1) PACT project in the City of York, United Kingdom; (2) Bhima Sangha in Karnataka State, India.

PACT, City of York

Through the PACT project, youth are hired on as staff by the City of York to establish a liaison with the community of youth with disabilities. The youth are trained as researchers, and use a variety of consultation tools to engage youth with disabilities in discussions about a range of social policy issues (e.g. housing, transportation, employment). The data they collect is written up and presented to Council for consideration, giving youth with disabilities a direct voice to elected decision-makers.

Bhima Sangha (CWC), India

In Karnataka, India, the organization Concern for Working Children (CWC) helped to spark the development of Bhima Sangha, an association of working children with a current membership of over 20,000. This organization supports the continuous process of child participation allowing for child-centred development and interventions. The organization has focused on a range of issues to protect the livelihood, wellbeing, and dignity of child workers. For example, Bhima Sangha members found that a major reason for children quitting the school is that they have to fetch firewood from distance places, as far as 5-7 kilometres, after which they would attend school. Through a series of discussion at Bhima Sangha a conclusion was drawn that if they planted trees in the common lands, they could get sufficient firewood without going to far away places, and the children could attend school more regularly while also working. A request was made to the Forest Department to see tree samplings and authorization to plant in the common lands.

Though these programs have different operating environments, each share a commitment to marginalized populations and to celebrating the resiliency of children and youth. Provided with the capacity, marginalized children can identify their needs best, local governments needs to be receptive to meeting these.

Experiential Learning / Localization

Volumes of research point out that most children and youth learn best by doing. Research and experience also suggest that beliefs and attitudes about environmental stewardship are sustained in children who participate in hands-on activities in their neighbourhoods, as opposed to those who learn about the environment in a classroom. The advantage of experiential learning activities is that they build upon what is usually a highly localized relationship to space and place. Several projects engage children and youth in projects that immediately contribute to strengthening their local community: the Children's Parliaments in Slovenia; and Municipal School Committees in Peru.

Accion por los niños, Peru

In Peru, Municipal School Committees are organizations run by children and adolescents that operate throughout the educational system. In these communities, children and youth build their self-esteem, social skills and sense of belonging to the community with the support of teachers. The activities support and complement the curriculum in providing a holistic education for children and youth and strengthening the development of rights that respect values, citizenship and democracy. Currently, there are approximately 5,000 educational centers with municipal school committees throughout Peru supported by 7 organizations under the coordination of Accion por los Niños. Amongst the many examples of issues taken on by the committees is the one in Tarapoto that approached education authorities and companies to not close down a school for children with disabilities.

Children's Parliament, Slovenia

In Slovenia, the Children's Parliament takes place in schools, communities and at the national level. The aim of the parliament is to draw public attention to children and their voices and give children an active and participating role in creating their own future. The project promotes cooperation between many actors including civil society and the state, children from primary schools, youth mentors from high schools, and teachers. The parliament uses age-specific engagement techniques: for younger children; they are able to express themselves through art and other creative expression. For example, at a community parliament in the city of Ljubljana, a youth group performed a skit for their peers and adults as a way of presenting information on gender differences, healthy relationships, sexuality, and the importance of respecting one another. Older youth can express themselves through debate and discussion between each other and adults on matters that concern them, their families and their communities.

Each of the above models has developed local capacities to engage children and youth in governance and in program development and delivery. The outcomes benefit both the children and the community at large.

Adult-youth partnerships & Institutionalization

Strong adult partnerships are one of the hallmarks of projects that fully engage children and youth. While some projects had strong partnerships with adults in the community (service providers, children's aid workers, activists, business people) most identified having adult allies inside a local political institution, be that a School Board, municipal government, regional authority or national government.

These latter projects include the Youth Roundtable on the Environment, Canada; Municipal Youth Committee in Malindi, Kenya; Barra Mansa: City Youth Parliament Project, Brasil; the Bhima Sangha/Makkala Panchayats in Karnataka; the Youth Commission Ville De Gatineau, Canada, and the Vancouver District Student Council - District Budget Student Survey, Vancouver.

Youth Roundtable on the Environment, Canada

The Canadian Ministry of the Environment established the Youth Roundtable on the Environment (YRTE) in June of 1997, acting on the call from the Action 21 plan created at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. This roundtable has 12 representatives selected from among several national, provincial and territorial youth organizations, and advises the minister of Environment on issues key to youth. Their most recent consultation on child and youth friendly cities brought forward a broad range of recommendations on issues such as: making cities safer through the creation of more public commons areas; creating livable cities through the provision of micro-loans to environmentally sustainable projects; and increasing youth's knowledge and involvement in government through interactive ways such as theatre. The YRTE is an excellent example of how local issues as defined by youth can be brought to national government.

Malindi Youth Consultative Council, Kenya

The Malindi Youth Consultative Committee (MYCC) was launched on Malindi Youth Day in September 2002 by the Mayor and the Municipal Council. Also known as the "Junior Council", the MYCC is composed of an elected youth representative from each of Malindi's 12 wards. Trained and supported by a Kenyan NGO, the MYCC conducted a participatory youth survey that revealed most youth (including some MYCC members) had very little understanding of the municipal decision-making process and limited participation. To address this, the MYCC set up a Steering Committee of business leaders, municipal officials, central government representatives, religious and community leaders to provide guidance to the youth and start up resources (office space, computers, stationary). MYCC priorities include participating in the Malindi Council budgeting process and exploring ways to increase youth employment. The MYCC is now firmly embedded in the local wards, and has a strong relationship with Malindi City Council as they begin to engage youth in Malindi.

Barra Mansa: City Youth Parliament Project, Brasil

Barra Mansa, in the State of Rio de Janeiro, was the first Latin American city to include children and youth in municipal budgeting. Their 'Children's Participatory Budgeting Council' (CPBC) is an outstanding example of meaningful participation, in that Council created and resourced a participatory decision making structure and then gave them full

decision making power over substantial resources ($125,000US). In the CPBC, eighteen boys and girls are elected by their peers to make budget decisions using a process that mimics the adult council. As noted in the UN Habitat Paper on Youth and Governance, "the process begins at neighbourhood level where everyone between 9 and 15 years is eligible to vote, and delegates go to district assemblies where the youth council members are selected. Some 6000 children and young people have been involved each year since 1998. The resulting projects have included tree planting, school repairs, drain and sewer repairs, improved playgrounds, security, and health services in low-income areas".

> *Adult members and staff need to understand what youth are all about. One idea is to have youth facilitate a training session, almost like a cultural studies workshop. Through this they can teach the older members what's cool with young people, decode jargon and interpret behaviours to break down misunderstandings.*
>
> **Cathy Dyer, Project Leader, Youth In Care Connections Program, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), Canada**

A similar participatory budget program is being undertaken by the Vancouver District Student Council in Vancouver, Canada. The Vancouver District Student Council undertook two budget surveys with a response of 4,000 and 14,000 students respectively. The students' opinions and suggestions were collated by the district and influenced the decisions made by the Vancouver School Board in allocating money.

