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Enhancing youth participation in urban governance through city youth councils



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SHORT SUMMARY

Youth Voices, City Choices

City youth councils offer a formalized arrangement for continuous dialogue with policymakers. They have played a key role in fostering the next generation of leaders and encouraging youth to be contributors and agents to social change and dialogue. UNESCO is publishing this report to ensure that the actions and solutions proposed by youth can be applied and scaled up worldwide. It encourages local governments to create spaces for youth to participate actively and genuinely in decision-making processes.

As a first-of-its-kind global compilation featuring the history, typologies, compositions, and functions of city youth councils, the report also seeks to underline promising practices of city youth councils informed by evidence-based methodology to determine their impact and effectiveness in inclusive urban governance. It proposes ideas to foster collaboration, amplify youth voices, and present recommendations to develop partnerships with Member States, local governments, youth associations, civil society, and other stakeholders to create inclusive communities.

94%

of city youth councils
surveyed cooperate with
NGOs and independent
associations.



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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"



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Enhancing youth participation in urban governance through city youth councils

PREFACE

The unprecedented times we are living call for deep engagement of all groups in our society to devise inclusive solutions. In this context, young people have demonstrated their will to contribute to meaningful change all over the world.

This has been evident during the COVID-19 crisis, given the impact of the crisis on youth's access to health, education, employment and well-being. Nevertheless, youth-led initiatives during the pandemic as volunteers, researchers, activists and communicators have contributed to more resilient social systems. As digital natives, they found new ways to engage in civic and political life to advocate for various causes. Whether through social media or on the streets, youth movements – such as Fridays for Future, Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate – have influenced global action. Young activists have breathed new life into the current global landscape, having their voices heard and inspiring an entire generation.

This activism and commitment should also give room for youth to engage within institutional settings where they can genuinely represent their voice in decision-making contexts, and therefore achieve higher impact. With 1.2 billion young people around the world aged

15-24, youth make up a large cohort of citizens shaping our world.

Thus, given their size, but also their engagement, youth can help us address multiple challenges, including the demographic transitions and sustainable urbanization. By 2050, over 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas.¹ Rapid urbanization and the increasing youth population represent tremendous challenges for our societies. With increasingly dense urban spaces, how can we guarantee equitable and inclusive access to health care services, housing or even culture? How can we strengthen young people's talent and energy through better education and stable employment to empower them as active members of society? How can we empower them to actively participate in public life?

The United Nations Youth 2030 Global Progress Report shows that programmes *for* and *with* youth, implemented across various UN agencies, have increased support for governments and other stakeholders to enhance policymaking and "strategic partnerships for innovation and innovation on youth."² As the United Nations specialized agency for education, the natural, social and human sciences, sports, culture and communication, UNESCO is committed to empowering youth, encouraging young women and men to develop critical skills and to participate in the civic and political life of their societies supporting particularly those that left behind.

1 See: www.worldbank.org, Urban Development, April 2020.

2 Youth2030: A Global Progress Report. Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, April 2022.



In this perspective, UNESCO supports the establishment and support of city youth councils, which provide a powerful space for young women and men to engage in policymaking. As they increase in number in cities across the world, city youth councils have developed platforms to ensure they are engaged and impactful in their communities. This report explores the role of city youth councils as effective institutions to encourage youth democratic participation and enable young people to have a voice in local political institutions. As spaces for inclusive policymaking processes, city youth councils offer young women and men an empowering role in decision-making fora.

This report is the result of research completed in 2021, notably through UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR. In addition to a study of the genesis and history of city youth councils, the report provides a landscape analysis of their wide variety. Showing inspiring examples of impactful youth participation in urban governance, this report provides a global overview of city youth councils and their growing importance in urban governance.

The report also makes several recommendations, at different scales, to advance reforms to increase the establishment of city youth councils. They can make meaningful contributions to sustainable urban governance, by including the voice of young people in local decision-making processes. Decision-makers from local to national governments can take inspiration from case studies on city youth councils and benefit from this empowering mechanism.

There are many ways in which young people can express themselves, through interactions with governments, international and regional organizations, academic institutions, NGOs and civil society, and the media, among others. The establishment of city youth councils allows young citizens to participate in policymaking. Clearly, any inclusive development agenda should embed youth participation in democratic processes. Building an institutional framework such as youth councils in cities, therefore, fosters citizenship and inclusion, and enhances youth agency in shaping their future.

Young women and men are committed to their communities. But their engagement in decision-making depends greatly on the degree of power that authorities delegate to them.



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for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO*

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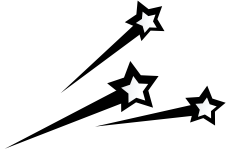
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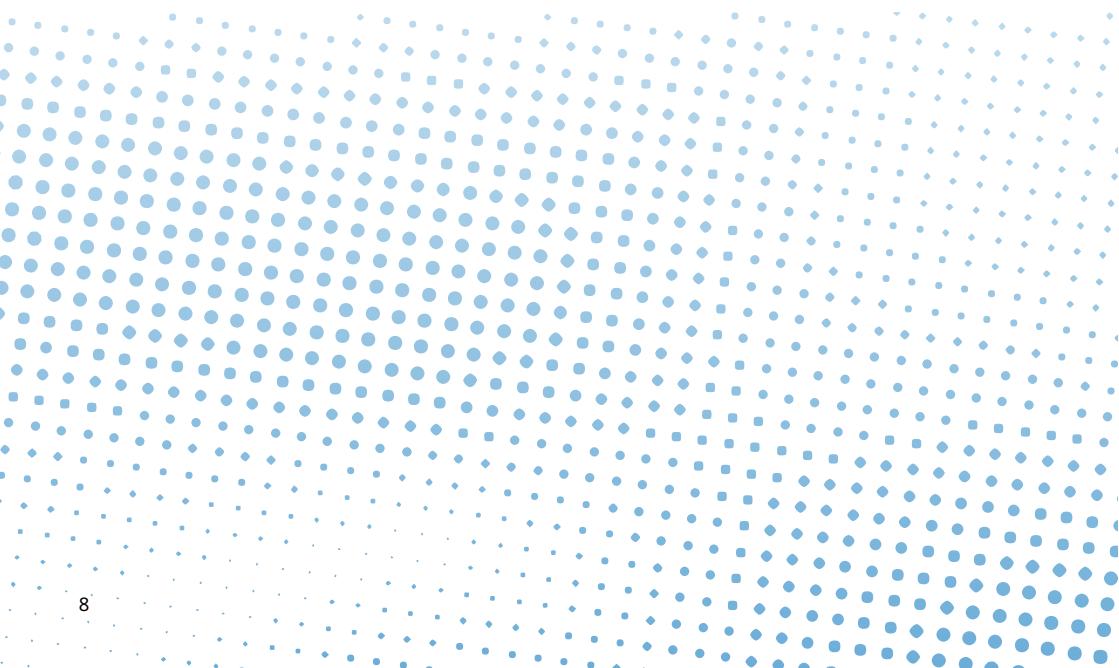
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INTRODUCTION

Youth face challenges from complex crises like the effects of climate change, rising income inequality and international conflicts, to difficulties affecting their education, employment and social issues.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated underlying challenges confronting youth, affecting their health and well-being, and weakening their learning outcomes and opportunities. In March 2021, UNESCO published "Supporting learning recovery one year into COVID-19: The Global Education Coalition in action", which reported more than 1.5 billion students and youth had been affected by school and university closures due to the pandemic (UNESCO, 2021c). An International Labour Organization (ILO) survey said the pandemic inflicted a "heavy toll on young workers, destroying their employment and undermining their career prospects... (and that) one in six employed young persons before the outbreak stopped working altogether" (ILO, 2020). Effectively, the ILO survey concluded that one in three young people noted a significant impact on their right to participate in public affairs; specifically, among 40% of youth in lower-income countries, 36% in lower-middle countries and 28% in high-income countries (ibid., p.33). Youth not only have to deal with systemic and structural barriers but also grapple with a lack of access to public life and representation at necessary discussion tables.

More than ever, young people demand the right to participate, to be included in policies and decision-making processes. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), youth-led innovative social impact projects during the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated young people's important role in their communities. The same study revealed partnerships created by governments and select private sector groups with youth have shown that investing in youth policies "can deliver future economic dividends and provide an avenue for youth to contribute and demonstrate their solidarity in a time of crisis" (UNDESA, 2020). A UN-Habitat research also highlighted youth's active leadership in effecting positive change in cities (UN Habitat, 2015).

However, to what extent do youth voices impact public policies? Without the ear and support of policy- and decision-makers, do we risk overlooking youth voices? These queries only scratch the surface of youth participation across levels of government. Issues like providing equal opportunities to young people identifying as being LGBTIQ and vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making are also at play.

In Best Practices for Youth Engagement in Municipal Government, scholars Augsberger, Collins, and Gecker (2017, p.10) bring to light "the numerous challenges facing young people in contemporary society." By emphasizing the issues youth face, the authors



call for "establishing and sustaining youth councils [that] may provide a key mechanism for fully engaging youth and tapping their expertise to enhance a city's commitment to youth" (ibid., p. 10).

City youth councils offer a formalized arrangement for continuous dialogue with policymakers. They are an effective way to harness youth voices to create inclusive policies and decisions. City youth councils have played a key role in fostering the next generation of leaders and encouraging youth to be contributors and agents to social change and dialogue.

In line with the UN Youth 2030 and the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth, UNESCO is publishing this report to ensure that the actions and solutions proposed by youth can be applied and scaled up worldwide. By mobilizing UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR and the World Urban Youth Councils Network (WUYCN) established by UN-Habitat, this report encourages local governments to create spaces for youth to participate actively and genuinely in decision-making processes. As a first-of-its-kind global compilation

featuring the history, typologies, compositions, and functions of city youth councils, the report also seeks to underline promising practices of city youth councils informed by evidence-based methodology to determine their impact and effectiveness in inclusive urban governance. It proposes ideas to foster collaboration, amplify youth voices in sustainable and inclusive urban management, and present recommendations to develop partnerships with Member States, local governments, youth associations, civil society, and other stakeholders to create inclusive communities.

It consolidates the research previously conducted on city youth councils and the achievements made by the World Urban Youth Councils Network (WUYCN) to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 11, the New Urban Agenda, UN Youth 2030, and the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (Axis 1 and Axis 3). This report serves as an evidence-based testimonial to promote the creation of city youth councils in local governments, enhance existing ones, and guide youth-related policymaking, responding to the needs in data gaps on city youth councils.

As a first-of-its-kind global compilation featuring the history, typologies, compositions, and functions of city youth councils, the report also seeks to underline promising practices of city youth councils informed by evidence-based methodology to determine their impact and effectiveness in inclusive urban governance.

The report has the following specific objectives:

- ★ To underscore the importance of empowering young people for sustainable urban development and promote their active and genuine participation in decision-making processes at the local level.
- ★ To understand the genesis, categories, compositions, and functions of city youth councils and map the existing ones from various regions.
- ★ To establish an evidence-based methodology that would seek to determine the effectiveness and impact of the city youth councils in meaningful youth participation by highlighting promising practices from all regions.
- ★ To provide recommendations to the Member States, local governments, youth associations, civil society, academe, and other relevant stakeholders to establish cooperation mechanisms to foster youth engagement and participation at the local level.

To dig deeper into the activities of city youth councils and understand their potential to galvanize social change, UNESCO embarked on a preliminary study completed in 2021 to provide an overview of the different categories and activities undertaken by city youth councils.

In partnership with UN-Habitat, UNESCO conducted a research study that culminated in 2021, which aimed to present a more in-depth understanding of the functions of city youth councils and their impact through a questionnaire

disseminated to the ICCAR and WUYCN networks. UNESCO and UN-Habitat collectively designed the study that raised detailed questions to produce data highlighting the legislative framework, categories, organizational capacities and functions of city youth councils. The research study provides a picture of the strengths and benefits of city youth councils. Moreover, the study solicited participating city youth councils to share detailed information on their history, legal structures, policies and programmes. Four submissions were received from city youth councils from Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines which resulted in the case studies presented in this report.

This report demonstrates that creating legitimate spaces like city youth councils is a concrete way to support youth inclusion in urban governance. These councils enhance youth participation in the public sphere that goes beyond tokenism. City youth councils put policies into practice and provide opportunities for public offices to ensure their relevance and connection to young voters. City youth councils pave the way for young people to create policies for themselves. As an evidence-based testimonial to promote and legitimize youth engagement, this report hopes to contribute to the discussion advocating for more youth voices and representation at institutions worldwide.



The International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, formerly the International Coalition of Cities against Racism – ICCAR, was launched by UNESCO in 2004 following the call made for a common front in the global fight against racial discrimination during the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Since its inception, and its revitalization in 2016, ICCAR has grown to become an active global front against racism and discriminations with over 600 members across the globe. ICCAR has become a reference as a unique city-level platform in the UN system and in the international community that undertakes a wide range of initiatives – ranging from policymaking, capacity building to awareness-raising activities. It advocates for global solidarity and collaboration to promote inclusive urban development free from all forms of discrimination.

ICCAR is composed of seven regional and national Coalitions. Each Coalition responds to specific priorities and challenges set out in a Ten-Point Plan of Action, composed of ten commitments covering various areas of competence of city authorities such as education, housing, employment, and cultural activities. It proposes examples of practical policies for city authorities to enhance or develop. Signatory cities undertake to integrate this Plan of Action in their municipal strategies and policies and to involve various actors of civil society in its implementation.

Launched at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum in 2018, the World Urban Youth Councils Network WUYCN works closely with city youth councils to ensure youth have a voice in important decisions. The WUYCN is establishing a global network of city youth councils to build best practices and collaborate on topics, including housing, municipal services for youth, climate change, humanitarian crises, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. UN-HABITAT has launched the WUYCN to work closely with city youth councils worldwide, by empowering youth in critical city governance processes and by ensuring they have a voice in policies that impact them the most. The WUYCN assembles local youth governance bodies in urban areas from across the globe to enhance their institutions and support their engagement in the administration of their respective cities.



1
CHAPTER

**Leveraging
Youth Power**

1 The UN's framework and strategies for youth engagement

Young people are vital partners for democracy and development. They possess the creativity and knowledge necessary to drive positive transformations instrumental to social inclusion and innovation. The United Nations (2020) has long "recognized that the imagination, ideals, and energy of young people are vital for continuing the development of societies." With its unique global convening role, the UN is committed to its capacity as a platform to strengthen youth's voices.

In 2018, the Youth 2030: UN Strategy on Youth (United Nations, 2018) underscored "engagement, participation and advocacy" to "amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable world." The statement reflects the UN's vision for young people's role in society. Globally, the strategy also aims to facilitate increased impact...to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world, and to ensure engagement and participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (ibid., p.5)

Recently, the World Youth Report on "Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UNDESA, 2020) examined how evidence-based youth policies can help accelerate youth-related objectives. More importantly, the report explored the critical role young people have in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—an

important statement in appraising youth's role as partners and collaborators in achieving the 2030 targets. Furthermore, the New Urban Agenda (UN Habitat, 2016) recognizes that "young women and young men are key agents of change in creating a better future and when empowered they have great potential to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities".

