



**THE GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE**
ON URBAN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME



UN-HABITAT



The greatest threat youth face today is exclusion and marginalization from decisions that affect them. Unemployment, crime, HIV/AIDS, neglect by the authorities and often abandonment to their fate because of various forms of discrimination top the list of problems young people face in African towns and cities. At the same time, urban youth in developing countries possess immense potential to contribute to social development if afforded the right opportunities. The challenge of putting youth at the centre of development strategies can be compared to the challenge, two decades ago, of putting women and gender issues on the development agenda. It is no longer conceivable that problems of developing countries can be resolved without focusing on the role of women. A similar paradigm shift is required with respect to youth in development.

Young people have the highest rate of unemployment and in many ways are the most vulnerable to the social depredations caused by unemployment and poverty. At the same time, they are the promise of the future, and failure to invest in the young generation imposes great constraints on the potential for future development. Investing in the creation of decent work for young people boosts the economy and lowers the demand for social services; supporting peer-to-peer models of HIV/AIDS education, or helping youth create food security for their community, is enormously beneficial as research has shown. The Global Partnership Initiative is an approach that promises to make just this kind of investment.

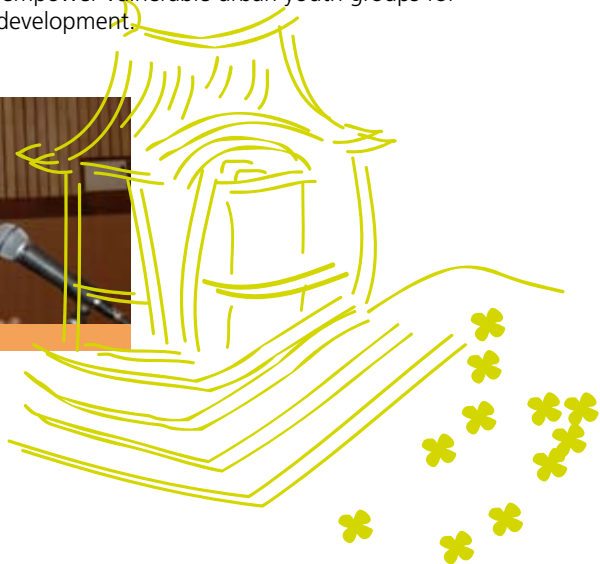


THE INITIATIVE

The Global Partnership Initiative on urban youth development in Africa is run by UN-HABITAT in cooperation with selected African cities.

In May 2003, member governments of the Governing Council which oversees UN-HABITAT's work programme, adopted a resolution on the engagement of youth in the work of UN-HABITAT. It stipulates that the Executive Director "ensure the active participation of UN-HABITAT in the Secretary General's initiative on youth employment". It further calls for the development of "a Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa, in partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies, as well as multilateral institutions and private foundations in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development".

The idea is to harness the abundant resources of Africa's youth to improve the quality of life in cities and towns with a view to empower vulnerable urban youth groups for improved socio-economic inclusion and development.



SOMETHING WITH A DIFFERENCE

A key focus of these partnerships will be to share the best initiatives and experiences of young people from other parts of the world and to bring them to Africa. This effort is unique in its approach because it is forged in the belief that youth are agents of change within their communities. Too many development programmes still regard young people as problematic, and thus dictate to them.

There is, however, a growing movement internationally which argues that youth, beyond being passive, are actively taking charge of their own destiny within their own communities. This is where the Global Partnership Initiative on urban youth development in Africa can make a real difference.

THE STRATEGY

The Global Partnership Initiative on urban youth development in Africa will focus on the key urban issues of economic development, urban peace and conflict, HIV/ AIDs, and environmental degradation. These four areas have been selected based on the research done through the World Urban Cafés – a series of online and direct exchanges that drew some 25,000 young participants from around the world in the buildup to the third session of UN-HABITAT's World Urban Forum in Vancouver in June 2006.

The Initiative will act as a vehicle to mobilize resources globally to support those most marginalized, and to sustain youth led programmes.





The Global Partnership Initiative on urban youth development in Africa will encourage the creation of more downtown youth resource centres with computers and other facilities. Such centres have already been set up in Vancouver and Nairobi. Known as One-stop Youth Centres, they enable young people to meet informally, learn from NGOs and other experts about employment prospects and how to go about applying for jobs, pick up computer skills, and undertake training.

Areas of training include crime prevention, education delivery and HIV/AIDS counselling. But the World Youth Report 2003 states that in Africa, where an estimated 300,000 young soldiers between the ages of 10 and 24 are involved in armed conflicts of various kinds, much needs to be done to help channel the energies of young people away from war and violence. New ideas are expected to result from the new Initiative's research and policy development programme.

Since the launch of the youth centre initiative in Barcelona in 2004, other cities that that have shown an interest in setting up their own centres include Malindi in Kenya, Kampala in Uganda, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Kigali in Rwanda and Lusaka in Zambia. The One-stop Youth Centres are based on the Nairobi model.





THE FOCUS

1. **Employment and Entrepreneurship:** To build capacity of youth to participate effectively in urban poverty reduction through training and by offering employment opportunities in self-employment, formal and informal sectors.
2. **Governance and Advocacy:** To enhance youth contribution towards better governance by promoting increased youth participation in local government matters, particularly those concerning youth development.
3. **Health:** To provide services aimed at preventing and solving reproductive health problems amongst the youth by provision of information, skills training, education on reproductive health, counselling and referral services.
4. **Communication and Information:** To establish mechanisms to effectively communicate and disseminate information to youth, youth organizations and other partners involved in youth work.
5. **Environment and Resource Management:** To strengthen youth engagement in the protection and improvement of the environment by promoting their participation in environmental justice and governance initiatives.



THE FINANCIAL NEEDS

Funds are needed to establish satellite youth centres in informal settlements, seed job creation and micro-credit programmes, provide more free health services and to build local and international networks.

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