Makkala Panchayats (CWC), India

In India, the working children's movement had strong adult partnerships from the very beginning with the NGO Concerned for Working Children (CWC). As time passed, they began to recognize the value of engaging municipal government and set up Makkala Panchayats (children's governments) in each of the local districts. Recognizing the importance of representing a diversity of children's voices, the children saw the need to ensure seats are reserved for girls and children with disabilities. Each Makkala Panchayat is supported by a Task Force, made up of local government functionaries and a Makkala Mitra, an adult friend assigned to every child who acts as an advocate and provides any necessary assistance. The Task Force and the Mitra have proven to be invaluable in ensuring structural links to the formal adult bodies that set village level policy.

Youth Commission Ville De Gatineau, Canada

The Youth Commission in Ville de Gatineau was established in 2001 for young people ages 12 to 17. It currently represents 14 000 adolescents. Early political support was essential to putting the Commission in place. Approval of a yearly budget, the appointment of three city councilors to the youth file, and the hiring of a staff followed

this process. The Commission's mandate is to transmit to municipal council all recommendations regarding the planning, development and improvement of adolescent's life quality in Gatineau. Priority files for the young people currently include: recognition, culture and recreation, security, transport, work and voluntary work.

Each of these examples point to the need to nurture adult-youth partnerships, as well as the need for institutionalizing youth involvement into formal structures. They suggest that the more committed adult and children are in working together on strengthening relationships, the more likely the institutionalization process is to become successful. It can be especially challenging to strike a balance that reflects both respect for each perspective and effectiveness in bringing about change with children and young people. It is to be noted that this may be most difficult with younger children.

Capacity-Building

Several of the projects reviewed specifically outlined the importance of increasing the capacity of children and youth to meaningfully participate in local government. This can be done in two ways: first, by increasing the accessibility of local government and its structures to involve youth; second, by increasing the capacity of youth to be involved in local governance, and local government to work with children and youth.

Many municipalities follow a participatory method of adult-youth partnerships. This model underscores the challenge of mixing adult and youth "cultures" and the need to have a strong commitment from both adults and youth to learn from one another. One example of a successful adult-youth partnership is in Vancouver, Canada, where a team of youth workers, the Youth Outreach Team (YOT), is championing child and youth engagement as the way to do business.

Youth Outreach Team, Vancouver

The Youth Outreach Team is made up of four youth, hired on as city staff to move forward the Civic Youth Strategy, the City of Vancouver's 1995 policy commitment to supporting youth and involving them in decision making. Hiring youth as staff in 2003 was a new step for the municipality. With youth staff dedicated to improving youth involvement in the municipality, the City can now tap into their expertise and connections in the community to move forward three primary goals:

• to build the capacity of city staff to engage youth meaningfully (in consultations and decision making related to "the development, assessment, and delivery of civic services that have a direct impact on youth")

• to build the capacity of youth and youth groups to engage municipal government in order to advance various social agendas

• to profile positive stories of youth achievement and celebrate the youth community

As a result of their work, in partnership with youth driven organizations, youth service providers and youth themselves, YOT members work to ensure that civic resources will be used as effectively as possible to support youth in Vancouver to lead healthy, fulfilling lives; youth will have an opportunity to take action around civic issues that are important to them, through local action and policy development; residents of the City of Vancouver (including but not limited to youth) will have an opportunity to witness and celebrate youth achievement.

So far the YOT has worked with the:

- Mayor's Office to provide education and support around how to effectively engage youth in public forums

- Planning Department on how to tap into the assets of local youth (using community asset mapping tool as described below)

- Engineering Department on how to design and deliver interactive discussions on graffiti

- 2010 Olympic Bid Corporation on how to engage youth in consultations and in decision-making

- Secondary school staff on how to engage youth and local community members in discussing and improving school safety

The key factor enabling all of this work to move forward has been the commitment by the City to hire youth as staff, recognizing their expertise. In Vancouver, city staff are no longer asking "why" they should engage youth. They are now asking "how", and turning to the Youth Outreach Team and community partners like the kinex youth initiative and the Environmental Youth Alliance to answer those questions.

One tool that has proven to be valuable in supporting city staff to engage youth in consultations and decision-making is community mapping, a tool that is in use world wide. In Vancouver, the organization with expertise in this area is the Environmental Youth Alliance, which has worked with the YOT to make community mapping available to the Park Board and the City Planning Department.

4 Exploring community asset mapping as an exemplary model of child and youth participation in action

"Mapping helps us share the stories of young people, and encourages us to write new chapters in our lives."

-Katrina Ao, EYA Youth Community Asset Mapping Team

Community asset mapping is one of the many effective tools for engaging children and youth in local government. When most of us think of maps, we imagine professional drawings that identify and locate resources, territories, and peoples. These maps also convey institutional power and authority. Community mapping changes this perspective by locating a much different source of power: children and youth.

Mapping supports local engagement by helping children and youth chart their perspectives, ideas, needs and visions for the community.

Community mapping is an accessible tool of participatory action for local government that enables children and youth to create visual representations of themselves and their communities through images and text. Through mapmaking, information gathered is used to address and resolve specific local, social, economic and environmental challenges relevant to children and youth in their communities. Maps provide an accessible tool with which to gather perspectives and mobilize children and youth to influence decisions that impact their communities.

Community mapping includes the voices of children and youth

As Driskell, author of *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation* suggests, community mapping "creates opportunities for young people to voice their experiences, ideas and concerns, and encourage active listening from other community members, including other young people."

For example, at the United Nations Environment Program International Children's Conference on the Environment, held in Victoria, Canada, a group of 400 children aged 10 - 12 year from over 60 different countries engaged in community mapping to understand and articulate their collective voice. Working together in small groups, children began by literally mapping themselves: they traced an outline of one member on a piece of paper. Within the outline, they drew and described the one environmental issue most important to them and decided what project and action they would initiate in their own community. Outside of the outline they described what they wanted world leaders to do in order to address the environmental issue. The emphasis of this mapping exercise was to enable the children to understand themselves as a unique collective, separate, but also linked to the world community in general. This process further enabled the children to recognize their shared

values, concerns, roles and responsibilities, as well as to articulate a clear set of demands to world leaders, presented at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Mapping supports strong adult - child/youth partnerships

Community mapping creates strong adult-child/youth partnerships by providing young people with an opportunity to share ideas and collaborate with "enabling adults." Enabling adults are receptive to the input of young people and strive to ensure child and youth participation leads to important actions within the community. For example, in Halifax, a team of youth between the ages of 14 to 18, supported by the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development used community mapping to find out how to make their community a better place to live. After identifying the need to improve the grounds of a local school, J.L. Isley high school, the youth team invited members of the local community to help map out a plan for improving the school grounds.

Mapping is a critical tool of peer-led initiatives

Community mapping ensures children and youth adopt leadership roles, working with their peers to define their own needs and issues in the community. Mapmaking "starts with a 'clean slate' so that young people themselves can define their needs and priorities, and provide opportunities for young people to 'be in charge." For example, a group of Latin youth in Vancouver, Canada, supported by the youth Student Commission, a local youth organization, used mapping as a frame to organize themselves around an issue they felt needed addressing: the unrecognized language barriers in their community. In an entirely youth-driven effort, they mapped out which services were Spanish-speaking; what the services offered youth and how they could be best accessed, thereby identifying the community gaps and strengths in this area. Mapping provided a way to frame and address their issues in a way that was not overwhelming, resulting in a process that enabled youth to take full control - from identifying the issue, to collecting and presenting user-friendly, accessible data.