2 Youth platforms in the United Nations

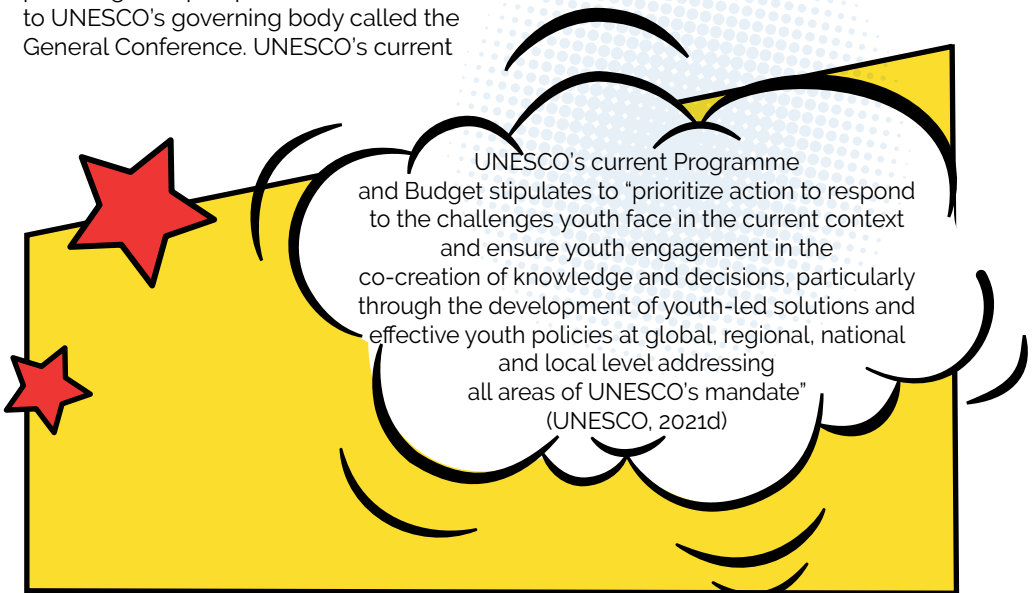
In line with the UN Youth 2030, UNESCO strives to ensure that the voices, actions, and solutions proposed by young people are adequately heard, applied, and scaled. As a priority group for UNESCO, the Organization believes that "youth are key actors and partners in its mission to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue"(UNESCO, 2020a). The UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021 (UNESCO, 2014) resulted from a lengthy consultation process, engaging young people and the Member States. UNESCO defines civic engagement and democratic participation as one of the three principal axes of its strategy. It focuses on three specific types of youth engagement, including youth participation in decision-making and democratic consolidation. The strategy puts forth three multidisciplinary and complementary axes of work, which incorporate the full range of UNESCO's expertise in its fields of competence, namely, 1) policy formulation and review with the participation of youth 2) capacity development for the transition to adulthood and 3) civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation.

Under the guidance of the Operational Strategy, UNESCO prioritizes its work with and for youth across all its programmatic areas and sectors, seeking to respond in a holistic way to youth aspirations. Among its key youth-focused work, inclusion of youth in designing and driving initiatives is increasingly important. This includes ensuring that youth are part of providing policy advice to support local authorities and build local youth institutions. UNESCO's strategy also "developed education and training initiatives, such as empowering youth to pursue new careers as scientists, to act as responsible citizens, to speak for themselves in the media, or to preserve their environment and their heritage. In the area of education, the focus is mostly on upstream work aiming to improve the education environment" (UNESCO, 2014).

Since 1999, UNESCO's Youth Forum process has proven to be an innovative opportunity for youth to dialogue among themselves and with UNESCO, by providing their perspectives and ideas to UNESCO's governing body called the General Conference. UNESCO's current

Programme and Budget sets forth a number of youth-oriented objectives including prioritizing "*action to respond to the challenges youth face in the current context and ensure youth engagement in the co-creation of knowledge and decisions, particularly through the development of youth-led solutions and effective youth policies at global, regional, national and local level addressing all areas of UNESCO's mandate*" (UNESCO, 2021d).

Youth programmes are also vehicles to promote and enhance gender equality. In the mid-term review of the UNESCO Operational Strategy published in 2018, it was emphasized that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are prominent components in UNESCO youth-related activities, which also prioritize disadvantaged and traditionally underserved groups (UNESCO, 2018b).



The focus areas and priorities of the WUYCN are as follows:

- ★ Ensure the advancement and improvement of the representation of youth in the decision-making processes of cities;
- ★ Advocate for the social, political, and economic engagement of urban youth;
- ★ Create more civic, public, and digital safe spaces for youth;
- ★ Lobby for the rights of youth, especially for the establishment of more safe space activities for at-risk children and adolescents in addition to refugee and migrant youth in urban settings;
- ★ Campaign for safer, more affordable, and more accessible transport for students and young people in cities; and
- ★ Create more opportunities in urban areas for socially disadvantaged groups, such as young people living in slums, young refugees and immigrants, and young people with low socioeconomic backgrounds.

3 UN Youth Envoy: Bringing youth voices to the global stage

Recognizing the need for more youth voices around the table, the United Nations has prioritized the representation of young people by creating the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth in 2013. The appointment of the UN Youth Envoy and the subsequent creation of a concrete work plan signals a series of substantial reforms that should profoundly transform its work and modes of operation to build an organization that is relevant to and in touch with those it serves. The UN Youth Envoy's role is guided by the *World Programme of Action for Youth*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995, which outlines four priority areas: Participation, Advocacy, Partnerships and Harmonization. The Youth Envoy is responsible for reforming and setting goals focusing on youth accessibility, like the establishment of the UN Panel on Youth, the promotion of youth participation in various UN-led projects, increased youth engagement with Member States, as well as enhancing youth roles for the coordination and harmonization of youth programming in various UN agencies. The programmes above represent only a tiny fraction of current initiatives envisaged by the United Nations System. From a global perspective, they serve as catalysts for promoting youth participation in decision-making, formal political processes, activism, and civic participation worldwide.



2 CHAPTER

Historical origins of city youth councils, digital natives and the 21st Century

This chapter recounts the historical origins and definitions of city youth councils, highlights the importance of youth in the digital age and situates the current youth generation against the backdrop of rapid urbanization and changing demographics.

1 Historical origins of city youth councils

Given municipalities' direct interaction with their inhabitants, cities would be the level of governance most accessible to citizens. Through the services they provide, local governments play a significant role in fostering civic engagement and political participation. For this reason, many cities worldwide have sought ways to ensure that residents including their youth inhabitants – come from diverse ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds. The creation of city youth councils has become a way for youth to get involved in their communities and build relationships with the elected officials who represent them. Civic participation studies have recently pointed to city youth councils as a great way to capitalize on meaningful engagement with youth and the multitude of ideas they bring to the table.

Historical research on youth participation in local, national, and international decision-making processes is underdeveloped and, at times, geographically limited. Even though there is a long-documented history of youth movements, the earliest written account of a youth council in the United States—The Manhasset Youth Council—can only be traced back to 1943. In

the United Kingdom, the British Youth Council (BYC) was one of the first to be established in 1948. The BYC brings together local youth councils, religious associations, and minority groups from across the UK. From its inception, the organization's purpose was to help young people participate in decision-making processes at local and national levels. On a global scale, following the traumas of the Second World War, the "World Assembly of Youth," (2021) was established in 1949, and created to guarantee peace and mutual understanding among young people worldwide. To this day, it remains the primary international coordinating body of youth councils to work with the United Nations on youth-related issues. The youth councils that were first created at regional or national levels were the first steps that led to the creation of youth councils at municipal level.

As one of the engagement activities within "citizen participation", Checkoway and Aldana (2013) note that youth councils are examples of "engagement in community governance". It is also where "youth are meaningfully involved in significant decisions regarding the goals, design, and implementation of the community's work", according to Zeldin and co-authors (Augsberger et al., 2017). City youth councils offer an opportunity to enable and legitimize young people's engagement. Through active participation, youth can develop their skills, sense of agency, autonomy, and voices. As consultative bodies for local governments, these councils work to increase awareness and sensitivity in youth and adults.

Besides the practical, on-the-ground experience, it can also be the springboard for active youth

participation in policymaking. Therefore, involving youth as legitimate representatives in local governance can be an effective citizen-building exercise.

Through the data collected in their survey, Augsberger et al (2017) showed that youth councils promote social inclusion and personal development of their members. The young people interviewed stated that, through their participation in local governance, they are better informed about local and national politics and have developed public speaking and leadership skills. Notwithstanding its benefits, city youth councils offer a way for municipalities to promote equal representation and engagement. For most city youth councils, the democratic process of campaigning and electing members is a mainstreamed activity. Like their counterparts in city councils, members must undergo various steps to ensure competencies to perform the tasks required to represent youth in their cities. The commitment of local governments is essential to ensuring representation from a diverse group of youth, including securing gender balance and diversifying membership from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Based on the analysis of the present study, city youth councils are well versed in the democratic process of campaigning and electing members. Their governance structure is very similar to that of traditional municipal councils and, in this sense, city youth councils are a good way for young people who engage in this type of organization, to become familiar with the most fundamental democratic practices.

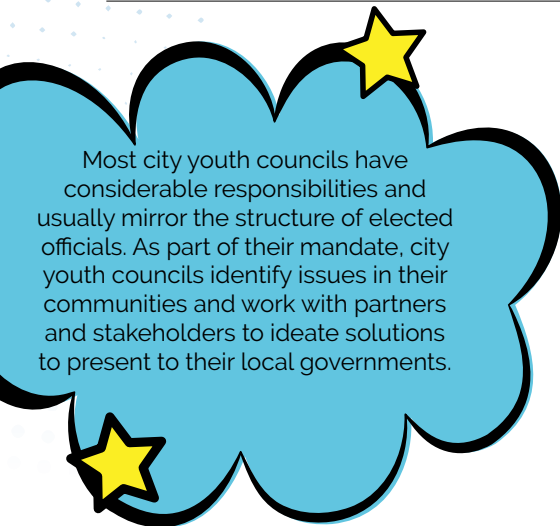


What is a city youth council?

City youth councils are formal structures within local governments, a space for youth to get involved in governance and civic issues. They offer a mechanism for participants to help build their future by promoting citizen engagement and good governance practices. Indirectly, they aid in promoting accountability and transparency within municipal management. City youth councils are often convened, organized, elected, and administered by youth. Most city youth councils have considerable responsibilities and usually mirror the structure of elected officials. As part of their mandate, city youth councils identify issues in their communities and work with partners and stakeholders to ideate solutions to present to their local governments.

In their research, Augsberger et al. (2017) maintain that "youth councils provide a realistic opportunity for enhancing social equality for young people at the community level." In parallel, the OECD (2018) also note that "young people are significantly underrepresented in state institutions, including the cabinet, parliament, and central public administration." City youth councils offer a path for youth to claim spaces within decision-making bodies. Moreover, they serve as launch pads for the legitimization of youth participation in the public sphere.

Mary Elizabeth Collins, Astraea Augsberger and Whitney Gecker (2017) have identified six everyday activities undertaken by city youth councils, based on a case study analysis of 24 municipalities:



Most city youth councils have considerable responsibilities and usually mirror the structure of elected officials. As part of their mandate, city youth councils identify issues in their communities and work with partners and stakeholders to ideate solutions to present to their local governments.

★ **Education and prevention activities** are about raising awareness and providing information to the local population and beyond.

★ **Youth summits**, defined by M.E. Collins et al. (2017) as special events, directly "linked to the mayor (or other leaders) of the city or the region", regroup plural activities with different goals spanning from recreational activities to educational or advocacy campaigns.

★ **Recreational activities** are supposed to be entertaining above all, but they carry a didactic message. While having fun, its organizers and participants raise awareness on societal issues. They also aim to encourage youth engagement in public processes.



★ **Community service activities** refers to volunteering for events serving the common good.

★ **Community assessment activities** are also relatively infrequent. However, youth councils that produce their research and inquiries on subjects of public interest may appear as more legitimate interlocutors in front of local authorities.

★ **Policy-specific actions** refer to campaigns and activities advocating for policy change on a specific matter.

In the age of hyper-connectivity and digital engagement, the value of incorporating youth perspectives cannot be underscored enough. Youth are critical stakeholders like any other social group. Additionally, their resourcefulness and digital skills, creativity and information sharing skills are necessary to keep innovating local governance and democratic institutions.

3 Generation of digital natives

As *digital natives*, youth possess the unprecedented e-competences that no other generation has achieved. Findings in a study conducted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2017 showed that 70% of the world's youth aged 15-24 are active online. Even with varying degrees across regions, the rates of connected youth by socioeconomic demographics remain high. In developed countries, 94% of youth use the Internet, 67% in developing countries, and only 30% in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). These numbers should not hide the digital gender gap, which is also growing. Globally, young men are more connected than young women, and this divide has

repercussions on young women's access to higher education and when entering the job market (ITU, 2020).

4 Changing demographics, employment

The digital space has created a crucial role for the rising generation to define current and future global dynamics. Youth today are creators, narrative builders, positioned as legitimate rights-holders and duty-bearers like other members of society. The technological age has given young people more tools to become active catalysts for positive social transformations. Furthermore, as the proportion of young people grows, youth is a causal factor in determining the labour force and an essential element for economic development. As a result, youth economic welfare constitutes a significant aspect of maintaining social well-being in societies. Instead of engaging themselves and participating as active players in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres, youth alienation will likely result if they feel economically, socially, and politically disenfranchised. Barriers threatening the well-being of youth – including access to education, employment, and civic participation – should be eliminated to ensure sustainable youth prospects and well-being.

The global youth population has been steadily increasing, with an average of 1.5% annual growth since 1950 (UNDESA, 2015). In 1985, the youth population peaked at 19.3% of the total global numbers (UNDESA, 2019). According to the United Nations Population Fund, there are currently 1.8 billion young persons between ages 10 and 24 years


(United Nations Population Fund, 2020). The proportion of youth as a percentage of national population varies around the world. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, youth make up 20% of the total population, (UNDESA, 2018), while in Japan youth population represents 12% of the country's population (OECD, 2020).¹ Undoubtedly, the share of children and youth worldwide will only increase as the years progress.

The active youth labour force is approximately 497 million, or 41% of the global youth population. Among them, 429 million are working, while 68 million are unemployed. Out of the total global youth population, 59% or approximately 776 million, remain excluded from the labour force, "meaning that they are not employed and are not looking and available for a job." However, despite their employment, approximately 126 million young people, or 30% of employed, still face moderate or extreme poverty (ILO, 2020).

Currently, there is a positive trend in youth enrollment in education. Worldwide, gross enrollment in secondary and tertiary education has increased, from 59% in 1999 to 76% in 2018 and 18% to 38%, respectively. A large proportion of youth who are not active in the labour force are engaged exclusively in education. The numbers indicate that the future labour force will be better skilled and educated than generations before (ibid., p. 28).

Creating environments to unleash youth's full potential pave the way for sustainable social cohesion and development. With their creativity and innovation, young people could play a significant role as change-makers to shape future trajectories.

GENDER GAP IN YOUTH LABOUR MARKET AND EDUCATION



Concurrent gender inequalities exist in the youth labour market and education. The gender gap in percentage points is at 16.2 percentage points. The youth labour force participation rate (LFPR) is around 49.1% for youth males and 32.8% for youth females (ibid., p.25). Disparities are similar in youth enrolment rates, as demonstrated by an ILO study in 115 countries where data are available. There is tremendous progress regarding girls' access to education since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. This is particularly true for adolescent girls. Globally, gender parity in primary and secondary education was achieved in 2009, even if essential gender gaps remain at the country level (UNESCO, 2020a). This gender divide is relatively narrow in the Americas, Europe, and Central Asia (ILO, 2020, p.30).

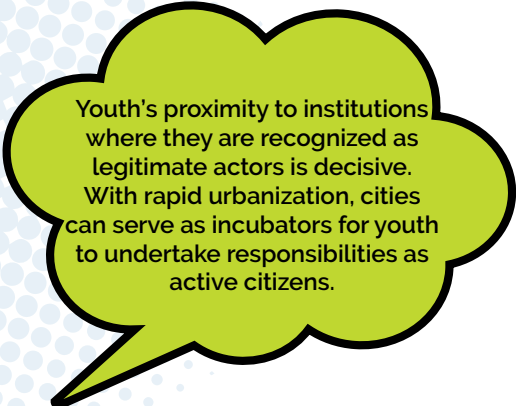
The pandemic threatens to reverse the progress made over the last 25 years, as nearly 11 million girls are at risk of not returning to school due to the unprecedented education disruption across the world. Girls and adolescents are more vulnerable to gender-based violence and more at risk of unintended pregnancy and early and forced marriage when they are not in school (UNESCO, UNGEI, UNICEF, Plan International, Malala Fund, 2020).

If these environments are within their reach, participation is more likely. In concrete terms, youth's proximity to institutions where they are recognized as legitimate actors is decisive. With rapid urbanization, cities can serve as incubators for youth to undertake responsibilities as active citizens.

Today, more than half of the world's 4.2 billion inhabitants live in urban areas. By 2030, 60% will live in cities, and by 2050, urbanites are estimated to rise to 70% (World Bank, 2020). According to UN-Habitat, the urban dwellers under

18 years of age will constitute 60% of the total amount by 2030 (UN-Habitat, 2020).

In an increasingly urbanized world, the most significant challenges will emerge in cities, spanning from socioeconomic equalities, climate change, human mobility, access to services, rise of populist movements, among others. Likewise, urban centres must also create the solutions stemming from growing inequalities (including gender) to forced migration and displacement, poverty and discrimination, environmental degradation, unsustainable resource use, natural and human-made disasters, and health-related crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the growing responsibilities of cities at the forefront of addressing multidimensional challenges. As hubs of activity and cultural life, cities are also sites for innovation, exchange, learning, dialogue and cooperation, and areas such as the very spaces in which creative solutions to contemporary challenges will converge.