Mapping supports localized involvement of children and youth in their communities

Community mapping begins where children and youth experience their lives — both in terms of place and understanding. This process allows young people to build their local knowledge and act as co-researchers in determining the issues that impact them. For example, in Bangalore, India, over 600 college students participated in a comprehensive survey of 9 of Bangalore's wards in a project that combined the use of a new skill with their extensive knowledge of their home places. After receiving mapping training from Swati Ramanathan and Janaagraha volunteers, each group of students worked for

approximately one full week to survey the use of every property as well as several street features in the wards. Their neighborhood maps will be used to guide the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) in developing the next Comprehensive Development Plan for Bangalore and will remain as a part of the official city records. Through mapping, youth were able to use their extensive knowledge base to have a voice in future community plans.

Community mapping relates to the local and everyday experiences of children and youth. Starting with their local area as a tangible focal point, young people identify the urgent needs and priorities that are most relevant in their everyday lives. For example, in Victoria, Canada, children aged 12 and 13 worked with facilitators from GroundWorks to map an assessment of the heath of their region during a conference set up by the local school district and regional health authority. The youth drew on their definitions and experience in their neighbourhoods to identify what places were healthy and what physical conditions contributed to healthier living, such as restaurants, trees, and basketball courts. Theses ideas were then assembled on a map of the region, enabling health authorities and children to see what the children valued, and what future health initiatives could be developed in tandem with the schools.
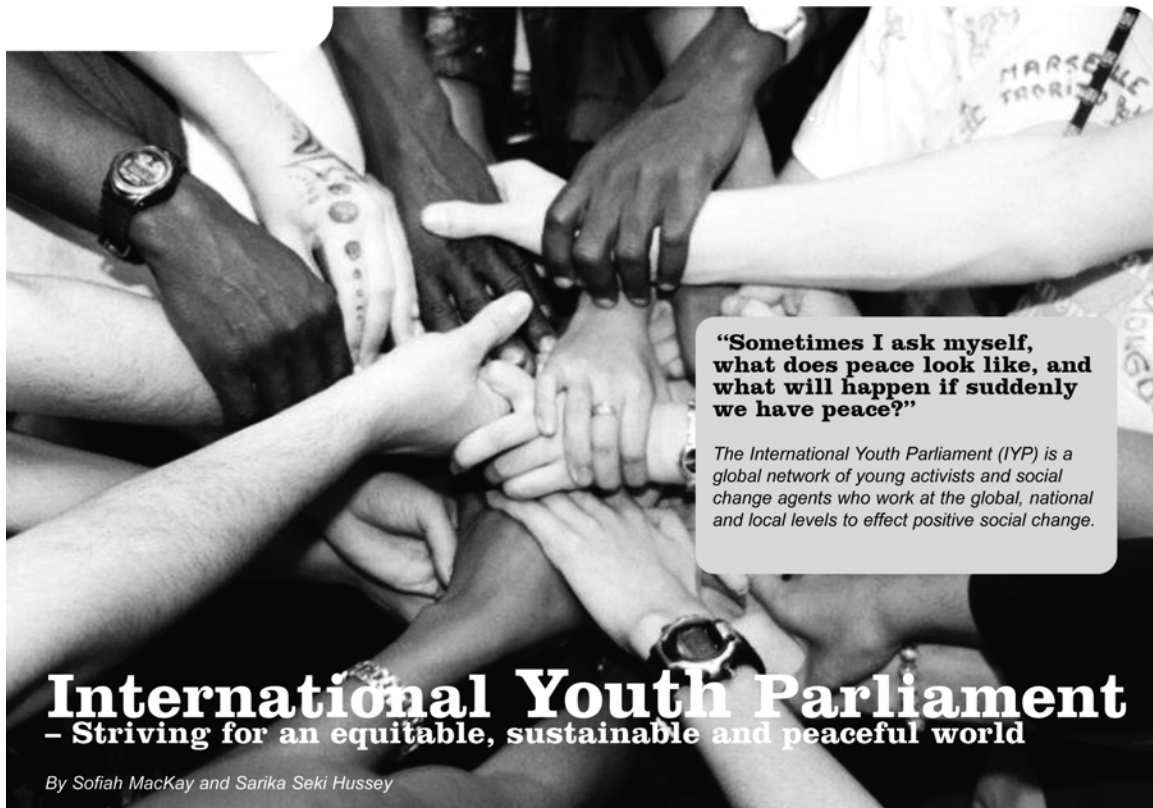
Mapping as a powerful tool of participatory engagement

Community mapping helps children and youth shape their communities, whether through localized, on-the-ground projects, or in contributing to the policy planning, research and setting development priorities with local governments and institutions. As a practical and applicable tool, community mapping embodies the participatory principles of listening to young peoples' voices, supporting child/youth and adult collaboration, supporting children and youth to assume decision-making roles, fostering critical awareness, and promoting local knowledge and skill sets.

As local governments work with community mapping, they often recognize the need to combine the tool with others such as focus groups or interviews. It may be that community mapping is good to begin a process, to identify children's perspectives. This could then be used to develop a survey or other formal methods. Central throughout is to remain true to the dynamic process of participatory action research to bring about change in the everyday life of children and young people to better meet their needs and dreams.

Conclusion

As the research and examples show, it is both desirable and possible to give children and youth a meaningful role in the development of human settlements. In the Capable City, local governments are tapping into the assets of all of their citizens in laying the foundations for an active, vibrant, engaged citizenry. These young citizens in turn build healthy, socially inclusive, economically vibrant and environmentally sound human settlements which in turn become the foundation for successful, sustainable cities and states.

International Youth Parliament
– Striving for an equitable, sustainable and peaceful world

By Sofiah MacKay and Sarika Seki Hussey

The International Youth Parliament (IYP) is a global network of young activists and social change agents who work at the global, national and local levels to effect positive social change. As Soraya Mentoor, 24, South African IYP Action Partner, puts it: "Youth are the leaders of today, and not tomorrow. We are assets, not liabilities. We are solutions not a problem to be solved."

We use the word parliament in our name in a symbolic sense. Parliament represents a space in which community agendas are set, strategies are developed to address key issues, and decisions made. It is a space from which young people have traditionally been excluded. As such, the IYP represents a reclaiming of that space – an active response to some of the key issues that face our world.

The three key action areas for the International Youth Parliament are conflict, breaking the poverty cycle, and cultural activism. From neighbourhood disputes to war between countries, we must choose whether we want to let the conflict around us continue or be part of the solution, and find methods that are culturally appropriate and adapted to the specific situation. "Sometimes I ask myself, what does peace look like, and what will happen if suddenly we have peace?" The question is one posed by IYP Action Partner Stella Matutina Herny Bagho, 29, from Sudan, a nation ravaged by decades of civil war.

She was recently involved in the historical first African Youth Parliament bringing together young social change agents to develop youthful solutions for key challenges in Africa. Elnara Babayeva, 21, an IYP Action Partner from Azerbaijan, and founder of an NGO called Lighthouse, is currently working on an income-generating project for displaced young Azeri women, living camps for people forced to flee from territories of Nagorno-Karabakh held by neighbouring Armenia. "The crucial point is that I didn't give up, when facing a lot of obstacles in my work. My strong motivation helped me to start a new organization and manage with a number of other activities."

Young people are devising ways of breaking the poverty stranglehold. In the view of Thanh Han Tran, 16, from Vietnam, "eradication of poverty should be more important than anything. The best strategy is education". Ana Maria Marin, 29, a journalist and IYP Action Partner, from Colombia adds: "Globalization is creating new boundaries and strengthening the existing frontiers. What do the so called 'First world' know about us? Private enterprises know about our natural resources, governments know about our debts, ordinary citizens know about our problems and failures. For many reasons we have narrow and erroneous perceptions about each other." Ana Maria recently developed a project called Crafts for Economy and Peace in partnership with the NGO Corporacion Paz y Democracia, to ensure safe and sustainable livelihoods for 10 young female leaders, ex-combatants and victims of her country's armed conflict.

Recently, the youth parliament launched a Youth Commission into Globalization. In a new report soon to be published, young authors will raise the issues that concern them most: Access to and privatization of education, HIV/AIDS, young workers in Export Processing Zones, the trafficking of young women, indigenous youth, vulnerability of agricultural youth, violence and young people's security, globalization of youth activism and human rights, technology, water, and global culture and identity. The report is intended for decision makers in government, corporations, multilateral institutions and NGOs as well as for individuals. It will carry an action agenda with recommendations for specific changes to reduce the negative impact of globalization and enhance the positive aspects.

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Uniting for a better world. © Claude Sandler
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1 (Brada Youth Action Plan 1998)

2 (Chawla 2002, 12)

3 (McCreary Centre Society)

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6 (Christensen and James 2000)

7 (Komro et al. 1996, 328334); (Adams and Ingham 1998)

8 (Chawla 2002, 14)

9 (Chawla 2002, 17)

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11 (Thomashow 1995)

12 (Chawla 2002; Nabhan and Trimble 1994)

13 (UNHABITAT 2006, 3940)

14 (City of Toronto 2004)

15 (Sobel 1997)

16 (Driskell 2003)

17 (BlanchetCohen et al. 2004)

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Photo Credit - Lee Caruthers – Kids Mapping, Carmacks

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YOUCan: Peacebuilding Builder (Modules 1-8). http://www.youcan.ca/html/tools/price_list.html

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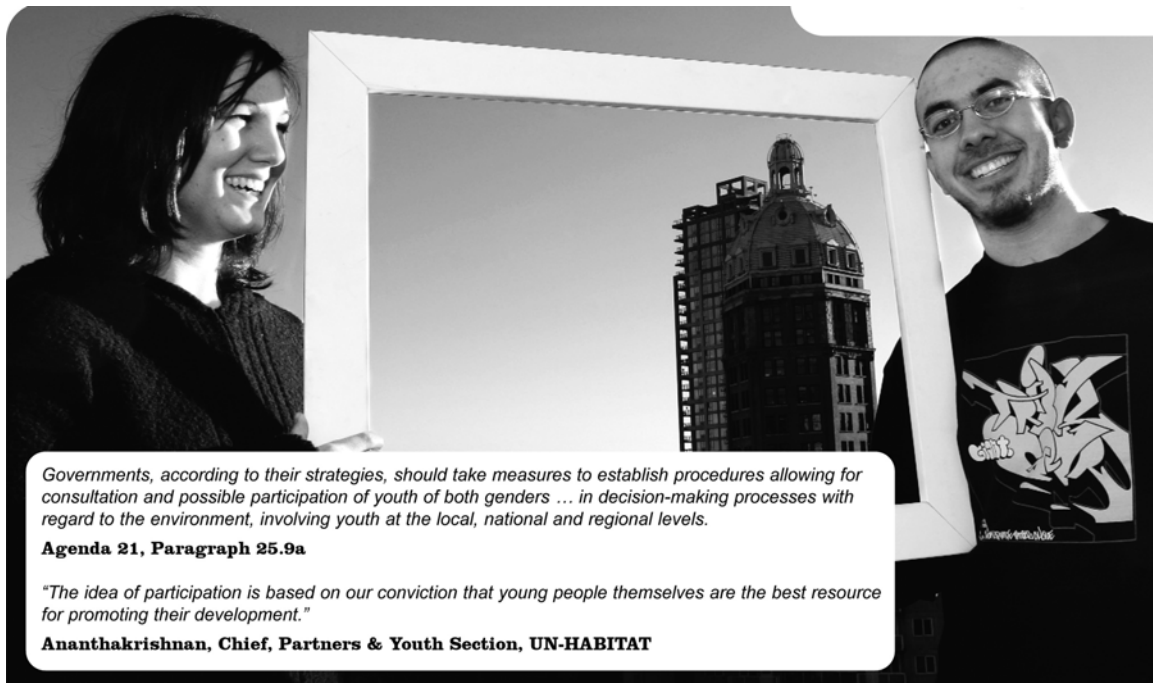Youth Hands, Youth Voices Manual. http://www.eya.ca/yaec/for_gov't_story_01.html

The Liveable City

How young people are creating more sustainable, accessible, and inclusive urban environments

Chapter 4

Governments, according to their strategies, should take measures to establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders … in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, involving youth at the local, national and regional levels.

Agenda 21, Paragraph 25.9a

"The idea of participation is based on our conviction that young people themselves are the best resource for promoting their development."

Ananthakrishnan, Chief, Partners & Youth Section, UN-HABITAT

The Livable City encompasses both the physical and social environment as it relates to its citizens. The livability of city can be defined as the relationship between the abundance or deprivation of its physical and social assets, and the social process which govern how and where these assets are distributed amongst its citizenry. This social process is represented by three guiding principles: (1) accessibility, (2) equity and (3) participation. Together, these principles represent a dynamic process that determines whether citizens indeed have equal access to their resources, as well as an equitable role in city planning, decision-making, and policy-making. Citizens globally have varying degrees of access to participatory processes in city governance.

Children and youth are in a unique position. From a developmental perspective, their need for an adequate and an appropriate physical and social environment are greatest. As young citizens, however, their basic needs and resources are regulated by and through others (e.g. families, community). They do not enjoy a direct relationship to the system which allocates the often scarce assets of a city. Young people are often not treated equitably, their civic engagement limited due to their age. Nevertheless, we have found that when children and youth are given an opportunity to have a more dominant role in meeting key physical and social needs, the result is more sustainable environments, and livable cities.

This chapter will examine some of the dynamic and progressive actions of young people around the world who are driving innovative responses to the alleviation of poverty, pollution, and inequality, at a local level. They demonstrate that rather than being vulnerable populations, children and youth can be, and are, true and equitable partners in creating livable cities.

The chapter examines the involvement of child and youth in creating livable cities through five key issue areas:

1. **Livability – Water & sanitation**

2. **Livability – Food security & greenspace**

3. **Livability – Sustainable technology & innovation**

4. **Livability – Transportation planning & development**

5. **Livability – Going 'Glocal'**

1 Livability – Water & Sanitation

'We have lots of problems with water. Sometimes we don't get water sometimes we get it. It often only comes for twenty minutes. Because of my water problem, I can't go anywhere in the evening to play. My dream: water in the morning'.