Youth's proximity to institutions where they are recognized as legitimate actors is decisive. With rapid urbanization, cities can serve as incubators for youth to undertake responsibilities as active citizens.

Since the pandemic has exacerbated systemic and structural inequalities in all its forms, cities have been quick to provide prompt policy responses to offset the disproportional repercussions on vulnerable groups. Our world calls for innovative urban governance models, emphasizing the social and cultural dimensions and including all population sectors (West, 2020).

These interlocking patterns, characterized by the upsurge in youth populations and the endemic expansion of urban spaces, give a favourable climate to empower urban youth. These social transformations have a significant impact on youth empowerment and youth agency. As harbingers of the future of humanity, today's young people are on the cusp of redefining their increasing roles as catalysts for change in the global scene.

5 Youth engagement and participation: recognize, enable and position

In many countries today, youth often have no direct role in shaping or influencing local policies and programmes beyond voting, usually limited to youth over 18 years old. Effectively, children and youth below this age are rarely heard in the public discourse. This gap in acknowledging young people's views poses a risk in recognizing youth as civic actors with the right to participation. Youth engagement opportunities should be created by meaningfully engaging youth in all stages of decision-making. In the fast-paced digital age, youth are well-positioned to provide ideas on change and be part of designing


and implementing projects in their communities — faster than generations before. Through the use of social media, youth are pushing boundaries for defining legitimate spaces for governance. Youth engagement can be a central force for development. It can also play a key role in building inclusive and vibrant societies. Recognizing the lack of universal definition for youth civic engagement, UNESCO employs youth civic engagement as an activity that (i) is characterized by the agency of young people, (ii) as well as collective action to address issues of public concern, and (iii) towards social change that is youth-led and directed (UNESCO, 2014). Similarly, in their *Youth Engagement Strategy, 2016-2021*, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (2017) defines youth engagement as "involving young people at all levels of decision-making that directly affect them and encouraging them to participate in initiatives to create positive social change."

Indeed, studies show that youth who participated in the civic engagement process could develop leadership skills, including teamwork, public speaking, communications, decision-making, and time management. Moreover, participants often mentioned the "importance of this concrete, relevant, and highly recognized activity to focus their attention and make their participation meaningful rather than symbolic" (Augsberger et al., 2020, p.33). Through civic engagement, young people gain work experience, acquire new skills, learn responsibility and accountability, develop a greater sense of confidence, empowerment and membership, and forge meaningful connections with other youth and adults.

According to the OECD (2017), "*youth participation in policymaking processes is*

an action-oriented process involving young people in institutions, initiatives and decisions, and affording them control over resources that affect their lives".

Political and institutional support, including a genuine willingness to shift power relations and structural changes, are required to create the space for youth participation in policymaking necessary for change.



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6

Meaningful youth engagement: recognizing youth as equal partners

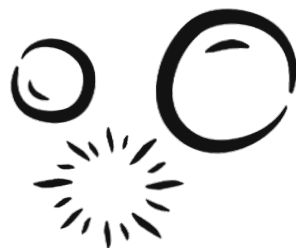
Local governments are focal points for citizen engagement. For young people, volunteering and getting involved in youth councils is an appealing way to make a difference in their communities. For cities with large youth populations, creating youth-driven spaces means integrating youth perspectives into policy and planning.

In their study on local youth councils and the civic engagement of young people, Feringa and Tonkens (2017) note, "governments often see young people as citizens of the future." Meanwhile, the OECD's Youth Governance Survey

(2019) found that "young men and women [are] a yet untapped partner [for] governments in shaping public policies and services." Their assessment of young people's skills vis-à-vis governments underscores the need to shift the prevalent mindset by institutions that youths are the future *and* the present.

Creating the institutional structures that can bridge local governments and young leaders is a cornerstone of meaningful participation. As cited in UNESCO's publication on Youth Engagement in UNESCO's National Commissions (2020), meaningful engagement goes back to Sherry Arnstein's *Ladder of Citizen Participation*. According to Arnstein's philosophy, which Feringa and Tonkens (2020, p.33) describe as "rankings of the significance of participation in terms of the influence exerted, with acting and talking having less impact than giving advice and making decisions," meaningful [youth] engagement must:


- ★ Redistribute power, negotiated between youth and those who hold power.
- ★ Share planning and decision-making responsibilities.
- ★ Ensure youth have the power to assure the accountability of programmes.
- ★ Involve youth directly in the planning, policymaking, and programme management.



Meaningfully engaging with youth can support young people's transition to work, public life and promote entrepreneurship. In the same vein, the UNESCO research presented below revealed that "young people invested in local governance are more confident in their views and opinions and their ability to express these. Participation has also

developed their sense of belonging to their communities" (UNESCO, 2018a). Since youth are increasingly present in the fringes of change-making on their own, there should be more incentives for institutions to include them into the fold, given their expertise and willingness to lead and act.





3
CHAPTER

**About the Surveys –
A global picture of city youth
councils around the world**

This chapter presents an analysis of city youth councils surveyed within ICCAR, including their composition, operations, roles and activities, membership makeup and selection process among others. It provides a snapshot of various city youth councils worldwide.

1 Studies in the field

According to an article by Martin, Pittman, Ferber and McMahon (2007), "youth councils are a suitable place for young people to come together and act on issues of public concern." However, the extent of the activities conducted by city youth councils is less documented at the international level. In 2020, UNESCO conducted a survey and mapping of the city youth councils using an online questionnaire sent to the member cities of the ICCAR network. The study provided an overview of the different categories and activities of various city councils currently in existence. Specifically, the survey sought to identify existing city youth councils within member cities of ICCAR that work directly with public authorities to assess the city youth councils' strengths and activities.

The city youth councils were split according to their classifications based on specific definitions. City

youth councils were classified into various types of organizations based on their level of activity and their legal status. The classifications provided below depended on the city youth councils' affiliation with municipalities and the scope of their work. Based on the desk review, it was apparent that the boundaries between "local council" and "association/NGO" and private and public organizations are sometimes fluid according to each legal context. For statistical purposes, the leading roles and activities of city youth councils were divided into broad categories of activities such as "advocacy" or "consultative" roles. This labelling process comes from the information provided by the website of each city youth council. Therefore, it is worth recalling the prominence of self-definition: city youth councils describe their roles and activities according to their understanding. Ultimately, the categorizations conducted for the survey aid in understanding the creation and day-to-day operations undertaken by city youth councils. The exact nature of their roles and operations would be the subject of a more in-depth study in the future.

The purpose of sending a questionnaire sent directly to member cities of ICCAR was to understand how municipalities define and perceive their public policies concerning youth.

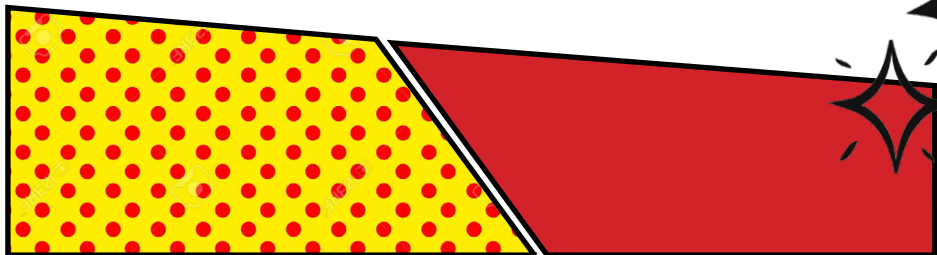


Table 1: Main roles and activities within city youth councils

Main Roles and Activities	Definition
Advocacy role only	When this activity is indicated alone, it means that the related youth organization has no direct link with the municipal authorities. This youth organisation thus plays a role of external pressure, by disseminating information through various media for example.
Advocacy + Consultative	In this case, the youth council does not only play a role of external pressure/advocacy. Municipal (or regional/national) authorities have set up an institutional consultation mechanism with this specific organization.
Advocacy + Consultative + Cultural	In addition to the two activities mentioned above, the organization offers cultural and artistic activities to its members as well as to the rest of the local (and sometimes regional/national) community.
Elected members + Advocacy + Consultative	The members of this youth council are elected and are the official youth representatives of their cities (and sometimes of their region or country) in front of policy makers. This does not necessarily mean that these representatives have the right to vote in municipal council sessions nor to sit in council. However, they do have an official consultative and advocacy power.
Community Service	This type of activity is common among youth councils. It is rare, however, that this is their main activity. When this is the case, the given youth organization generally aims to represent and help a group of disadvantaged persons who need well-adapted help and services.

The survey revealed many variations within city youth councils globally. The study also showed strong connectivity and linkages among city youth council members, recognizing the importance of building youth networks worldwide.

Through an extensive mapping, the study results showed 136 national/regional coalitions in the 7 ICCAR networks: Africa, Arab region, Asia and the Pacific, Canada, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, United States and Canada. The results of the desk review showed that some national/regional coalitions are better represented than others within the ICCAR network. These variable data may indicate more city youth councils in

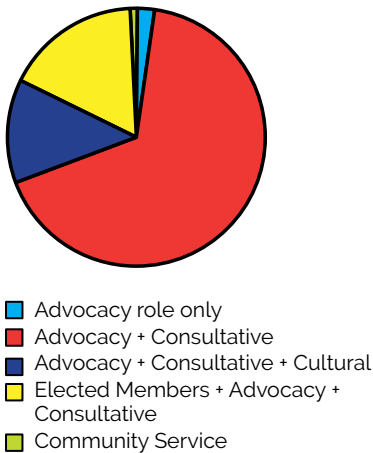
specific federal or local territories than in others. Furthermore, small numbers of city youth councils in each area may be linked to a lack of investment by public authorities in youth-oriented policies. Some regions have more city youth councils in existence than others—sometimes varying in high numbers. Due to the limited scope of the desk review, the correlation between city youth councils and the youth policies created by national governments has not been investigated. However, it is a study worth undertaking in the future.

The second part of the desk review sought to understand the roles and activities of city youth councils in the different regions. Concerning

the principal functions and events of youth councils in ICCAR, both "advocacy" and "consultative" roles are most predominant. Through various consultation mechanisms, city youth councils become the interlocutors of public authorities. If some members of a given city youth council sit and vote in the municipal council, others are rarely heard by local public authorities on specific issues.

Through consultation mechanisms, city youth councils become the primary interlocutors of public authorities. The fact remains that among consultation processes, there are many variations. If some members of a given city youth council sit and vote in the municipal council, others rarely audition on specific topics.

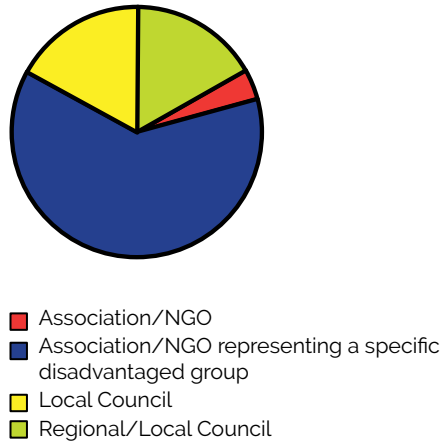
Table 2: Percentage distribution of activities and roles accumulated by youth councils based on available data



As represented in the chart below, the main category of youth councils in the

7 ICCAR coalitions seems to be the "local council", with a total number of 85. This amount is even more significant with the 22 "regional/local councils", conglomerate organizations of several local youth councils. According to the definition adopted in this report, both regional and local councils have easier access to the decision-making spheres. Public authorities recognize their members as the leading youth representatives and interlocutors with respect to local government affairs.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of categories of youth councils based on available data



The desk review also delved into the regional activities of various city youth councils in different parts of the world. For instance, as can be seen from the case study on Montreal in the next chapter, Canadian city youth councils work in close collaboration with municipal authorities. There are regular consultation mechanisms between city youth councils and the cities, and there is also a willingness to include diverse voices in policymaking. The US Coalition of Cities against Racism and

Discrimination showed that city youth councils in the US are spread between the above categories.

According to the desk review, few local youth councils were identified within the Coalition of African Cities against Racism and Discrimination. Instead, regional and national youth organizations are more visible. Similarly, data was also limited when it came to evaluating the activities of the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Intolerance. These gaps would merit further studies in the future. The survey found that "young people often favour engagement through civil society organizations and community-based projects that present pathways towards a more equitable development" (Mercy Corps, 2012). Among the organizations located in Asia and the Pacific region, most have good access to decision-making spheres, either by being democratically elected, with a fundamental right to vote (like in the Philippines with the Sangguniang Kabataan system) or by consultation procedures.

One of the most robust networks and memberships of city youth councils exist in the Coalition of Latin American and Caribbean Cities against Racism. Many countries have well-developed avenues for youth participation, enshrined in local policies and national legislative frameworks. According to data collected, there are many local youth councils in Latin American and Caribbean regions. A number of youth organizations in the region are directly connected with decision-making authorities, which signals a genuine willingness to allocate youth power in policymaking. The case study on the Dominican Republic outlined in the following chapter only provides a glimpse of the various ways

city youth councils in Latin America and the Caribbean have developed over the years, with the help of national youth strategies and policies.

In Europe, the desk review found that local youth councils are the most common type of organization within the European Coalition of Cities against Racism. All the organizations surveyed work in close collaboration with public authorities by being elected as members of the city council or participating in consultations by policymakers related to youth issues.

2 Online surveys (discussion on the survey and the findings)

General Survey Following the results of the ICCAR desk review, a collaboration between UNESCO and UN-Habitat led to the launch of a General Survey, addressed to the ICCAR network, completed in 2021 to develop a comprehensive study aimed at enhancing youth participation in urban governance. The survey included topics on organizational structure, legal status, selection of members, affiliation with local, national, and international bodies of the various city youth councils. It was also made available in both French and English to reach a wider audience. The survey's outcome resulted in a deeper look at how city youth councils operate, complementing the desk review conducted the year prior. The study asked targeted questions on how the youth members feel about their respective organizations. Ultimately, the study compiled data from the city youth councils and their

members concerning their promising practices. The questionnaire included 40 questions, divided into membership, institutional make-up, communications and outreach, and external relations. The survey exercise generated over 37 responses from cities in all regions of the world and provided some valuable insights into the world of youth-led initiatives and activities. Below is the summary of responses from the city youth councils.

The study sought to understand the city youth councils' relationship to local authorities and to assess the level of proximity of youth activities to their municipal counterparts. Moreover, it seeks to find out if city youth councils are considered as an internal part of the political system or as an independent institution designed to have an external effect on the political institutions which make up the decision-making part of the local political system.

Like the desk review above, the city youth councils surveyed are classified according to their affiliation with the municipality as:

1. Independent Association / NGO
2. Affiliated with the Municipal Council
3. Affiliated with a Local Government Body
4. Affiliated with the Mayor's Office

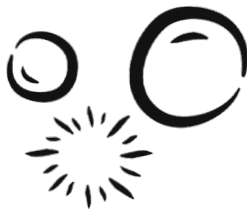
Once again, the classifications helped analyze the activities, management, and affiliations of the various city youth councils. Under these classifications, out of 37 respondents, 12 are with local government bodies, eight affiliated with the Mayor's office, 11 with the municipal council and seven were independent associations.

The difference in membership is relative to the size of the cities. For instance, a city youth council in Istanbul, with a population of approximately 15 million inhabitants, reported having 350 active members. In contrast, Honiara, Solomon Islands, stands out compared to other cities as its city youth council boasts 1,500 members. While the concrete policies enabling a large membership of Honiara's city youth council is unknown, it is nevertheless remarkable to see the city's youth participation. Due to the limited scope of this report, the correlation between population size and youth membership was beyond the survey's range. It would be interesting to further analyze municipal budgets and commitments depending on the size of the city relative to its support for its city youth councils.

The City of Johannesburg in South Africa is another city youth council with a high membership of 84 individuals. According to the Johannesburg Junior Council's response, 36 schools within the municipality send their "finest pupils." Furthermore, through elections, youth council members can also become members of the municipal council, creating an open transition process between the city youth council and the working municipal council (Johannesburg Junior Council, 2020).