-Swapna, age 12, India

Many people in cities, especially those populations most marginalized, experience a constant struggle to access basic needs. For example, one of the greatest threats facing children and youth in developing countries, and even in developed countries, is lack of water. Particularly in isolated communities and urban slums, populations struggle with issues of water quality and inadequate or inaccessible water supplies. This deprivation poses a serious threat to children and youth who, at a critical stage of stage of their growth and development, are most susceptible to life-threatening diseases that can be prevented by improving water quality and proper sanitation. It is estimated that improvements in water supply, and particularly sanitation and hygiene, can reduce the incidence of diarrhea by 22% and resulting deaths by 65%. Children living in poor urban areas also suffer disproportionately from inadequate water supply. Often, women and girls bear the greatest responsibility in expending time and energy to collect water from distant sources.

Globally, responsibility to provide children with the basic right to access adequate water supplies lies foremost with local governments. As per the commitment made by World State Parties for the coming decade in a world fit for Children there is a commitment to reduce the 'proportion of households without access to hygienic sanitation facilitation and affordable and safe drinking water by at least one third.' In reality, access and

distribution of appropriate water supplies often reflect complex economic, social and political priorities. Given this interdependent context of priority setting, power and influence, children's capacity to effect change may seem limited. The stories in this section, however, demonstrate that children can play an influential and persuasive role in bringing to the attention of municipalities their right to access water. Young people further display a remarkable ability to educate their community and peers about hygiene and sanitation, as illustrated in the story below.

Earth's grand-children, Venezuela

In the shanty-towns of the big city, Maracaibo, a group of Wayuu children, seeing that their community was being ravaged by diarrhea, put together a puppet play to present basic health information to their peers and mothers. With the technical advice from health service providers, they developed skits with simple information such as how children needed to be fed, kept clean and how to treat diarrhea. Elmis, 14, an initiator of the children's group, attributes the success of the plays to the fact that information is presented in a fun way, and adapted to their reality. Within a year, the children made over 50 presentations in and around their community. The municipality health officials claim that mortality rates were reduced by half that year. It was realized that children have an incomparable capacity to diffuse information and can improve health conditions. A number of children's committees took on health as their major issue; they became known as the "health lookouts", in Wayunaikii, Suluin Maa, meaning Earth's grandchildren.

The redevelopment of the Woodward's building is, both practically and symbolically, key to the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside.

The Woodward's building once provided food, household goods and employment to people in the lowest income neighborhood of Vancouver—the Downtown Eastside—and the city in general. The store closed in 1993 and the building has sat despite several failed attempts to redevelop the site. The fate of this building has been the subject of much debate focusing on need for social housing in Vancouver.

Woodward's has come to represent this demand due in part to its long-term vacancy and the deterioration of the neighborhood surrounding it. There has been an exodus of legitimate business and a lack of new investment. Eastside residents now face high unemployment, poverty, high rates of drug use, and other challenges to their well-being.

The City of Vancouver initiated a consultation process in May 2003 to identify the community's vision for the site, with a specific focus on including the voices of youth. During this event, the Ideas Fair, the Environmental Youth Alliance and the City's Youth Outreach Team facilitated mapping workshops with youth to offer them the opportunity to express their ideas for the site's redevelopment. Their input, along with the input from the wider Vancouver community, was directed to the City's housing department, which is still in process of planning Woodward's future.

2 Livability – Food security & greenspace

A proper diet is necessary for the healthy development of children and youth. Providing adequate household food security is central to ensuring sustained improvements in the nutritional well-being of children and families. The development of a child and a youth also depends on their physical environment. Access to parks and greenspace are considered to be a key condition for the social and mental health of children. Research shows that the emotional security and trust in the world is rooted not only in a child's relationships with other people but in the security, familiarity and predictability of their physical environment. Children need to have access to spaces within cities where they feel comfortable.

Local food and greenspace are often viewed as the antithesis of what defines a city. Cities are concrete spaces in which people import their food from outside city borders, and places where people become disconnected from their natural environments. Far from being detached citizens, young people are often intimately connected to their environments and, as the following stories suggest, are at the forefront of preserving food supplies and creating safer, healthier living spaces. For many young people, cities are not monolithic structures, but localized communities in which they learn, play, create and build their capacities. One such vital space is the Strathcona and Cottonwood Community Gardens in the downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Environmental Youth Alliance Youth Garden, Vancouver

Land to grow food is as precious as the air we breathe and the water we drink to the vast majority of people who inhibit this planet. Having a small plot to grow vegetables in lean times can save your life and provide human dignity. Human displacement from the land world wide, including Canada, has resulted in our bursting cities where land is elusive to

the young & the poor. For a young person to have control over a piece of land here is unheard of. Even in these circumstances people will go to extreme lengths to seek out pockets of soil to plant a seed whether they own the land or not.

The EYA Youth Garden was born from the extremely successful Strathcona Community Garden. The Strathcona Community Garden began to till the soil in 1985, and through numerous battles with city officials who owned the land, displacement, and massive organizing efforts by the local community they gained a legal lease for 3.5 acres of land to grow food on

small plots in inner city Vancouver. This lease was expanded in 1993 to include the EYA Youth Garden & the Cottonwood Garden site for a grand total of 7 acres, an unprecedented size for local food, grown by a group of low-income residents in the poorest neighbourhood in Canada. A Community Garden revolution in Vancouver and their eventual acceptance at the government level has resulted.

Youth were an absolute cornerstone to the extension of the Garden to 7 acres. The Strathcona Garden was full and they pointed the EYA youth in the direction of a brambled garbage heap and said, "no one's using that, why don't you start there…" Though the land was owned by the city's Engineering Department, it was not being used. So, with a leap of faith, a team of EYA Youth tilled the soil, planted seeds, and learned from the Strathcona "mother garden".

The Youth Garden has acted as a food system training ground & ecological oasis ever since, where hundreds of children and youth have learned the basics of food growing & stewarding with Mother Nature. The youth harvest what they grow, often share meals, make medicines, grow and collect seed for other low income gardeners, schools, and next years crop. They learn the cycles of life, that nothing tastes better than something ripe from the vine, and that the act of growing food has a revolutionary effect that never goes away.

Here, the land is controlled by youth and nature, an indominable combination that has resulted in one of the most successful community development examples in Vancouver. The success of the Youth Garden has spun off into numerous initiatives city wide that include youth roof top gardens, nursery depots, and micro-enterprise developments. For youth the City seems livable, with your boots in the soil and your hands harvesting food from your own plot of land.

3 Livability – Sustainable technology & innovation

A livable city is one that finds sustainable solutions to preserving clean air, water, and other natural resources as well as provides for energy-efficient solutions to meet the basic needs of citizens. While such innovation may seem beyond a young person's capacity, we find that children and youth are deeply committed to their environments, finding ingenious ways to preserve the healthy state of their cities. Two youth from South Africa have demonstrated such capacity by producing solar-powered food cookers and 'wonder boxes'. Their innovation not only helps the environment but also provides a potential source for revenue generation.