3 Representation Matters: A Snapshot of the Gender Makeup of city youth councils

As part of its implementation modalities, the UNESCO Youth Strategy (2014) stipulates that UNESCO's work is



“designed to contribute to national development plans and international development goals and commitments... It will apply and promote (i) rights-based approaches, (ii) gender equality and non-discrimination, inter alia”. In a world where representation matters, it is imperative to see organizations represent their populations as accurately as possible. Gender equality is an essential part of establishing more equal and fairer city youth councils that will, in turn, create more meaningful participation for youth. The survey asked members about the gender makeup of their respective organizations to understand the gender representation of the city youth councils. Data show that there are predominantly more organizations with a higher proportion of female participants than their male counterparts.

In contrast, there were only ten youth councils with a higher percentage of young men than women. While there remains a disparity in gender representation, it is nevertheless noteworthy that out of the 37 responding organizations, eight city youth councils (Azua, Basel, Gatineau, Houston, Toulouse, Tours, Villa Altigracia, and Vienna), representing 21% of the total respondents achieved gender balance within their memberships. Furthermore, it is remarkable that eight other cities (Bani, Beaverton, Helsingborg, Heredia, Medicine Hat, Montreal, Ottawa, and Tecumseh), representing 21%, nearly achieved gender representation within their memberships.

Organizations from Turkey, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, and the Dominican Republic all declared non-binary identifying members – signifying further progress for diversity and inclusion. As demonstrated by the survey results, there is still more to be

done to achieve diversity and equity on participation in city youth councils.

4 Other under-represented groups

The General Survey also inquired about the participation of disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, including young refugees and asylum seekers, minorities, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities, and unemployed and underemployed youth.

The survey revealed that 29 out of 37 organizations responded positively to having members from minority groups. Moreover, out of these 37 organizations, 16 declared they implement mechanisms to include members of underrepresented groups in their selection. Cities such as Leuven in Belgium responded to being in close contact with organizations that work with minorities. Meanwhile, a member from the Jeugdgraad Gent, Belgium, answered, “...in the Ghent Youth Council, we do involve organizations who work with young asylum seekers and with young persons with disabilities; unfortunately, we have not succeeded yet to include them as one of our members.”

Other cities have taken a different route towards ensuring the representation of minorities by putting concrete policies into the process for the recruitment of youth members. The city youth council of Goicoechea (Costa Rica) adopted a local institutional framework for promoting human development which includes areas such as women, family, children, adolescents, older persons, diversity, and persons with disabilities. The practice of adopting

a framework, complemented by a human development office, under the responsibility of the Mayor, ensures that policies to promote equal representation are always present. In Port Vila (Vanuatu) Youth Council, a "Youth Authority Act allows fair role representation for people with special needs who can also become a member or is eligible to occupy any post for any youth councils." In Gatineau, Canada, a point system is in place to ensure that members of underrepresented groups get an equal chance to participate in the city youth council. Similarly, the Kenya National Youth Council has a provision to have one special needs person in the cabinet.

Some city youth councils, however, rely on the open nature of the application process to ensure diversity in representation. Several respondents from different youth councils rely on having a broad criterion for applicants. A respondent from Ottawa, Canada, wrote, "...We do not have any formal mechanisms, but we are definitely mindful of the importance of the diversity for membership and consider this inclusivity when making our ultimate selection of members." Others like the London Youth Advisory Council in Canada and the city of Vienna, Austria, depend on the democratic nature of elections.

With regard to social integration processes, five out of the 37 youth councils mentioned existing mechanisms to include refugees and asylum seekers in the recruitment of members. For instance, the Vlaamse Jeugdraad from Flanders, Belgium, actively incorporates communication strategies targeting under-represented and vulnerable populations.

The data above show that there are variations in the promotion of diversity within city youth councils. Whether or not one approach is more useful or equitable than the other warrants a more thorough study. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that city youth councils have spearheaded processes to achieve gender balance and diversity irrespective of the political environment or level of intervention from their national governments.



5 Selection and membership

Like the administrative structure of city councils, city youth councils generally tend to elect or appoint their members for a specific time interval. Through a variety of processes, many city youth councils hold elections and appointments regularly to encourage as many youth to get involved in municipal affairs. On the other hand, the selection process for city youth councils, either conducted by municipal councils or youth organizations, presents new opportunities to ensure

diversity and equal representation. Out of the 37 respondents to the General Survey, one city youth council mentioned conducting elections twice a year, slightly more frequently than others. Meanwhile, 19 city youth councils held elections yearly, while only nine out of the 37 reporting city youth councils held votes bi-annually. On the other end of the spectrum, five city youth councils reported having a longer-term for their members, choosing to hold elections only every three years. Lastly, two city youth councils undergo an election process every 4 to 5 years. Beyond the traditional election processes, other respondents have a slightly different approach. Unlike its counterparts above, the youth council of Helsingborg in Sweden selects their members on a rolling basis, which means that new members have a chance to join the organization whenever a position becomes available.

Similarly, a respondent from Ghent in Belgium mentioned that they also recruit members continuously. The city youth council of Ghent stated that the choice to do so stems from their desire to be as accessible to all youngsters as possible “... we don't work with elections and terms: every youngster living in the city can present themselves to become a member. We strive continuously to form a diverse group of enthusiastic youngsters, and new members can apply throughout the year.” Once again, the survey results show that when it comes to the day-to-day management of city youth councils, one size does not fit all. Each city youth council is unique in its approach to the recruitment and selection process that reflects the needs, capacity, and perspectives of their respective working environment.

One of the most critical questions in the General survey concerns selecting the

youth council members and whether they are chosen through elections or by appointment. The case studies outlined in the following chapter show relevant examples of ways city youth councils conduct their recruitment. Some believe in making the process as similar as possible to an actual political cycle, where prospective youth must campaign publicly in the lead up to voting. Other city youth councils appoint new members based on the demographic needs and vote through a selection committee tied to the municipality. The selection process is imperative to the creation and operation of city youth councils primarily because they are a mechanism to promote participatory politics and democratic governance. Furthermore, determining a specific process for choosing youth representatives is crucial since it determines the representativeness and inclusiveness of the process.

According to the responses, 16 of the city youth councils stated that the youth council members are appointed. In contrast, 20 city youth councils responded that the members are voted through elections. Conversely, three of the respondents mentioned having no selection process since any willing young people can join the youth council activities any time they wish.

City youth councils selecting their members by appointment also have variances in the decision-making process. For instance, the Ottawa Police Youth Advisory Committee prefers to choose its members after an application process or statement of interest. Current youth members screen application forms to select applicants for an interview. The youth members themselves conduct the meetings with the occasional support by members

of the committee. This process helps to empower the youth and is a great learning opportunity for them about interviewing. Another popular form of selection among youth councils is through committees, generally formed as a mixture of current municipality members, youth council members, or mentors.

Some cities, like Helsingborg, Sweden, have adopted a simplified process where interested candidates volunteer to join the council, along with an explanation of why they fit the role. The relevant city councilor proceeds to consult the nominating committee and subsequently suggests new members. Afterwards, committee members are given a chance to vote on their preferred candidate. Notably, in some cases, the municipality is heavily involved in the selection, while others choose to delegate the selection process to the current members of the city youth council. Alternatively, the Mayor and city council make the final decision of whom to take in as a member of the city youth council members. Such is the case in cities like Basel, Switzerland, and Medicine Hat in Canada.

6 Governance

As a formal or semi-formal body within the political system, city youth councils tend to have regular rules and code of conduct defining their selection and decision-making processes. In response to the General Survey, a significant majority (82 %) of the respondents emphasized that they have a charter or a code of conduct in place to guide the ethos and values of the council. In contrast, others authorize the newly

elected members for a term to define a set of rules for their term in office, much like Calgary, Canada emphasizing the importance of having a youth-led council. In many cases, the code of conduct and regulations are neither stated nor otherwise. Instead, they are defined by formal political processes, enshrined under legislation at the national or municipal level, such as Montreal, where the existence of the youth council is included within the city's charter. The municipality of Botkyrka in Sweden- has a process that includes "[having the] municipal council adopt internal management. The city itself has passed statutes and by-laws to govern all municipal commissions such as ours."

7 Commissions and ad-hoc working groups

One of the ways city youth councils address the different issues in their communities is by creating ad-hoc commissions, which offer a way for youth to study, understand, deliberate, and develop solutions for the pressing problems of their municipalities.

The General Survey reveals, 29 of 37 organizations have an internal organizing structure, which includes a President or a Chair as well as a Vice-President or a Vice-Chair. Around 30 city youth councils indicated having commissions to work on specific issues outside of the city youth councils' usual mandate on an ad-hoc basis. These commissions are policy-based or directed according to the city's request or when a pertinent problem arises.

In some cases, the city council may request the city youth councils to

undertake studies to provide a youth perspective, such as in Ottawa, Canada. Others have fixed commissions working on a specific area like culture, sport, environment and mobility as they do in Mao, Spain. The efficacy and smooth functioning of the commissions often depend on how often members can meet and convene. According to the survey, 18 out of 37 reporting youth councils gather once a month, representing 46 % of the network. Meanwhile, ten city youth councils meet twice a month (25.6 %). At the same time, six out of the group reported convening only once per week (15.4 %). In contrast, four of the organizations hold meetings between three to six months (10.3 %). In comparison, one city youth councils reported gathering only when necessary.

separate staff and budget, a majority of the youth councils (29 out of 37) indicated having a dedicated team to support their work (78%), and 28 reported to have a fixed annual budget (75%) to finance their activities.



8 Pillars of success: organizational capacities and support

By establishing a formal organization and official roles of their members, city youth councils are accountable to the municipalities and constituents they represent. Additionally, many of them have operational constraints, and like any working organization, they need logistical and organizational support to fulfil their mandates. In this regard, having an annual budget, allocated workspaces, and a space for assembly, as well as the ability to make recommendations to decision-makers and access to municipal staff, are all imperative to the success of city youth councils. Responses show that 21 of 37 organizations have offices and workspaces (56%), and 18 have a different assembly room for council activities (48%). When it comes to

Additionally, twenty-five of the responding city youth councils indicated raising funds for their events and activities (67%). The resources available to youth and city youth councils show a substantial investment and commitment for youth. They can have a direct impact in ensuring that city youth councils maintain a voice in decision-making circles, and they go beyond mere tokenism and enhancement of public reputation.

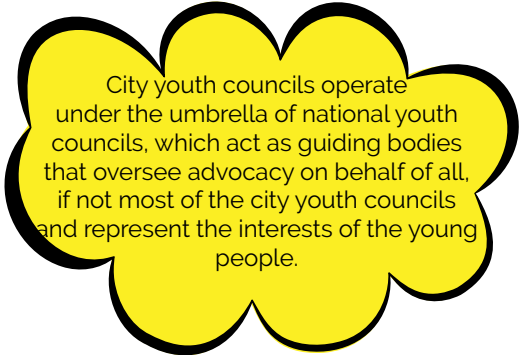
9 Politics, national representation, and affiliations

Given that city governments themselves fund their youth councils, it is not surprising that there are lingering questions over the impartiality and freedom of association for youth participants. The survey reveals a number of stipulations and rules to

ensure that the city youth council operates and conducts its work without fearing political interference. According to the General Survey, which asked the question *Can the members of the City Youth Council engage in mainstream and representative politics during activities?* Only 12 out of 37 youth councils prohibit their members from getting into mainstream party politics. A respondent from Villa Altigracia in the Dominican Republic describes, youth members "[can] not join political parties, campaign individually or object to voters to win, campaign with all participants, so that parents and others do not intervene in the processes." Such rules are a form of pre-emptive mechanism to prevent any conflicts of interests and controversies between city youth council members and the political world. Conversely, 27 out of 37 respondents mentioned that youth are free to engage with mainstream politics.

In most of the responding countries, city youth councils operate under the umbrella of national youth councils, which act as guiding bodies that oversee advocacy on behalf of all, if not most of the city youth councils and represent the interests of the young people at the national level. Examples include the National Youth Council of Kenya, the Swiss National Youth Council, Finnish Youth Council, and the Sangguniang Kabataan in the Philippines, among many others. On the international stage, the World Youth Council acts as a platform for national youth councils around the world to convene but also to empower youth development and action on the global stage. Surprisingly, only 12 out of 37 organizations within the General Survey claim to be represented at the National Youth Council (32%). In comparison, 23 out of 37 organizations are reported by

the respondents not to be represented at the city council. The reasons behind the relatively low participation/representation of city youth councils in their respective national councils warrant further study to understand the dynamics between local and national youth councils fully.



Similarly, 21% of organizations reported an affiliation with the Mayor's office. Consequently, several municipalities have a more fluid relationship with city youth councils, especially when youth members can partake and run for city council. Such is the case in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Villa Altigracia, Dominican Republic.

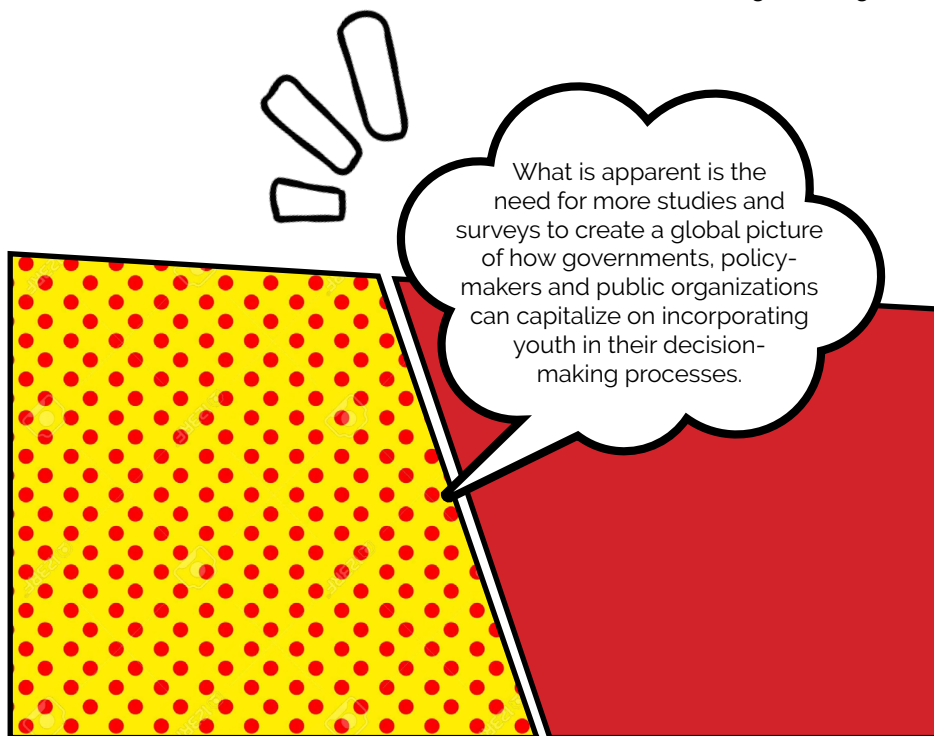
10 **Strength in numbers: cooperation with NGOs, international organizations and other networks**

Many cities recognize the high convening power of networks and alliances today, as exemplified by many existing city platforms in various regions. For example, the UNESCO Cities Platform gathers eight UNESCO

networks and programmes, including ICCAR, and reflects the transversal approach to working towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The same goes for city youth councils, where relations with non-governmental and civil organizations, as well as international organizations and other youth associations, can be crucial to garnering more support and knowledge.

According to the responses of the survey, 35 out of 37 organizations cooperate with NGOs and independent youth associations (94 %). Cooperation ranges from collaborating on a project to working together on fundraising activities, organizing joint training, open discussions, working on specific themes like citizenship and urban mobility and many other topics.

The survey results reveal the varied ways that city youth councils around the world are created, operated and organized. More importantly, the data reflects the academic research supporting the benefits and opportunities for growth associated with the existence of city youth councils. The data and analysis presented in this report only provide a glimpse of deconstructing the world of youth empowerment and development through civic participation. However, what is apparent is the need for more studies and surveys to create a global picture of how governments, policy-makers and public organizations can capitalize on incorporating youth in their decision-making processes. In the same vein, the youth members who answered the surveys have shown that when youth are provided with the freedom to engage, create and speak, they can be forces for effective change-making.





4
CHAPTER

**Lessons learned from Canada,
the Dominican Republic,
the Philippines and Brazil**

The case studies below provide a snapshot of active city youth councils in various parts of the world. The examples are based on the availability of comprehensive data and information provided by the city youth councils.