Solar Cookers and Wonder Boxes, South Africa

Azola Lingani is 13 years old and lives in Ndyebo, South Africa. Azola's home community of Port Elizabeth is faced with unemployment and environmental

degradation. Azola, working with her school Eco-club has come up with an invention: a solar cooker and 'wonderbox' that provides a source for employment and environmental sustainability. A 'wonderbox' is a type of insulated box that can be used to cook food and the solar cooker has a reflective surface that is used to cook food with the sun's heat.

Along with club members, Azola reaches out to her community by selling the wonderbox for 30 rand ($6 Cdn) and solar cooker for 25 rand ($5 Cdn) as an inexpensive and healthy alternative to using electricity. Working in partnership with her classmates and teacher, Azola has developed a sustainable environmental strategy that is practical and based on the local needs and assets of the community. Through such partnership, young people can fully engage in improving their livelihoods.

Azola's experiential engagement is an inclusive participatory model of engagement that needs to be recognized, researched and sustained, if children and youth are to be equally involved in improving the livability of communities.

4 Livability – Transportation planning & development

Transportation systems affect the quality of our lives in many ways beyond the time we spend commuting. The efficiency of the local and regional transportation systems can affect the quality of the air we breathe, the safety of our children, how we spend our leisure time, and the ways in which we access services and local communities. City planners need to ensure transportation systems meet the needs of children and youth while avoiding the danger of traffic as a major obstacle to children's safety. In numerous countries, traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for young people.

Prince George Public Interest Group (PGPIG), Prince George, Canada

In British Columbia, a local and national youth group has taken on the challenge of involving youth meaningfully in policy deliberations in support of sustainable transportation. In 2002, youth groups from a local university in the town of Prince George began a participatory process to engage youth and the general public in discussing transportation issues in the upcoming municipal elections.

Supported by Youth Action Effecting Change (YAEC), a national youth capacity building network, students from the PGPIRG and partners set out to create a forum that would bring local citizens and municipal candidates together for meaningful democratic exchange. They chose to forgo the traditional political forum, and brought the community, candidates and city staff together around tables to discuss issues concerning sustainable transportation. Through a youth-facilitated process, which incorporated the participatory tool of community mapping, the forum was a great success. Some 17 of 22 election candidates were in attendance along with close to 50 community and youth

participants. A positive and effective relationship was established between the students, the community and incoming councilors. Following the forum, students and the community remain involved in formal policy processes, and are consulted in the design of Prince George's transportation system. PGPIRG is a strong example of how a youth group can initiate community-based participatory process that support formal processes of local government.

5 Livability - Going Glocal

For many years, an important concept promoted by social justice activists, environmentalists and others working at the grassroots to create more livable cities has been: "think globally, act locally." While this idea remains powerful, a number of more recent initiatives (such as the World Social Forum) have been predicated on a related but much more all-encompassing concept: think and act, locally and globally.

Growing Up in Cities is one such "glocal" effort that is focused specifically on understanding and responding to the needs of young people in cities. Working across sectors and disciplines, the project seeks to promote a more integrated, holistic and participatory approach to community evaluation and change through processes that engage young people as real partners. It also seeks to develop a stronger research basis for documenting the quality of life of young people in cities — from their own perspective — and the impacts that increased globalization and social, political, and economic change are having on local cultures and lives. The project has its roots in the 1970s, when urban planner Kevin Lynch directed a four-country research effort under the auspices of UNESCO to try and understand young people's experience of urbanization as the basis for more child friendly urban policy and planning. However, interest was significantly greater in the 1990s when Dr. Louise Chawla, revived the project. Growing Up in Cities achieved new relevance as a practical strategy for local implementation of these global policy documents, as well as an important global research project for informing ongoing policy making.

Since 1996, the global action-research project has engaged people from across a range of disciplines (urban planning, public policy, youth development, anthropology, sociology, architecture, landscape architecture, etc.) and from multiple sectors (government, NGOs and universities) in 16 countries to date, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Cook Islands, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, UK, USA, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

Because the project's local outcomes are based on the priorities identified by local children and youth, the types of actions undertaken have varied widely across sites. For example:

- In Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the project worked in a working class district near the port, outcomes included a toy lending library, a photography exhibit, and a hands-on design workshop for an abandoned property.

- In Johannesburg, South Africa, where the project worked with a squatter community that was forcibly relocated, outcomes included a workshop hosted by the Mayor to draw attention to the perspectives and needs of young people in squatter settlements, a children's crèche and play area, and a participatory video broadcast on a national network as part of an intensive lobbying effort to ensure that government promises for services were delivered.

- In Melbourne, Australia, where the project worked in a working class suburb, outcomes included an effort to counter the negative stereotypes of youth in the local and national media, and a participatory design process to enhance safety and access on a neglected pathway connecting the local neighborhood to an adjacent area.
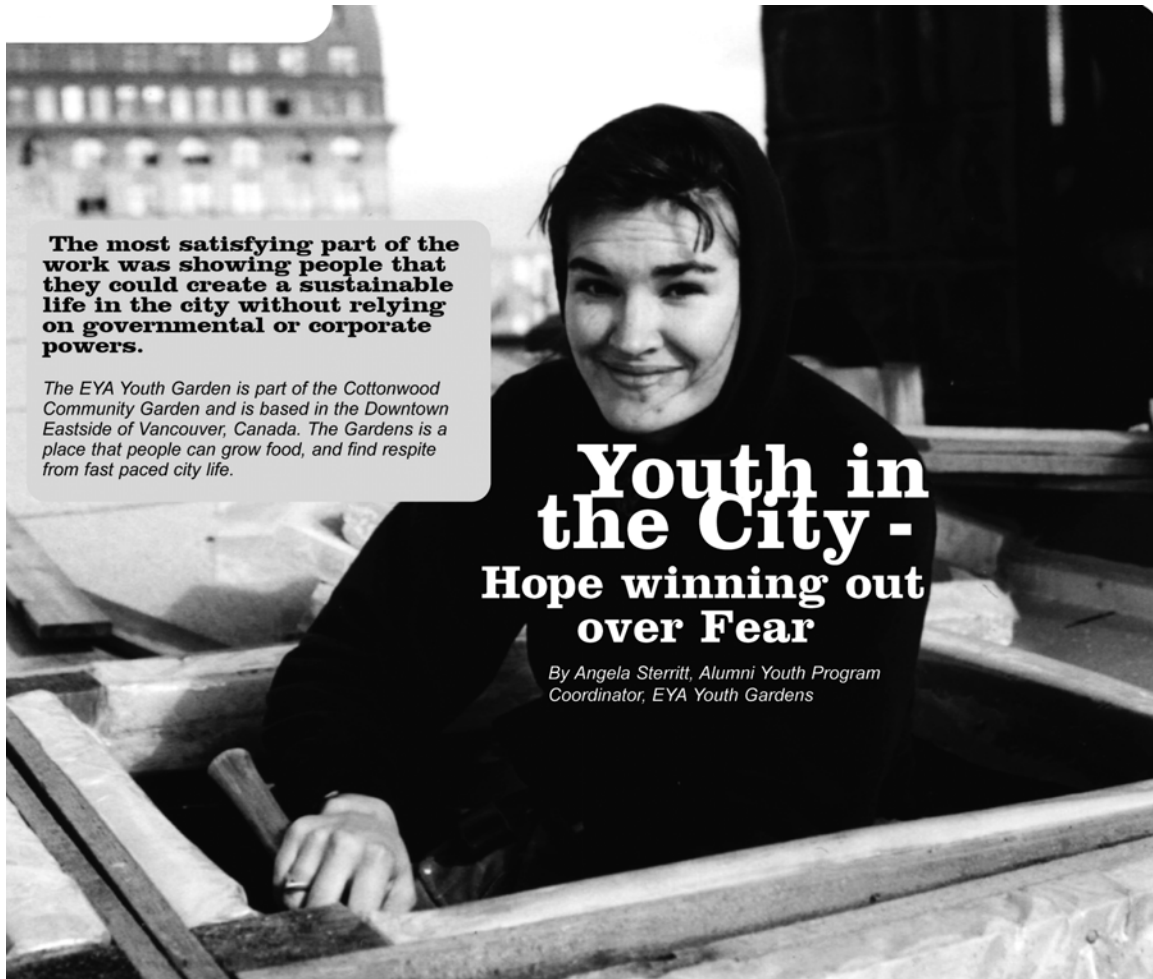
Over the years, many national and international donors have contributed to the project's development under the leadership of UNESCO, including UNICEF, NORAD (the Norwegian Aid Agency) and the Johan Jacobs Foundation. Local project sites have also been supported by a wide array of municipal and nongovernmental agencies. Most recently, a new country-wide effort in Canada is being supported by Social Development Department Canada along with five national and regional partners.