1 Montreal, Canada

A portrait of Canadian youth by Statistics Canada (2019) reveals that Canadian youth are more diverse, connected, socially engaged, and educated compared to past generations. The data also shows "youth are less likely to vote but are still socially and civically engaged" (ibid., p.15). As one of the oldest cities in North America, Montreal is home to one of the most racially mixed, vibrant, and youthful populations in Canada. Located in the southwest of the province of Quebec, 1.7 million residents call it home (Statistics Canada, 2016). Given its active youth makeup, Montreal has one of the most involved municipal youth councils in Canada. The Conseil jeunesse de Montréal (CjM) or the Montreal Youth Council was created in 2003 to involve youth in municipal affairs while bringing the city closer to the youth.

Background to the Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal

To address the concerns of young citizens, Montreal's municipal administration invited youth aged 12-30 to deliberate issues and decisions that affect young people. Established on 11 February 2003, the Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal (CjM) plays a vital role in advising the Mayor and Executive Committee on all issues

relating to young Montrealers. The CjM was created under the by-law 02-177, adopted at the municipal council on 23 June 2007. The creation of the youth council paved the way for a formal and standardized method for youth participation at the city level.

On 16 September 2019, the City of Montreal's municipal council adopted a new legal framework for the city's advisory boards, the City Council By-law Montréalaises, the *Conseil Interculturel de Montréal* and the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal* (19-051)—further cementing the legal status of the CjM. The selection process is organized and formalized with procedures to ensure proper representation and diversity. Unlike other youth councils who function on a more informal approach, the CjM's creation, mandate and activities fall under an institutionalized mechanism enshrined in the city's municipal charter. Apart from a well-developed institutional framework, the CjM has a dedicated operational annual budget.

Mandate

The CjM's primary mandate is to serve as a consultative body reporting to the Mayor as the bearer of the Montreal youth file, and the CjM represents the interests of young people aged 12 to 30. Its role is to :

- ★ Advise the Mayor and the executive committee on all youth-related issues.
- ★ Ensure concerns are addressed to the youth in the decisions of the administration
- ★ Give a voice to young Montrealers and Montrealers.
- ★ Provide youth with access to decision-making power.



- ★ Participate in determining youth priorities in the municipality.

To fulfil their directive, the CjM functions to:

- ★ Solicit opinions, receive, and hear from representations of any person or group on issues related to young people.
- ★ Commission studies and research related to these concerns.
- ★ Organize events, seminars, training, or any other activity promoting the development of knowledge of the reality of young Montrealers.

Selection process

The process starts with a public call for nomination, followed by an extensive review by the selection committee. Potential members are interviewed, placed in a pool of candidates to be selected when a vacant position arises. Considerations such as gender, age, and which area of the city they represent ensure that the group represents the diversity of the population they serve. The municipal council then appoints members for three years.

Inclusivity and diversity lie at the heart of the youth council, as exemplified by its membership. The CjM currently has 15 volunteer members, including a Chair (President) and Vice-Chair (Vice-President). Members reflect the population of the different parts of Montreal; and represent the geographical and gender diversity, linguistic, cultural and social aspects of the city's youth. Furthermore, members cut across different professions and fields of study, ranging from engineers to urban planners, teachers, doctors, and students from high school to university. As a youth council that aims

to represent a diverse population, the selection process also seeks to reflect the cultural, linguistic, social, and geographic diversity of Montreal, as well as gender representation.

City youth council at work: bringing the city closer to the youth

The members have a fixed meeting schedule, where they convene each month, in addition to participating in committee meetings and hosting as well as participating in various events. To ensure a smooth operation of the youth council, the President and Vice-President also convene monthly. A municipal council member sits in the CjM while a part-time secretary ensures that there is a fixed advocate to represent the interests of youth in city council proceedings.

Activities and publications

From expressing views on underused public spaces to homelessness and tackling the circular economy, the city youth council has probed on complex issues and has worked hard to develop concrete recommendations to contribute to better policymaking. A well-informed research process, guided by different perspectives, backs their studies. Moreover, the consistent publication of reports ensures a regular flow of information and communication between the youth council and the city administration. The documents published by the youth council, straddling the broad spectrum of many societal issues today, are testament to the meaningful participation and impact of the CjM on policy discussions within the city.

Their most recent works include the following: *Policy Paper on the City of Montreal's Use of Automated Decision*

Systems: Ensuring Responsible, Fair and Inclusive Governance (2021) and Opinion on the circular economy in Montreal: a transition to a sustainable future tackled circular economy head-on. The CjM provided necessary recommendations on how the City of Montreal can leverage the smart city model, and support the transition to more sustainable alternatives (Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal, 2022). The city youth council also published a *Brief on Systemic Racism and Discrimination (2019)*, guided by an intersectional approach to assessing the discrimination and racism faced by young people adequately.

With a strong social justice focus, the CjM has published reports like *Young People and Homelessness: Revealing a Hidden Reality (2017)*. The CjM previously tackled social and urban issues through pieces like *The reality of Aboriginal youth in Montréal - Policy paper release (2016)*. Published in partnership with Native Montreal, a non-profit organization and service centre for Indigenous people, the policy paper highlighted the obstacles experienced by Aboriginal young people living in Montreal to ensure the services are better suited. The collaboration resulted in 19 concrete recommendations, such as providing adequate health and social services, education, employment, and training, fighting against exclusion, among many others.

Events: painting the town with awareness, engagement, and action

City youth council members have maintained active partnerships with other stakeholders. In 2018, they partnered with the *Institut du Nouveau Monde* summer school. They designed and facilitated an interactive workshop, the *Municipal Lab*, which showed how

cities operate and function, including their responsibilities and jurisdictions.

The CjM maintains an active calendar; in 2019 alone, they hosted or participated in more than 100 events that cut across different fields, such as policymaking, urban issues, climate action, digital future, diversity, and inclusion, to name a few. The CjM has numerous collaborations with other organizations, such as its work in helping to establish the Borough Youth Councils around Montreal. The CjM advocated the creation of other youth councils in the boroughs (or neighbourhoods) in Montreal. The borough youth councils such as Lachine and Verdun are connected to the CjM but are not interdependent. The groups have a shared newsletter, meet once a year and exchange best practices. More recently, in collaboration with the *Forum jeunesse de l'île de Montréal*, convened youth council members and administrative heads from 7 other existing boroughs to give training workshops and valuable advice to support other youth council members. Such collaborations and mentorship allude to the potential of youth councils to be further expanded through cooperation, mentorship and sharing of helpful practice methods in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Creating the building blocks of a healthy community

In their *Youth Engagement Handbook*, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM, 2018) called on cities across Canada to "attract the next generation of municipal leaders in [their] community." To do so, they recommend that "young residents have to be engaged in a way that makes them excited, interested, and invested in the plans and processes that will shape how the community looks in the future"

(ibid., p. 11). Apart from establishing the youth council with dedicated funding and personnel, the CjM maintains relationships with city officials and councillors.

Members' experiences show that adopting inclusive and engaging practices in decision-making processes can lead to good outcomes. Furthermore, it drives the mutual benefit of having youth councils as a tool for broader engagement and active participation. When trust and knowledge come together, action and change follow. Like the findings of the ICCAR survey on city youth councils, it highlights that structure and stage setting is vital – municipalities should invest in building a structure for youth council members and a preliminary plan.

The CjM encapsulates the necessary steps and supports essential for city youth councils to flourish. It is not enough to create avenues for youth to participate, but it is also vital to have the political will and tangible tools to support youth to ensure their success. The UN Youth Strategy cites youth engagement platforms, dialogue opportunities and capacity building to strengthen foundations to help young people (United Nations, 2018). In this regard, education and empowerment will go a long way. For youth who are new to city building and politics, giving them tools and knowledge about the ins and outs of city management, laws will be beneficial for them to know what is possible to accomplish in the context of city politics, different layers of administration and jurisdiction. It shows a realistic picture of how cities work. The CjM's work speaks volumes for using the tools at their disposal to spearhead the initiatives in their community. *"You give knowledge and tools to your youth members, and in turn, they will develop it."* The Conseil

Jeunesse de Montreal is a primary example of creating an impact from empowerment and using all the available tools for young people to thrive.

The Dominican Republic

Background and mandate

Currently, youth under 30 make up over 30% of the inhabitants of the Dominican Republic. Among young people, data from the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2016) show that pre-COVID youth unemployment rate in the country was at 13% whereas the general average was 5%. Between the rising youth population and the high unemployment rate, young people face many barriers to transitioning to adult life. Locally, Dominicans tackle challenges by creating networks of city youth councils engaged in their communities, advocating for better youth-oriented policies.

Fifteen city youth councils promote the participation and public engagement of children and adolescents from 10 to 17 (Jimenez, 2016). In the Dominican Republic, city youth councils represent a social space for youth engagement that increases the agency, autonomy, and voice of young people.

The Dominican Republic has a history of signing on to international legal frameworks that promote youth and children's rights. For instance, it has ratified the International Convention for the Rights of the Child. It has approved a comprehensive code to protect children's fundamental rights, including their right to participation in society. It is the only country in the Caribbean region with a youth-only secretariat (World



Bank, 2003). Additionally, the Dominican Republic has national legislation called the *Ley de Juventud* No. 49/2000, which created the Secretary of State for Youth. The law allocates 1 percent of the federal budget for the youth secretariat and establishes a local youth initiatives fund covered by 4 percent of municipal budgets (ibid., p.61).

The legal framework in the Dominican Republic explicitly promotes child and young people participation via law 136-03, Code for the Protection of Children, Article No 17 (Conani, 2005):

"All children and adolescents have the right to participate freely, actively and fully in the family, community, school, social life, science, culture, sports and recreation, and to their progressive incorporation into active citizenship. The State, the family, and the society must create and promote opportunities for the participation of all children, adolescents, and their associations."

Additionally, the National Development Strategy 2010-2030 mandates "creating the institutional setting for the development, recreation and progressive citizenship of children, adolescents and young people, through the joint effort of the National and Local Government" (Abreu and Rodda, 2010). Legislative measures above allow the creation and optimization of youth-centred mechanisms with proper allocation of financial and human resources to ensure youth participation.

City youth councils in the Dominican Republic are unique in their democratic mandate. Unlike most city youth councils, youth council members in the Dominican Republic are voted by their peers (UNICEF, 2012), with the electoral turnout at 72% in 2006 (UNICEF, 2006)

and 87% in 2012. By 2016, the city youth councils had organized 43 elections in 23 participating cities, with 350,000 voters, 700 elected officials, and over 4,500 volunteers in the different electoral commissions (Mercedes and Abreu, 2019).

For over 15 years, youth participation rates in city youth councils increased steadily. The uptick in youth involvement can be traced back to 1998, when a group of adolescents in Pedro Santana, the second poorest in the country (MEPYD, 2014), lobbied for a participatory budget for children and youth. Through their commitment, UNICEF, and AIESEC, an international youth-run NGO, spearheaded the creation of city youth councils in Bani, Yaguata, Guaymate, Mao and La Romana in 2004. Not long after, the pilot project grew in 2006 when UNICEF expanded the initiative further while providing municipalities financial support, technical assistance, and capacity building. Following the favourable outcomes of the first two projects, former members of the city youth councils supported the expansion of the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU) by creating the Red Dominicana de Asesores de Ayuntamientos Juveniles e Infantiles (REDAJI), a network of advisors of city youth councils. REDAJI created a system of support and knowledge sharing between the boards. After all these efforts, by mid-2012, the number of municipalities with active city youth councils had increased to 12 (FEDOMU, 2013).

In 2012, UNICEF signed an agreement to transfer responsibility to FEDOMU, a representative association of local governments in the Dominican Republic, which became a symbol of maturity and national ownership for the organizations involved. With the additional funding

and enhanced responsibility, FEDOMU recruited staff to support its operations and activities. They also obtained a grant from Ryerson University for a 5-year project aimed at consolidating and expanding the city youth councils as well as to create 20 new city youth councils and strengthen support for the existing youth councils through capacity building and training. Ultimately, the project ended in 2018 with mixed results. Towards the end, FEDOMU significantly downsized its operational structure linked with city youth councils (Custodio and Jimenez, 2019). Nevertheless, FEDOMU's progress speaks to its success in building a network of grassroots change-makers to foster partnerships with international organizations. Ultimately, it illustrates young people's potential to create something from their passions and scale them up to spread community-oriented opportunities for other young people.

The World Bank (2003, p. 57) notes, "Youth and community groups are important in the Caribbean, forming the basis of youth organization in some countries." They provide an outlet for youth to develop competencies, tools and opportunities to participate in community programmes actively. The existence of city youth councils in the Dominican Republic has been an essential outlet for youth to represent themselves in critical issues and organizations.

As such, the main goals of city youth councils are (FEDOMU, 2013):

- ★ To promote youth participation in cities through active engagement in the different participatory schemes already existing at the local level (participatory budgeting, consultations, town hall meetings, etc.).

- ★ To promote children's voices and concerns and contribute to the creation of active citizenship and participatory democracy.
- ★ To advocate for children's rights in the local and national realms.
- ★ To implement local projects and programmes that benefit children, especially the most vulnerable.

Like their counterparts in municipal administration, the city youth councils have a Mayor, a Deputy Mayor, secretary, treasurer, councillor and city council president. Each councillor oversees one specialized commission that responds to the strategic planning of each city youth council. Much like their counterparts in city councils, some of the most recurring commissions are health, education, culture, sports, environment, child protection against abuse or negligence, and communication are also present in the plan (FEDOMU, 2013, p.76).

Selection process

Youth representatives are selected either by a small number of children (usually sponsored by an NGO or school) or directly appointed by adults (Mercedes and Abreu, 2019, p.68). In the Dominican case, the city youth council electoral processes are open to all 9 to 17 years old. First, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and council members of the youth arm are confirmed and followed by the appointment of the intersectoral steering committee composed of civil society and governmental organizations favouring children's rights in each municipality. Once the new members are confirmed, they undergo intense training focusing on child rights, municipal development, leadership, teamwork, planning, budgeting, ethics, and communication. Additionally, a transition team with members of the old and new city youth councils guarantees the

continuity of work and a smooth transfer of responsibilities.

Youth council at work: governance of the city youth council

The members are elected for a two-year term, supported by regular commissions and an ad-hoc task force to help organize work. The monthly commissions take place according to the four main categories of rights defined in the Convention on the Child's Rights, namely: survival, development, protection, and participation rights. Moreover, there is a transversal commission that deals with child rights promotion and communication (FEDOMU, 2013). In addition, each city youth council can create task forces to respond to the demands and challenges of its constituencies. Given the varying needs of each city youth council, there is no standard operating procedure for all city youth councils; however, there are some commonalities. First, there is no predetermined budget allocation for city youth councils. Some municipalities have a minimum distribution for city youth council basic operations, and the Mayor's office or the Municipal Council must approve the different programme expenses.

Meanwhile, funding for other city youth councils remains project-based. In contrast, other city youth councils do not have any budget and operate with in-kind donations supplied by the municipality's administrative department. The city youth councils must organize three open town hall meetings, including approving work plans, presenting the first year's results, and discussing the second-year project and finally giving the city youth council's results and achievements.

Activities: Child-friendly programmes and projects

City youth councils mainly conduct project work, which is designed in each of the city youth council commissions. The city youth council must approve these projects, which are later presented to the Office of the Mayor or the municipal council to proceed. By 2016, city youth councils had implemented over 500 projects in 23 cities; including the following (Jimenez, 2016):

- ★ Promotion of the civil registry for undocumented children in Bani and Villa Altigracia. 1500 children were registered in a joint effort between the city youth councils and the National Board of Elections and Civil Registry
- ★ Installation of libraries, operating homework rooms, scholarships for low-income outstanding students and provision of school supplies for low-income students
- ★ Fundraising for activities and the promotion of child rights
- ★ Organization of social media campaigns (Prevention of Cholera, Prevention of teen pregnancy)
- ★ Promotion of civic engagement (creation of youth-led community-based associations)
- ★ Construction of sports facilities and recreational parks in favelas and informal settlements
- ★ Actively participating in the local development plan via engagement in participatory mechanisms at the municipal government (participatory budgeting, town hall meetings, etc.)

Institutional context

Local governments only manage a fraction of the national budget which was 3.5% in 2018, compared to the Latin American average of 12% (Baez, 2015). Therefore, Dominican cities are financially constrained and have a limited impact on local public services such as education, health, environment and public infrastructure.

As such, cities grapple with several challenges, especially related to the emancipation of city youth councils. Besides underfunding, resource allocation patterns do not prioritize the macro category of participation rights. Dominican communities remain adult-centric and show resistance to the participation of young people.

While the activities outlined above are youth-initiated, most decisions are still contingent on adults, such as creating the annual city youth council and funding allocations. Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic unique model was recognized by the 2012 State of the World's Children (UNICEF, 2012):

"Many towns and cities form children's councils to involve children in governance. This concept is taken further in the Dominican Republic, where child-friendly towns engage all schoolchildren in elections for the children's council, using this as an opportunity to teach citizenship rights."

Dominican city youth councils are examples of successful youth participation. Institutional space for meaningful youth participation has expanded throughout the country and has provided the organizational architecture for developing youth-led initiatives. It has also significantly increased the competencies and

abilities of children and adolescents relating to self-reliance, communication skills, and the ability to demand their rights in the public sphere. The city youth councils have also succeeded in creating massive social mobilization and turnout in the elections of the youth representatives. About 80% of the children and adolescents of the busy cities have participated in the electoral and governance. This increased participation of youth creates a positive platform for progressive citizenship and human rights.

3 The Philippines: Sangguniang Kabataan



Background and mandate

One of the most vibrant youth networks globally is in the Philippines, which has institutionalized the structure of city youth councils, provided budget allocations and a national secretariat. In 1975, a presidential decree establishing the networks identified young people's roles in the community ("*barangay*") and called for their active engagement in its development efforts. The *Kabataang Barangay* (KB), the city youth council in the vernacular, was composed of young people aged 15-18 years old. The National Youth Council (Pambansang Katipunan ng Kabataang Barangay) was created subsequently in 1977, which functioned directly under the Office of the President. Aside from expanding the age group to 15-21 years old, the council created the Youth Development Training Programme aimed to enhance the values and skills of young people to enable them to become productive leaders. Each *barangay* in the country has a mandate by law to elect its own KB officials.

Following the People Power Revolution, the *Kabataang Barangay* was abolished in 1986 (Evangelista, 2018) and was replaced by the Presidential Council for Youth Affairs (PCYA) in 1987. In 1991, the *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) was established by the Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160), which allowed youth to participate in local governance. The following year, over 42 000 barangays elected SK leaders across the Philippines.

City youth council at work: operations

In January 2016, the SK Reform Act of 2015 (Republic Act No. 10742) entitled "An act establishing reforms in the Sangguniang Kabataan creating enabling mechanisms for meaningful youth participation in nation-building, and other purposes" was passed. Revitalizing the role of the SK, the law declares (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 2016):

"The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and thus, promotes and protects their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being, inculcates in their patriotism, nationalism and other desirable values, and encourages their involvement in public and civic affairs. Towards this end, the State shall establish adequate, effective, responsive and enabling mechanisms and support systems that will ensure the meaningful participation of the youth in local governance and nation-building."

The mechanics for the election, the organizational structure and their terms of reference are carefully mandated by law. The SK elections are conducted simultaneously as the municipal elections and subsequently every three years. The SK Chairperson, SK Secretary and SK Treasurer manage the

organization's affairs. Additionally, the SK's functions, including its links with other national agencies in the planning, budgeting, implementation, and activity reporting, are stipulated in detail in the Republic Act.

The law requires each SK to formulate a three-year rolling plan called the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan (CBYDP) that must align with the Philippine Youth Development Plan. Projects called for by law in the execution of SK functions include advocating for good governance, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resilience, youth employment and livelihood, health and anti-drug abuse, gender sensitivity, and sports development. The law designates the SK to approve its budget, promulgate resolutions, implement projects, hold fundraising activities, create regular and select committees, submit progress and financial reports, among other things. The law provides economic independence in the city youth council's operations and disbursements, subject to accounting and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

A unique chapter in the law calls for the compulsory observance of the "Youth Week," an annual advocacy and awareness-raising commemoration, coinciding with International Youth Day every year in August. Young people aged 13 to 17 years old are selected to act as "boy and girl officials" and perform the duties of their counterparts in all local elective and appointed offices. This advocacy initiative has raised awareness among youth constituents in the importance of the role of youth in Philippine society.

The national law (under Republic Act No. 10742) also established

Local Youth Development Councils (LYDC) in every province, city, and municipality, composed of the SK President and two other members, plus other representatives of youth organizations. The LYDC was created to enable environments for broad and multisectoral youth participation in local governance. Furthermore, it fosters a more inclusive local policymaking process that includes consultations with civil society (Sangguniang Kabataan, 2015). By establishing the LYDC, youth leaders and elected SK members are called to participate in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of youth development programmes.

The National Youth Commission, together with relevant national and local agencies and youth leaders, published the Sangguniang Kabataan Operations Manual, which lays down guidelines on implementing the roles and responsibilities of city youth councillors. The Manual also includes an overview of the history of the Sangguniang Kabataan (National Youth Commission, 2020).

Initiatives to enhance youth participation are at the core of the national youth policy. The law guarantees a robust capacity-building mechanism, with allocation from the State's federal budget to improve the skills and competencies of city youth councillors. The "Mandatory and Continuing Training Programmes" require each SK official to undergo this training before the assumption of office and during their incumbency. National agencies (Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Development Academy of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance, the

National Youth Commission (formerly the National Youth Council)—the umbrella agency that formulates and coordinates national policies on youth) and youth stakeholders jointly design informative training programmes.

Under this law, the national budget appropriates an initial amount of fifty million pesos (approximately USD 1 million) for a training fund. The compulsory training programmes include topics such as "Philippine cultural history, political systems, ethics and ideologies; the Filipino as a nation builder; the Filipino youth and its role in nation-building; and capacity building on leadership, programme and project development and sustainability, financial management, accountability and transparency" (National Youth Commission, 2020).

Training workshops provided to city youth councils across the regions delve into topics such as Continuing Training Modules on Resource and Youth Mobilization, Disaster Risk and Climate Change Adaptation, Local Youth Situational Analysis and Local Youth Planning (Sangguniang Kabataan, 2020). An ongoing initiative established in October 2019 by the national government, *Competency-Based Human Resource Management and Development*, seeks to facilitate developing a competency framework to identify the training needs of city youth councillors to achieve their organizational mandate and objectives.

National law mandates allocated funding for city youth councils. According to Section 20 of Republic Act No. 10742, the Sangguniang Kabataan has "financial independence in its operations, disbursements and encashments of their funds, income and

expenditures” (Sangguniang Kabataan, 2015). Based on the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan (CBYDP) adopted by local officials, funds are allocated and shall be considered as a priority the funding for:

“programmes, projects and activities that will promote and ensure the equitable access to quality education, environmental protection, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resilience, youth employment and livelihood, health, including health services and adolescent sexual and reproductive health, anti-drug abuse, gender sensitivity, sports development, and capability building which emphasizes leadership training” (ibid., p.20).

National agencies guide the implementation of local policies targeting youth. Relevant ministries are actively collaborating with city youth councils to ensure that federal laws are appropriately applied.

The national government has also supported city youth councils in the proper handling of its budget. In January 2020, the Commission on Audit (COA), the Philippines’ audit institution, officially released the “Handbook on the Financial Transactions of the Sangguniang Kabataan” through an official circular. The Handbook guides the Sangguniang Kabataan in the “proper recording, reporting, and disbursement of their funds” (Commission on Audit, 2013).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sangguniang Kabataan city youth councillors have proven their trustworthiness and efficiency as front liners in addressing the challenges brought about by the crisis (ibid., p.84).

In collaboration with the National Youth Commission, the Sangguniang Kabataan deployed multiple efforts to support communities within their purview. Several SK officials used their funds to ease the impact of lockdowns in communities. In several cities, SK leaders coordinated and organized brigades in packing and distributing relief goods, face shields and masks. SK officials held online town hall meetings, webinars, and social media campaigns to raise communities’ awareness of health and security measures, particularly on guidelines related to quarantine measures. According to online news reports (Ernest, 2020), city youth councils conducted emergency responses by providing relief assistance and food distribution schemes to vulnerable populations, including farmers and jobless locals (such as #AmbagNgKabataan and Talipapa Online).

Today, the Sangguniang Kabataan prides itself with a dynamic, innovative, and efficient network of city youth councillors in all cities and provinces across the country. This results from the long-standing national policy frameworks that provide comprehensive laws leveraging youth engagement and participation in local governance. The provision of allocated funds for the operations of the city youth councils has demonstrated the sustainability of these networks. With the support of the national government, the city youth councils receive adequate guidance and support. Therefore, the linkages between national and local governance have remained stable. Continuous training—a crucial component in young leaders’ competencies, enables youth city councillors to perform better for unanticipated emergencies such as

common disasters in the country. More importantly, the democratic election of city youth councillors contributes to the confidence-building among local populations who vote for them and the legitimacy of this local institution which embodies youth participation in all Filipino communities.

4 Campinas, Brazil

Background and mandate

The Campinas city youth council was created in 2015 by the Federal Government in response to the historic youth mobilization in Brazil. As a space for debates, young people can express their needs and help build public policies while facilitating intergovernmental dialogue at the federal, state, and municipal levels. Through an election, young people from civil society and social and popular movements serve two-year terms. The Municipal Youth Policy and the Youth Coordination were also created with the Youth Council and serve as municipal structures linked to the Human Rights policy. Campinas has been able to make progress in implementing essential youth programmes, fostering access to higher education and the labour market, and expanding the political engagement of young people, especially young women.

Activities: from classrooms to businesses

One initiative spearheaded by Campinas is a socio-educational programme established by Law No. 14,853, of 16 July 2014, to promote digital inclusion. *Juventude Conectada* (PJC) invited

120 young people aged 15 to 29 to receive a monthly educational grant and work 20 hours a week to develop digital inclusion activities in telecentres distributed by Campinas territories.

Youth organize, guide and support their community with free introductory computer workshops and other digital literacy activities. To participate, the scholarship recipients receive an itinerary of social and cultural training activities guided by non-formal participatory education. Fellows participate in continuous biweekly training with the programme's leaders.

Among other notable projects include training courses in various domains to help youth gain skills and competencies. In September 2019, 32 new scholarship holders joined *Juventude Conectada* went through a week of basic training include courses on management, citizenship, and human rights (LGBTQ issues, femicide, racism, migration and xenophobia, people with disabilities) and information and communication technology courses.

Meanwhile, the "Generation of Opportunities" project, borne out of an agreement signed with the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, provided programmes and events for professional engagement and access to the labour market for vulnerable youth. The project had 360 courses on entrepreneurship, solidarity economy and cultural management courses for young people from low-income backgrounds. In addition, students received free material, school supplies and transportation vouchers. Both courses gave youth valuable tools in the formal labour market, in fields of work that provide autonomy and leadership

opportunities for the young people involved. Young people could capitalize on new knowledge for opportunities in entrepreneurship and employment. Indirectly, these young people will help reduce the violence against the young population through their engagement in safe spaces and contributions to the social development of their community and society.

Through the participation of the Youth Coordinator in the Young Apprentice Commission (CJA) of the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CMDCA), 24 April of each year was declared as the Municipal Week of Young Apprentice (*Semana Municipal do Jovem Aprendiz*). In celebration of this week, CJA, together with the Youth Coordination Council, promoted "Campinas Pela Aprendizagem", a walk with young apprentices from 12 training locations. The walk brought together about 800 young people in a march from *Estação Cultura to Largo do Rosário*, carrying banners and posters about the importance of learning professional careers and having a first job. Different training centres were provided by the municipality where youth set up booths to serve share information on apprenticeship programmes, vocational courses, and information about the labour market. In addition, the job opportunities fair aimed to support the inclusion of young people in the professional world.

Another major success was the "*Olha a Gente*" (Look at the People) project which was a partnership between the Youth Coordination of the City of Campinas and the Asas Institute of Educational Communication, with the support of the Cargill Foundation. The organizations brought the *Olha a Gente*

Project and developed multimedia workshops for public school students. In a sustainable food edition of the project, 81 high school students were trained at Vitor Meireles State Schools, in São Bernardo, and Benedicta de Salles Pimentel Wutke, at Jardim Nova América. The goal, in addition to training in multimedia languages, including photography, video and digital media, was to draw attention to food waste. During the workshops, the young people experienced, through video and the photography, new ways to raise visibility on food waste issues. The students involved their families and school actors, such as managers, teachers, and school cooks, in these projects.

In total, eight meetings took place in each school. The team of educators from Instituto Asas held debates, conversation circles and theoretical and practical activities on topics related to sustainable food. In this way, young people reflected critically on the various day-to-day situations that contribute to food waste. With the help of two nutritionists and the project's educators, students met and made recipes with some non-conventional food plants, reproduced the tricks of photo studios in manipulating food images, and learned about urban horticulture. They also recorded interviews with teachers, students, and school cooks and produced memes and posters to help raise the awareness of colleagues. At the end of the activities, the other students could attend a photo exhibition to watch the videos produced by their peers and attend the cine-debate session on food waste.

During the Citizenship, Adolescence and Youth Workshop, another event hosted by the Campinas Councils, young



teenagers from the “Ser e Conviver” Programme of the NGO Ensino Social Profissionalizante (ESPRO) participated in a workshop given by the Coordinator of Youth. The meeting addressed the importance of social participation and the fundamental principles of citizenship. Attendees were able to exchange their experiences on social rights issues in Brazil.

The final event, called Yellow September 2019, was the second institutional programme to prevent and combat suicide. Organized by the Secretariat Municipal Health in conjunction with the Youth Coordination, with support from various civil society institutions, the event included extensive programming related to mental health and more.



5
CHAPTER

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this current report, this chapter offers a panorama of general recommendations targeting various stakeholders involved in the advancement of youth empowerment.

National governments

Cities are considered an essential arena in the empowerment of young people. They offer proximity to their constituents that is otherwise not within reach of youth at the national level. Nevertheless, as demonstrated from the case studies of city youth councils in Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines, the robust structure of city youth councils stems from national government policies promoting youth engagement and participation. The political will emanating from the highest echelons of government cascades down to the subjacent level of cities. Therefore, the linkages between national and local policies could be enhanced to ensure the legitimacy and sustainability of city youth councils. National governments are thus recommended to:

- ★ Develop national policies to foster and establish youth participation by creating youth councils at the national and local levels.
- ★ Allocate reasonable budget to national and local youth-related agencies and programmes, including establishing and operationalizing youth councils.
- ★ Encourage collaboration between the national ministry tasked with the youth agenda, other relevant ministries (such as interior, local government, social development, women affairs, budget) and local entities such as city governments to raise the

profile of youth participation as a goal in governance.

- ★ Engage in a continuous dialogue process with youth parliaments, city youth councils, and youth associations to consult on their needs and concerns and explore possible joint action to address them.

Local governments

As the prime movers in cultivating youth empowerment, local governments are in the best position to accord the institutional space for the participation of young women and men in the planning and decision-making processes for cities and communities alike. Based on the surveys conducted in preparing this report, local governments have proven their commitment to continue leveraging the power of youth in community-building. Local governments without established youth councils could study, consult, and learn from the experiences of the existing ones to design their blueprint to create city youth councils. Mayors and city officials have a crucial role in inspiring other cities to establish city youth councils. Local governments could:

- ★ Consult with their national governments in aligning federal and local policies to advance meaningful youth participation in societies.
- ★ Establish city youth councils in their constituencies. If this is already the case, enhance the structure and functions of the existing ones, including an appropriate budget allocation, to optimize their role in building inclusive urban governance.
- ★ Embolden local youth organizations and relevant stakeholders by engaging

in consultation and needs assessment processes to inform regional decision-making mechanisms.

- ★ Organize regular advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising activities to encourage youth engagement and yield genuine youth participation in urban life, especially among young women.

UN system and international/ regional organizations

The United Nations system has vigorously nurtured its long-standing commitment to youth engagement and participation across its various agencies. Inter-agency mechanisms among UN organizations, and the specific mandate of the UN Youth Envoy, are set up to consolidate and complement youth programmes ranging from capacity-building activities to sensitization campaigns worldwide. While acting as a “broker” to inspire national and local governments to establish legitimate spaces for youth participation, international and regional organizations are in good stead to take advantage of the “youth spirit” to integrate youth-oriented initiatives in their programmes. These global actors could guide policymakers by sharing data, knowledge, experiences, good practices, tools, and other resources. This report recommends international and regional organizations to:

- ★ Advocate for creating enabling environments for young women and men to thrive as active citizens for social development, notably the setting up of youth councils as foolproof institutional spaces for youth participation.
- ★ Support citizen engagement mechanisms, especially for

youth, by providing policy guidance and tools to a wide gamut of stakeholders, including national and local governments, civil society organizations and communities.