As a global project working at the grassroots, GUIC has been an effective model for implementation of national and international policy. It has contributed valuable data and insights leading to more informed and responsive policy making at the local, national and international levels. Most importantly, it has helped make a difference in the lives of young people by helping them make a difference in their communities.

Conclusion

As we have seen in through examples in this chapter, children and youth bring creativity, energy, lived experience, and practical, localized knowledge to the creation of more livable cities. Children and youth are not content to compartmentalize their experience of city life. For young people, public spaces provide opportunities to learn, create, explore, imagine, play, and preserve their connection to the natural environment. Children and youth are actively involved in creating richer green spaces, ensuring food security, and finding innovative ways to preserve sustainable energies, address unemployment issues and build their capacities.

The most satisfying part of the work was showing people that they could create a sustainable life in the city without relying on governmental or corporate powers.

The EYA Youth Garden is part of the Cottonwood Community Garden and is based in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada. The Gardens is a place that people can grow food, and find respite from fast paced city life.

Youth in the City -
Hope winning out over Fear

By Angela Sterritt, Alumni Youth Program Coordinator, EYA Youth Gardens

I became involved with the Environmental Youth Alliance in 1996 where I began my work as a participant in the EYA Youth Garden. I was looking for a refuge from my street entrenched life and a creative place to express my emotions and political ideas. The gardens became that place.

I began working with a team of young people, educating the public about sustainable technology and inner city subsistence. The most satisfying part of the work was showing people that they could create a sustainable life in the city without relying on governmental or corporate powers.

The Gardens, for me, were and still are a meeting place where people from different backgrounds come together. People who live on the street in the Eastside work hand in hand with more privileged youth from the Westside. Together, youth share and learn from one another by engaging in topics such as race, poverty, food security and globalization. Working with a diverse group is a challenging and a profound learning experience.

Through my experience in the gardens, I observed youth coming together and regaining their connection with the earth, and to people. City life bogs you down. Many people have lost their connection to their earth to western ways of thought that provoke consumerism and block intimacy with the land. Some people begin not to care about life and forget how to link to the Earth. Working in community gardens links us to the Earth and helps us care about ourselves and others.

After my initial work in the gardens I helped design and implement a 9month program for homeless youth, created to educate youth to be self-sufficient in the city. Youth learned how to grow and harvest food, collect heritage seed, and eat healthy. The project built a legacy for youth by giving them knowledge they now carry throughout their lives. Many youth I keep in touch with continue to grow and build on the sustainability skills they gained in the gardens and pass their knowledge on to other youth.

The diversity of the participants was another important element of this project. It was refreshing to see the typical class, race, cultural, gender and gender identity barriers come down and see an open dialogue expressed. The gardens were to me a place where youth were encouraged to express their fears and passions about each other and the world and not be judged in the process.

Working with the in the EYA Youth Garden on this homelessness project, also reminded me that youth can collectively bring about change in the city and in their communities. Whether we were building the Native Plant Nursery, or the rooftop garden, or the wetlands sanctuary, or our own garden plots, we were learning that change is possible and that youth have important input to local and global awareness. Additionally we were inspired to apply our ideas in other places and spaces. My experience taught me how to manage programs, fundraise, and to coordinate people. I now apply those pertinent skills in the north interior of British Columbia where I work directly with 13 communities, to establish youth programs by implementing a youth strategy and directory I designed.

The EYA Youth Garden breaks down that fear and grow hope for youth and the larger community.

[1] (United Nations 1992)

[2] (Ananthakrishnan 2003, 4)

[3] (Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Chapter 25 Youth Review 2002)

[4] (UNICEF 2001)

[5] (UNICEF 2001)

[6] (UNICEF 2001, 41)

[7] (Satterthwaite et al. 1996)

[8] (BlanchetCohen et al. 2003)

[9] (UNICEF 2001)

[10] (Chawla 1992)

[11] (Bartlett et al. 1999)

[12] (Driskell 2004)

[13] (Chawla 2002)

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CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, we have seen how young people bring creativity, energy, lived experience, and practical, localized knowledge to the creation of healthier cities. Whether in creating a secure, livable, resilient or capable city, children and youth are often in a unique position to address the practical applications of policy-making and planning concerning the preservation of urban environments. They are also well positioned to educate peers on health and wellness related matters and to monitor and improve local access to natural resources and municipal infrastructures.

While local governments have a responsibility to provide adequate and equitable services to all of its citizens living in urban areas, meaningful child and youth participation stands at the cornerstone of creating healthy, secure and sustainable cities. Their input may be a lower priority for programmers and decision-makers, but it can have life-changing impact on the everyday lives of many children and young people in helping better meet their needs and dreams. The research presented in this document indicates that when communities and local governments support the full and active participation of young people in their development, it has a ripple effect that cuts across communities to benefit society as a whole.

The case studies in this report show that child and youth friendly communities reinforce young peoples' opportunities for connection, self-esteem, self-efficacy and engagement. This is in turn reflected in greater partnerships between young people and adults in taking action on diverse issues such as: the design of urban environments, opportunities for play and recreation, evaluating and responding to the impact of pollution and waste management, creating safe spaces and addressing crime, and addressing food security.

As the global percentage of children and young people living in cities continues to rise, governments are compelled to support the engagement of their young citizens. The following recommendations are drawn from the research and practice discussed in this paper.

1. BRIDGING PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND POLICY. Child and youth participation initiatives are becoming more widespread and increasingly effective in engaging young people and giving them meaningful opportunities to be heard. There have been many initiatives to involve children and youth in local, regional national and international governance, with some key recommendations for governments on how to meaningfully involve youth. Though these are significant accomplishments, their needs to be better and more systematic documentation of key principles supporting replication. This applies especially to assessing programmatic effectiveness in supporting

institutional and governmental policy change. There is also an urgent need to expand and enhance local programs that promote meaningful child youth participation, as this is where children and youth have their basic needs met, and where they are initially affirmed as asset and citizens within their communities.

We recommend that a Local Government Plan of Action for Children and Youth be established by each local government, similar to the National Plan of Action called for at the UN Special Summit for Children. This plan of action should be tailored to the specific capacities of local governments, but should have a vision that encompasses all levels of government.

2. GOING "GLOCAL". We need to think and act both locally and globally. Many participatory actions of young people are bound by locality but have global implications and applications and vice versa. In reviewing promising practices, we need to explore how to replicate local actions in other localities. There are also global initiatives such as the Growing up in Cities project that has both global and local implications and that can promote the child and youth friendly cities agenda more widely.

Groups such as the Environmental Youth Alliance and Santropol Roulant, have youth taking the lead in designing and implementing innovative and effective food security programs in some of the poorest urban communities in Canada. These programs have had impact at the policy level, such as EYA's involvement in the development of the City of Vancouver Food Security Taskforce.

We recommend that local government begin to recognize the expertise that children and youth bring through concrete initiatives they undertake on a daily basis to address the needs of their communities. This recognition should be reflected both through sustainable programs supporting these initiatives, as well as through institutionalizing this expertise within policy and policy frameworks.

Special attention should be given to supporting initiatives in "going to scale" both horizontally (bridging diverse government services responsible for children), and vertically (harmonizing different levels of government policy and practice).

We recommend that local government advocate with and on behalf of children and youth regarding these local initiatives, and facilitate the uptake of these initiatives into policy and policy frameworks at all levels of government.

3. NEED FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PARTICIPATION: RHETORIC MATCHING REALITY. Often, child and youth structures are not provided with real power so that children and youth do not become joint partners with government or institutions. Similarly, the engagement of children and youth within adult structures is often carried out a way that marginalizes their voice. Young people need to be made aware of the political realities they face. Child and youth participation initiatives, both as stand alone structures and within government, need to be supported and the process

tailored to enhance strengths and mitigate challenges of children and youth. The example given in Chapter of the City of Vancouver, Canada and the City of Malindi, Kenya demonstrate the growing understanding and methods that now are being tested in engaging children and youth.

We recommend that local government meaningfully engage with and support child and youth led organizations in governance through recognizing, supporting and involving them in policy development and delivery

We recommend that local government create and support structures within government institutions that meaningfully involve children and youth in policy deliberations.

We recommend that the academic community conduct further research on the effective and meaningful involvement of children and youth through child and youth led organizations. Research should also explore aspects of effective and meaningful engagement of children and youth in local government and its institutions.

We recommend that local governments identify and promote the expertise and knowledge of children and youth at the regional, national and international governmental level.

4.   OUTREACH EFFORTS NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED. Child and youth participation initiatives too often engage young people who are the most accessible (typically middle or upper income kids, or children of parents who are civically involved). Innovative outreach strategies are needed to ensure that children and youth who are marginalized have real opportunities for real participation. This also requires an analysis of which youth communities are not being heard, and a concerted effort to create methods that engage these communities.

This is also part of recognizing that there is no single 'youth voice' -- the same types of divisions and differences of opinion that exist between adults are typically replicated among young people. Participation initiatives need to recognize, accommodate and validate a plurality of opinions and perspectives.

We recommend that structures created to engage youth by government and its institutions should strive to engage a diversity of youth, especially those most marginalized.

As youth relate best to other youth, it is recommended that local government support youth led organizations to engage youth from all communities, especially those most marginalized.

5.   CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION CALLS FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING. Child and youth participation initiatives should avoid replicating dysfunctional forms of adult interaction and decision-making. There is a tendency to view the goal of youth participation as being to involve young people in the vibrant, inclusive democratic decision making processes of the adult world. These processes often

don't exist, or fail to live up to their promise. Participatory initiatives with young people provide an opportunity to engage a new generation in new forms of democratic decision making -- strengthening (and sometimes creating) democratic institutions in the process. New skills must be learned both by adults and youth, so as to make any partnership a truly equitable one.

We recommend that local government support increasing the capacity of children and youth in new forms of democratic and participatory decision-making.

6. VALIDATING DIVERSE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION. In addition to involving young people in formal government processes – from elections to urban planning and policy review – decision-makers need to support the full dimension of young people's interests and abilities. To address the needs of all youth, especially those most marginalized, informal processes of participation, such as local community action, must also be developed and supported. In concert with formal processes of participation, informal modes of access to governance adds value to policy and political deliberations. One successful alternative strategy is to offer children and youth opportunities for experiential engagement within their communities. This process enables them to learn while they participate, rather than involving them in a process that demands academic or professional background.

We recommend that local and other levels of government support both formal and informal methods of child and youth participation in their local communities.

We recommend that the government, NGO, and academic communities collaborate in conducting research on non-formal methods that promote child and youth input into policy development and implementation. Special emphasis should be placed on successful tools such as Participatory Action Research and Community Asset Mapping.

7. PROMOTING POSITIVE IMAGES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH. Social marketing and public campaigns at the local level need to focus on the good work being done by children and youth, on their current and existing contributions as well as their potential capacity. As children identify stereotypes about them as the number one barrier to their engagement, the stories in this paper alone should provide an easy first step to collective action on removing the obstacles to the full and active participation of children in cities around the world.

8. CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS MANAGERS. Children and youth often start and run their own organizations or run organizations in partnership with adults. These agencies are often highly effective and efficient in delivering services to children and youth through a peer-to-peer model.

We recommend that governments allocate resources to supporting child and youth driven organizations, and recognize their abilities in delivering services and affecting positive change in communities.

Future directions in participatory approaches to urban development

As global governments mobilize to integrate the principles and practices of child and youth engagement into policy decision-making processes, they invite unprecedented opportunities to address the challenges of a rapidly urbanizing world. Young people bring new perspectives and innovative solutions to issues of crime prevention, employment, education, the alleviation of poverty and inequality, health and wellness creation, the depletion of natural resources, and the challenges of building sustainable human settlements. Young people begin from a position of localized knowledge and experience, but their energy, commitment, and vision often extends beyond local borders. Young people who are meaningfully engaged in civic and community decision-making often have a collaborative approach toward urban development and an instinctive understanding of the interrelationship between urban communities and the diverse environments in which they thrive.

Child and youth policies at the national and local level need to include young people of informal sectors — those who live on the streets, are most marginalized, or are otherwise not heard in the drive toward sustainable urbanization. These voices represent the future of inclusive participatory policy frameworks, programs and resources. Engaged young people are not only vital to creating sustainable cities, but also a powerful symbol of resilience in urban development. Children and youth embody our ability to rebound from adversity, to adapt to ever-changing urban environments, and to build capacity by ensuring the healthy development of cities.

It is hoped that this paper will nurture partnerships at all levels of government and within local communities to open avenues of collaboration, promote resource exchange, and develop decisive plans of action to creating child and youth friendly cities as a prelude to the World Urban Forum in 2006.