- ★ Conduct in-depth research studies and surveys on youth participation, including city youth councils, across regions and with sex-aggregated metrics, to arrive at a solid evidence base highlighting promising practices that could be replicated and upscaled.
- ★ Organize global/regional initiatives such as campaigns, conferences, civic hackathons, training workshops and the like, designed together with city youth councils structured around long-term strategies and policy goals fostering youth empowerment.

Civil society, including youth leaders and youth associations

Civil society organizations are essential partners in community-building as they epitomize the pluralist composition of a democratic political system. Together with other social actors, like youth leaders and associations, civil society could collaborate with local governments to provide a holistic perspective to build the city’s analysis framework of needs and priorities, resources and limitations, to inform local policies and reinforce public service. There is a window of opportunity for civil society to partake in the policy cycle by ensuring that decision-makers hear their vantage point of grassroots knowledge, realities and insights about urban issues. As demonstrated by this report, several city youth councillors started as youth

leaders in civil society. Hence, civil society is recommended to:

- ★ Optimize their networks and resources to provide data and knowledge, including sex-disaggregated data, on urban youth issues to reach out to the local governments and contribute to elaborating evidence-based local policies.
- ★ Work together with city youth councils in raising public awareness on significant challenges that the city is confronted with by organizing information drives, campaigns, and surveys among local populations and by advocating for appropriate policy responses.
- ★ Establish a symbiotic relationship with city youth councils by sharing information, tools and networks to foster social cohesion and community development and recognize and complement each other's role as co-builders of sustainable urban development.
- ★ Encourage and support young women and men in honing their knowledge and skills in leadership and mentoring to unlock their potential in becoming future leaders both at the governmental and non-governmental levels and to encourage young women leaders to initiate their actions.

And last but not least...

As a testament to refuting youth tokenism, city youth councils are themselves the shining example to inspire stakeholders, both governmental and

non-governmental entities, to spawn a socio-political culture that welcomes young women and men at the decision-making table. Their mandate and role as advocates for institutionally established youth participation mechanisms should be strengthened and widely disseminated. Inclusive urban governance cannot be attained if youth voices are not adequately articulated and assimilated in local plans and decisions. Their commitment, creativity and dynamism should be leveraged at all levels of governance. With the advantage of occupying a unique role in societies, city youth councils are called upon, while working closely together with all stakeholders to:

- ★ Advance inclusive and participatory decision-making processes by demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of instituting youth councils within city governments through innovative information and awareness-raising campaigns via media platforms, including social media.
- ★ Encourage peer-to-peer, learning-by-doing activities and training workshops that will pave the way to increasing learning opportunities, knowledge, and competencies on a wide range of public administration and governance issues, including human rights and gender equality.
- ★ Galvanize intergenerational dialogue by conducting, through their initiative, local consultations with the mayor and city council officials, civil society organizations and youth associations, academic and scientific communities, artistic and creative sectors, media and

the private sector to identify and analyze major urban issues at stake, and scope potential solutions to these challenges.


- ★ Engage themselves in a proactive co-construction of local policies by initiating and proposing guidelines, laws and ordinances that address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations to ensure that “no one is left behind” in the urban space.
- ★ Become active advocates of gender equality and gender mainstreaming by enhancing equal opportunities for women and men in local consultative and decision-making processes and by conducting local activities that empower women and girls.
- ★ Join networks of city youth councils and youth associations outside their areas of authority, including at the global level, to learn from others and share experiences and work together on collaborative projects.
- ★ Reach out to national and local governments, international/ regional organizations and civil society to create spaces for dialogue to strategize, co-design, implement and monitor sustainable youth participation programmes.

Youth councils could provide a forum for genuine and inclusive policy participation of young people. City youth councils provide a legitimate space to properly elevate and integrate youth voices in local governance,

policy formulation, and programme delivery. In such processes, city youth councils work with local structures, which is crucial to capture the variety of profiles and perspectives among young women and men, including the most disadvantaged, vulnerable, and excluded. In addition, the practical, on-the-ground, local experience of policy participation with local stakeholders can be the springboard for active youth participation in public policy processes beyond the local context. Ultimately, involving youth in local governance is a way to leverage youth participation overall.

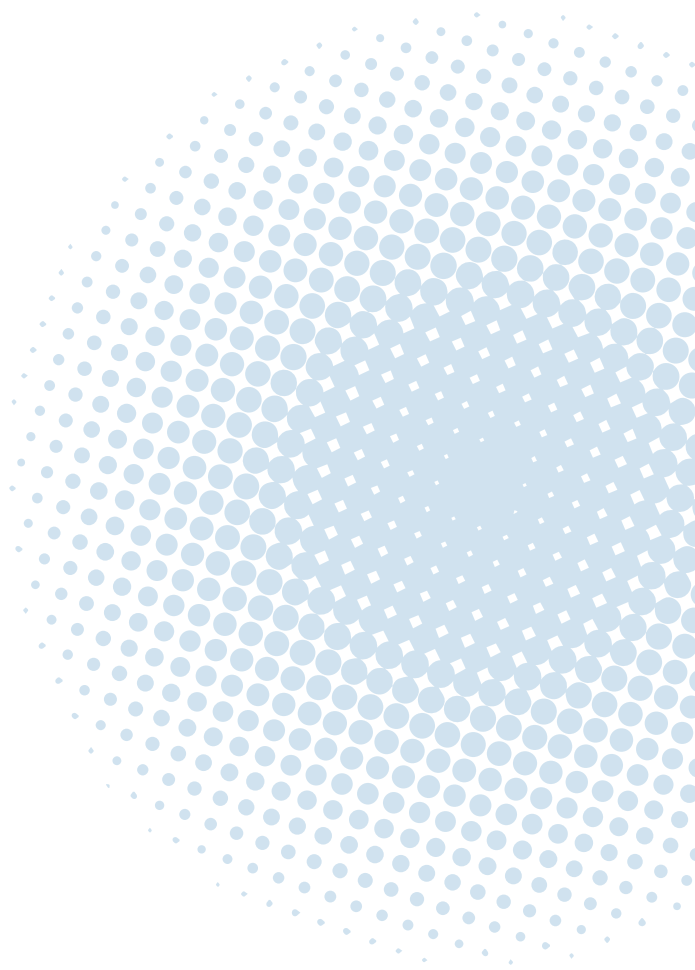
The ICCAR surveys on city youth councils illustrate that guaranteeing the right environment, with adequate allocation of resources and establishment of structures, are critical factors in ensuring the successes of youth councils. In addition, adapting concrete, meaningful engagement practices can ensure that youth are treated as valued partners for good governance. Meaningful engagement means enabling greater involvement of youth in decisions. As primary stakeholders, youth are well-suited to target solutions suited for their generation. Active public participation helps diverse voices and perspectives in discussions, leading to a more transparent policy-making procedure. The creation of city youth councils is a meaningful way to incorporate participatory governance and promote proactive citizenship. They can also directly contribute to community building and strengthening civil societies—a crucial step in ensuring bright futures for today’s youth.

Beyond the benefits of investing in youth, the data shows that for city youth councils to exist and to succeed, proper



support systems along with the political will and freedom to develop solutions are critical for youth to let their voices and perspectives matter. In countries with limited funding for youth projects, national legislations and international and domestic partnerships are vital to galvanizing support and meaningful participation. Finally, the strengthening of civil society is perhaps one of the most critical contributions of municipalities to youth. Thanks to the creation of city youth councils, the adage "learning by doing" is alive and thriving in activities

and experiences of youth who are leading the charge to maintain the youth outlook in policymaking. Through the participative nature of city youth councils, communities and cities are directly preparing young people to contribute to their communities now and for a brighter future.



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CITY YOUTH COUNCILS IN ICCAR

City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
Angola	National level	Conselho Nacional de Juventude/ Angola	https://pt-br.facebook.com/CNJAngola/
Argentina	Avelladana	Consejo de Juventud	https://www.facebook.com/Consdejuventud/
Argentina	Mendoza	Juventud Mendoza Ciudad	https://www.ciudaddemendoza.gov.ar/gobierno/areas-municipales/secretaria-de-gobierno/juventud/
Argentina	Morón	Programa "Autonomia Joven"	http://www.moron.gov.ar/programa-autonomia-joven/
Argentina	Santa fe	El Gabinete Joven del Gobierno de Santa Fe	https://www.santafe.gov.ar/index.php/web/content/view/full/114155/(subtema)/g3685 https://www.facebook.com/GabineteJoven/?fref=ts
Australia	Fiji	Fiji Youth Initiative (FYI)	http://fyi.org.au/about-fyi/ https://www.facebook.com/FijiYouthInitiative/
Australia	Perth	City of Perth Youth Advisory Council	https://www.yacwa.org.au/pling/service/city-of-perth-youth-advisory-council/
Australia	Queensland / Wide-Bay-Burnett	Youth Advisory Council	https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/our-people/youth-advisory-council
Australia	Representants in Melbourne	Youth Affairs Council Victoria	https://www.yacvic.org.au/
Bangladesh	National level	National Federation of Youth Organisations in Bangladesh	https://www.facebook.com/pg/National-Federation-of-Youth-Organisations-in-Bangladesh-22737420400620/about/?ref=page_internal
Belgium	Charleroi	Le Service de la Jeunesse	http://www.charleroi.be/Jeunesse
Belgium	Dour	Conseil Communal des Jeunes	https://www.communedour.be/ma-commune/participation-citoyenne/conseil-communal-des-enfants
Belgium	Gent	Child in the City	https://www.childinthecity.org/2016/04/04/the-city-of-ghents-strategic-plan-to-be-a-child-and-youth-friendly-city/
Belgium	Huy	Le Conseil Communal des enfants	http://www.huy.be/loisirs/jeunesse
Belgium	Liège	Le Conseil communal des Jeunes	https://www.liege.be/fr/vie-communale/services-communaux/jeunesse/les-commissions-thematiques/le-conseil-communal-des-jeunes-liegeois
Benin	National level	Conseil Municipal de la Jeunesse du Bénin	https://www.facebook.com/pg/Cmj.Benin/about/?ref=page_internal
Bolivia	El Alto	Honorable Consejo de Juventud de El Alto	https://www.facebook.com/Honorable-Consejo-Municipal-de-la-Juventud-de-El-Alto-721202801233638/
Bolivia	La Paz	Consejo Municipal de la Juventud	https://es-la.facebook.com/CMJLP/
Brazil	Belo Horizonte	Conselho Municipal da Juventude BH	https://www.facebook.com/comjuvebh/
Brazil	Brasilia	Conselho de Juventude do Distrito Federal	https://www.facebook.com/ConjuveDF/
Brazil	Curitiba	Conselho Municipal de Juventude de Curitiba	http://www.curitiba.pr.gov.br/conteudo/conselho-municipal-de-juventude-de-curitiba/2965
Brazil	Guarulhos	Conselho Municipal de Juventude de Guarulhos	https://pt-br.facebook.com/conselho.municipaldejuventude.7/
Brazil	Maringa	Conselho Municipal da Juventude (CMJ)	" http://www2.maringa.pr.gov.br/conferencia/?cod=conselhodajuventude http://www2.maringa.pr.gov.br/site/ "
Brazil	Porto Alegre	Conselho Municipal da Juventude - Porto Alegre	https://pt-br.facebook.com/CMJPOA/

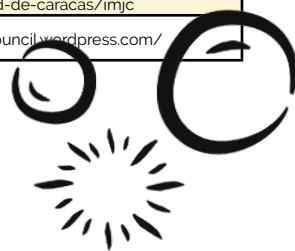
City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
Brazil	Recife	Conselho Municipal de Políticas Públicas de Juventude do Recife (CMPPJ)	https://www.facebook.com/pages/biz/youth_organization-52280680/Conselho-de-Pol%C3%ADticas-P%C3%BABlicas-de-Juventude-do-Recife-169891733704166/
Brazil	Rio de Janeiro	Conjuve	http://juventude.gov.br/conjuve
Brazil	Santa Maria	Coordenadoria Municipal de Juventude de Santa Maria	https://pt-br.facebook.com/Coordenadoria-Municipal-da-Juventude-de-Santa-Maria-463668753746387/
Brazil	Santo André	Conselho Municipal de Juventude de Santo André	https://www.facebook.com/Conselho-Municipal-de-Juventude-de-Santo-Andr%C3%Ag-358268090976214/
Brazil	São Carlos	Conselho Municipal Da Juventude	http://www.saocarlos.sp.gov.br/index.php/conselhos-municipaisx1/153464-conselho-municipal-da-juventude.html
Brazil	São Paulo	Conselho Municipal Da Juventude	https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/direitos_humanos/participacao_social/conselhos_e_orgaos_colegiados/comjuve/
Bhutan	National level	Bhutan Youth Development Fund	http://www.bhutanyouth.org/
Cameroon	Yaoundé	Conseil de la jeunesse	https://www.facebook.com/Conseil-National-de-la-Jeunesse-du-Cameroun-113240192113001/
Canada	Calgary	Mayor's Youth Council (MYC)	https://youthcentral.com/myc/
Canada	Gatineau	Commission jeunesse	https://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=la_ville/comites_commissions/commission_jeunesse
Canada	Lethbridge	The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)	https://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/Our-Community/Pages/Youth-Advisory-Council-(YAC).aspx
Canada	Medicine Hat	Youth Advisory Board (YAB)	https://www.medicinehat.ca/government/departments/social-development/advisory-boards-and-committees/youth-advisory-board
Canada	Moose Jaw	Youth Advisory Committee	https://moosejaw.ca/city-clerks/boards-committees/youth-advisory-committee
Canada	National level	National Indigenous Youth Council on Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS	http://caan.ca/en/national-indigenous-youth-council-on-hiv-aids/
Canada	Oakville	Oakville Youth	https://www.facebook.com/oakvilleyouth
Canada	Oshawa	Oshawa Youth Council	https://www.oshawa.ca/things-to-do/youth-council.asp
Canada	Ottawa	Aboriginal Youth Council	http://nafc.ca/en/who-we-are/aboriginal-youth-council/
Canada	Red Deer	Red Deer Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/reddeeryouthcouncil/
Canada	Saint John	Saint John Youth Council	https://orgs.tigweb.org/saint-john-youth-council
Canada	Saskatoon	Youth Advisory Council	https://www.saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/community-initiatives/youth-advisory-council/
Canada	Sault Ste. Marie	Mayor's Youth Advisory Council	http://saultstemarie.ca/City-Hall/City-Departments/Community-Development-Enterprise-Services/Community-Services/Recreation-and-Culture/Youth/Mayors-Youth-Advisory-Council.aspx
Canada	Sudbury	Youth Advisory Council - YMCA Sudbury	http://www.sudburyymca.ca/index.php/en/youth-advisory-council
Canada	Tecumseh	Tecumseh Youth Advisory Committee	http://www.tecumseh.ca/townhall/commiteelist https://www.facebook.com/TecumsehYAC/
Canada	Toronto	Toronto Youth Cabinet	http://theytc.ca/
Canada	Vancouver	North Vancouver Constituency Youth Council (CYC)	https://jwilkinson.liberal.ca/page/north-vancouver-constituency-youth-council/
Canada	Victoria	City of Victoria Youth Council	https://cvyc.ca/

City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
Canada	Winnipeg	Winnipeg South Youth Council	https://tduguid.liberal.ca/page/winnipeg-south-youth-council/
Canada	Wood Buffalo	The Mayor's Advisory Council on Youth (MACOY)	http://www.rmbw.ca/Municipal-Government/boards_committees/M-A-C-O-Y-.htm
Canada	Halifax	Phoenix Youth Programs	https://phoenixyouth.ca/who-we-are
Canada	Montreal	Conseil jeunesse de Montreal	http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=8657,96323818&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
Canada	Newmarket	The Newmarket-Aurora Constituency Youth Council	https://kpeterson.liberal.ca/page/newmarket-aurora-youth-council/
Colombia	Cartagena	Consejo Distrital de Juventud de Cartagena	https://orgs.tigweb.org/consejo-distrital-de-juventud-de-cartagena-colombia
Colombia	Medellin	Consejo Municipal de Juventud de Medellin	" https://cmjmedellin2013.blogspot.com/ https://es-la.facebook.com/Consejo-Municipal-de-Juventud-de-Medellin-135784126490795/ "
Costa Rica	San Isidro de Heredia	Comité Cantonal de la Persona Joven de San Isidro de Heredia	https://www.facebook.com/consejopersonajoven/
Costa Rica	San José	Consejo de la Persona Joven	http://cpj.go.cr/es/
Cyprus	National level	Cyprus Youth Council	http://cyc.org.cy/en/
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	Consejo Municipal de la Juventud Santo Domingo Este	https://www.facebook.com/Comujdsde/?ref=py_c
France	Aubervilliers	Le Conseil local des jeunes d'Aubervilliers	http://www.aubervilliers.fr/Le-Conseil-local-des-jeunes-d-Aubervilliers
France	Montpellier	Le Conseil Montpelliérain de la Jeunesse	http://www.montpellier.fr/2727-conseil-montpellierain-de-la-jeunesse.htm
France	Nancy	Conseil Nancéien de la Jeunesse	https://www.nancy.fr/citoyenne/participer/conseil-nanceien-de-la-jeunesse-551.html
France	Nantes	Conseil Nantais de la Jeunesse (CNJ)	" https://www.nantes.fr/files/PDF/Publications/05-AVN/Dialogue-Citoyen/delilcnj.pdf https://www.nantes.fr/directnantes "
France	Paris	Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse	https://www.facebook.com/conseilparisindelajeunesse/
France	Strasbourg	Conseil des Jeunes	http://www.strasbourg.eu/vie-quotidienne/democratie-locale-participation-citoyenne/s-impliquer-thematiques-projets/conseil-jeunes
France	Toulouse	Le Conseil des Jeunes	https://www.toulouse.fr/web/la-mairie/participation-citoyennete/conseil-des-jeunes
Gambia	National level	The Gambia National Youth Council	https://nyc.gm/
Greece	Athens	Refugee Youth Service	https://www.refugeeyouthservice.net/
Guyana	National level	Guyana National Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/guyananyc/
Iraq	Bagdad	National Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/nyc2017iraq/
Ireland	Dublin	City of Dublin Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/YouthCouncilProgram/
Ireland	Galway	Galway City Comhairle na nÓg	http://youthworkgalway.ie/?page_id=238
Ivory Coast	Abidjan	Conseil des Jeunes du District d'Abidjan	https://www.facebook.com/ConseilDesJeunesDuDistrictDAbidjan/
Ivory Coast	National level	Conseil National des Jeunes de Côte d'Ivoire	https://www.facebook.com/pg/Conseil-National-des-Jeunes-de-C%C3%B4te-d'Ivoire-CNJCI-324657704336518/about/?ref=page_internal

City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
Jamaica	National level	National Youth Council of Jamaica (NCYJ)	https://www.youthjamaica.com/content/national-youth-council-jamaica-ncyj
Kenya	Kwale	The Kwale Youth and Governance Consortium	https://nuruyakwale.wordpress.com/about/
Kenya	Malindi	Malindi Youth Consultative Council- Junior Council of Malindi	https://orgs.tigweb.org/malindi-youth-consultative-counciljunior-council-of-malindi
Kenya	National level	National Youth Council Kenya	" http://nyc-kenya.blogspot.com/ https://www.facebook.com/YouthCouncilKe/ "
Kiribati	Representants in Betio and Teinainano	Kiribati National Youth Council	https://fr-fr.facebook.com/pg/KiribatiNationalYouthCouncil/about/?ref-page_internal
Latvia	National level	National Youth Council of Latvia	http://www.annalindhofoundation.org/members/national-youth-council-latvia-ljp
Malawi	National level	National Youth Council of Malawi	http://www.malawiyouthcouncil.org/
Morocco	Tangier	Conseil de Jeunes Leaders de Tanger	https://www.facebook.com/CJLTanger/
Mauritania	National level	Le Haut Conseil de la Jeunesse	" https://www.facebook.com/hcj.mr/posts/1347473778607697 http://www.hcj.mr/ "
Mexico	Mexico City	Consejo Ciudadano de Seguimiento de Políticas Públicas en Materia de Juventud	https://www.gob.mx/imjuve/articulos/consejo-ciudadano-de-seguimiento-de-politicas-publicas-en-materia-de-juventud-periodo-2018-2020?idiom=es
Moldova	Bălți	Regional Office representing the National Youth Council of Moldova (NYCM)	https://www.cntm.md/en
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	Regional Office representing the Mongolian Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/MongolianYouthCouncil/
Namibia	National level	National Youth Council of Namibia	https://www.my.na/b/3690/national-youth-council-of-namibia/
New Zealand	Auckland	Auckland Youth Advisory Panel	https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/advisory-panels/Pages/youth-advisory-panel.aspx
New Zealand	Wellington	Wellington City Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/wellingtoncityyouthcouncil/
Peru	Lima	CMPJ - Consejo Metropolitano de Participación de la Juventud de Lima	" https://www.facebook.com/CMPJdeLima/ http://cmpjlma.blogspot.com/ "
Philippines	Makati	Sangguniang Kabataan Makati	https://www.facebook.com/sangguniangkabataan.makati/about?lst=1453038250%3A100002913746288%3A1531403906
Philippines	National level	Lady Municipal Mayor's League of the Philippines	http://www.dilg.gov.ph/issuances/mc/Lady-Municipal-Mayors-Association-of-the-Philippines-LMMAP-Consultative-Meeting/1926
Philippines	National level	League of Municipalities of the Philippines	http://lmp.org.ph/default/
Philippines	National level	Pag-Asa Youth Association of the Philippines	https://ivolunteer.com.ph/organizations/265
Republic of Korea	Gyeonggi and Gwangju	Gwangju-Gyeonggi Youth Committee	http://www.nuac.go.kr/english/sub04/preview.jsp?numm=71&code=ML0402
Republic of Korea	Regional Offices in Gyeongju and Jeju Islands	National Council of Youth Organizations in Korea (NCYOK)	https://www.facebook.com/nationalyouthcommission/photos/call-for-applications-youth-camp/1107362892610567/

City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
Salvador	San Salvador	Instituto Municipal de la Juventud de San Salvador	https://es-la.facebook.com/IMJSanSalvador/photos/el-instituto-municipal-de-la-983005735096781/
Seychelles	National level	Seychelles National Youth Council	https://fr-fr.facebook.com/snycseychelles/
Solomon Islands	Honiara	Honiara Youth Council	http://honiaracitycouncil.com/index.php/education-and-recreation-2/youth-empowerment-services/honiara-youth-council/
South Africa	Durban	Durban Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/durbanyouthcouncil http://www.dyc.co.za/index.php/en/
South Africa	Johannesburg	The Johannesburg Youth Council	http://www.johannesburgjuniorcouncil.co.za/web/index.asp
Spain	Barcelona	Consell de la Joventut de Barcelona	http://www.cjb.cat/
Spain	Getafe	Consejo de la Juventud	https://www.getafe.es/areas-de-gobierno/area-social/juventud/actuaciones/consejo-de-la-juventud-composicion-y-actas/
Spain	Madrid	Consejo Municipal de Juventud	https://b-m.facebook.com/Consejo-Municipal-de-Juventud-Madrid-536086846418990/
Spain	National level	Consejo de la Juventud de España	www.cje.org
Sri Lanka	Colombo	The International Youth Council Sri Lanka	http://internationalyouthcouncil.com/group/sri-lanka
Sri Lanka	National level	Sri Lanka Federation of Youth Clubs	http://www.nysc.lk/clubfederacion_e.php
Switzerland	Lausanne	Conseil des jeunes de Lausanne	http://www.cdjl.ch/
Thailand	Yala	The Children and Youth Council of Yala	https://www.facebook.com/CYCYALA/
Uganda	Kampala	Kampala District Youth Council	https://orgs.tigweb.org/kampala-district-youth-council
United Kingdom	Aberdeen	Youth Engagement Programme	https://www.aberdeency.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building/local-development-plan/aberdeen-local-development-plan/youth-engagement https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenCC
United Kingdom	Leicester	Leicester Youth Council	https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/support-for-children-and-young-people/youth-services/young-peoples-council/
United Kingdom	London	London Youth Advisory Council	https://lyac.ca/
United Kingdom	Newcastle	Newcastle Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/newcastleyouthcouncil/
United Kingdom	Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton City Youth Council	http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/8848/Wolverhampton-City-Youth-Council http://www.yow.org.uk/wolverhamptonyouthcouncil
United States of America	Baltimore	The Baltimore City Youth Commission	https://www.facebook.com/TheBaltimoreCityYouthCommission/ https://youth.baltimorecity.gov/
United States of America	Baton Rouge	Mayor's Youth Advisory Council	http://www.myacbr.com/
United States of America	Beaverton	Mayor's Youth Advisory Board	https://www.beavertonoregon.gov/28g/Mayors-Youth-Advisory-Board
United States of America	Charleston	Mayor's Youth Commission	http://www.charleston-sc.gov/index.aspx?NID=566
United States of America	Dallas	Youth Commission	https://dallascityhall.com/government/meetings/Pages/youth-commission.aspx

City Youth Councils in ICCAR			
Country	Geographical scope	Name of the Youth Council	Website
United States of America	Dubuque	Dubuque Area Youth Leadership Council	http://www.daylc.org/
United States of America	Durham	Durham Youth Commission	https://durhamnc.gov/1354/Durham-Youth-Commission
United States of America	Houston	The Mayor's Youth Council (MYC)	http://www.houstontx.gov/myc/
United States of America	Los Angeles	Mayor's Youth Council	https://www.lamayor.org/MYC
United States of America	Los Angeles	Civic Youth LA	http://empowerla.org/civicyouth/cyla/
United States of America	Madison	Madison Youth Leadership Council	https://www.facebook.com/MadisonYLC/
United States of America	Pennsylvania	The Pennsylvania Youth Congress	http://payouthcongress.org/
United States of America	Sacramento	Sacramento Youth Commission	http://www.cityofsacramento.org/ParksandRec/Neighborhood-Services/Programs/Sacramento-Youth-Commission
United States of America	San Francisco	Youth Commission	" https://www.facebook.com/SFYouthCom http://sfgov.org/youthcommission/contact "
United States of America	San Leandro	Youth Advisory Commission(YAC)	https://www.sanleandro.org/depts/rec/programs/yac.asp
United States of America	Seattle	Youth Commission	http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/seattle-youth-commission
United States of America	Syracuse	Syracuse Youth Advisory Council	http://www.syr.gov.net/YAC/
Uruguay	National level	Consejo Uruguayo de Juventudes	http://www.inju.gub.uy/97799/consejo-uruguayo-de-juventudes
Venezuela	Caracas	Instituto municipal de la juventud de caracas	http://www.caracas.gob.ve/alcaldiaDeCCS/instituto-municipal-para-la-juventud-de-caracas/entes/instituto-municipal-de-la-juventud-de-caracas/imjc
Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	The Bulawayo Youth Council (BYC)	https://bulawayoyouthcouncil.wordpress.com/



ANNEX

City Youth Councils Survey Questions

City Youth Council Survey Questions

Country

City/Town

Full name of the City Youth Council

Email Address

GENERAL SURVEY:

- 1.** Is your City Youth Council (CYC) a member of an ICCAR regional/national coalition?
- 2.** Is CYC a member of the World Urban Youth City Councils Network?
- 3.** What is the legal status of the CYC?
- 4.** How many members does the CYC have?
- 5.** What is the minimum age limit required to become a member at the Youth City Council?
- 6.** What is the maximum age limit required to become a member at the CYC?
- 7.** Number of members defining their gender as "male"?
- 8.** Number of members defining their gender as "female"?
- 9.** Number of members defining their gender as "other"?
- 10.** How often the CYC recruit its members?
- 11.** How do the CYC members get selected?
- 12.** Could you please explain CYC member selection process briefly.
- 13.** Does the CYC have members in one or more of these categories? (Minorities, unemployed or underemployed, persons with disabilities, refugees and/or asylum seekers)
- 14.** Does the CYC have mechanisms to include any of the categories above as members?
- 15.** Does the CYC have a charter and/or rules of conduct? (If so, briefly specify.)

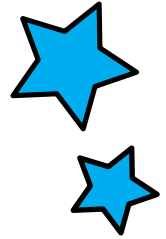
16. Are there sub-committees working on related fields under the CYC? (If so, briefly specify.)
17. Can the members of the CYC engage in mainstream and representative politics during activities?
18. Does the CYC have its own offices?
19. Does the CYC have a separate assembly room?
20. Does the CYC have its own staff?
21. Does the CYC have a fixed annual budget?
22. Is the CYC able to raise funds to support its activities?
23. How often does the CYC assemble?
24. Does the CYC have a governing body?
25. How are the members of the governing body selected?
26. If there is one, please explain briefly the selection process and the roles of the governing body.
27. Does the CYC have an established hierarchy?
28. Does the CYC organize activities to reach young people in their constituencies?
29. Does the CYC have a dedicated website/blog?
30. Does the CYC have dedicated social media accounts?
31. Does the CYC have activities and programs targeting one or more categories listed below? (minorities, young people with economic obstacles [low income, unemployment, etc.], women, refugees and/or asylum seekers, young people with disabilities, young people having educational difficulties [early leavers, people with learning difficulties, etc.], young people with chronic health problems)
32. Is the CYC represented at the National Youth Council?
33. Is the CYC represented at the Municipal Council?
34. Does the CYC cooperate with NGOs and youth groups? If so, can you give a short description of the scope and the nature of this cooperation?
35. Does the CYC cooperate with international organizations? If so, can you give a short description of the scope and the nature of the cooperation?

MEMBER SURVEY QUESTIONS:

1. To which gender identity do you most identify yourself with?
2. Which category includes your age?
3. What level of education are you currently in?
4. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

NOTE: The following questions require a response of 1-5

- 5.** The office and assembly space are adequate
- 6.** Although we don't have separate premises, we can work effectively
- 7.** With separate premises then we would be more active
- 8.** The budget is fair enough for our functioning
- 9.** We are supported with dedicated staff
- 10.** CYC premises can also be used by non-member young people most of the time
- 11.** Member selection processes are fair and transparent
- 12.** Member selection criteria and processes are announced openly in due time
- 13.** Member selection processes are open to all interested candidates
- 14.** Members are selected via elective and democratic processes
- 15.** Young people out of education and employment have the means to become a member
- 16.** Gender balance is regarded among selected members
- 17.** Selection processes pose no obstacles for young people from minorities
- 18.** Disabled young people are represented fairly
- 19.** We are successful in representing interests of the young people in our city
- 20.** Our activities produce concrete results for the young people in our city
- 21.** Age difference between members can be a problem sometimes
- 22.** The Mayor and/or other local government representative join our meetings regularly
- 23.** As a CYC there is a positive interaction with youth NGOs or groups
- 24.** We can participate at the Municipal Council assemblies
- 25.** Our CYC can effectively influence policy-making and decision-making processes
- 26.** Our social media influence is influential enough
- 27.** Our web presence (blog, website, YouTube, etc.) is adequate and visible enough
- 28.** We are regularly organizing activities for the young people in our city
- 29.** Members are actively using their social media accounts for CYC activities
- 30.** We are welcoming a lot of young people at our meetings to observe our processes
- 31.** We are well aware of the international partnerships and communication the CYC carries
- 32.** We can contact the Mayor whenever we need
- 33.** We are in contact with national and international CYC bodies



TARGETED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What were your motivations for participating in the City Youth Council?
2. When and how did you hear about the opportunity to become a member to the City Youth Council?
3. What lessons did you learn from your participation in the City Youth Council?
4. Has your participation in the City Youth Council enabled you to make your voice better heard in local decision-making processes?
5. What have been the benefits -if any- of your involvement in the City Youth Council in your life as a (local) citizen?
6. Do you have any good practices related to your participation in the City Youth Council that you would like to share?
7. What advice would you give to a young woman or young man who would like to participate in the City Youth Council?
8. Do you have any additional comments regarding your experience as a member of the City Youth Council that you would like to share?

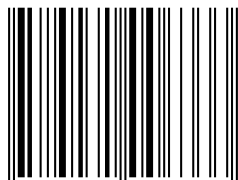
City youth councils offer a formalized arrangement for continuous dialogue with policymakers. They have played a key role in fostering the next generation of leaders and encouraging youth to be contributors and agents to social change and dialogue. UNESCO is publishing this report to ensure that the actions and solutions proposed by youth can be applied and scaled up worldwide. It encourages local governments to create spaces for youth to participate actively and genuinely in decision-making processes.

As a first-of-its-kind global compilation featuring the history, typologies, compositions, and functions of city youth councils, the report also seeks to underline promising practices of city youth councils informed by evidence-based methodology to determine their impact and effectiveness in inclusive urban governance. It proposes ideas to foster collaboration, amplify youth voices, and present recommendations to develop partnerships with Member States, local governments, youth associations, civil society, and other stakeholders to create inclusive communities.



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