Time for an Intergenerational Social Contract: The Inclusion of the Youth in Urban Processes

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Executive Summary

This policy paper is the result of complementary intellectual processes developed by different groups of youth, brought together by the first UCLG Youth Caucus. Young people are vulnerable to many of the world's problems, however, the understanding of youth as a transitory process from childhood (in need of protection from dangers) to adulthood (contributors to society) leaves us in a liminal space, alienating us from participatory processes and from enjoying the same range of opportunities as adults.

In the following paper we detail key issues young people are facing at the urban level across and our propositions for change. These have been developed by the Caucus members and constituencies, validated and streamlined by a further online youth consultation prior to the 2022 UCLG World Congress. We explain key issues of high importance for young people across the world, and propose a series of policy recommendations and a joint action plan to establish an intergenerational pact that can fulfill the needs of all, which recognises municipalities as the first line of government, in charge of the implementation and coordination of the lives of the citizens.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR YOUTH

- Importance of **inclusive and accessible services**, taking into account the intersectional and diverse identities and needs of young people. This includes fostering welcoming societies and communities that are ready to assist local governments with the inclusive implementation and provision of services to all, regardless of background, by dedicating further resources to combating xenophobia and discrimination, particularly within service providers and their staff through specialized, proactive training against discriminatory malpractices.

- Mechanisms for **meaningful youth participation and engagement**, including mutual channels of communication between young people and government actors, with special attention paid to including and creating space for the views of young people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization.

- Relatedly, **accessible information, capacity-building, education programmes, and funding for youth-led initiatives**, to ensure young people are aware of our rights, the role of government, and are empowered to meaningfully exercise active citizenship.

- **Peace and justice, transparent government and safe spaces, including restorative policing**, to ensure young people are able to hold stakeholders accountable without repercussions through transparent and effective methods of governance.

- Create **space for climate action**, uplift young peoples' knowledge and role as leaders, experts, and stakeholders in climate action and resilience. Create meaningful opportunities and flexible funding for impactful action against climate change and take bold, accountable action to reach climate goals.

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Preface

"We are sailors in a sea of uncertainty, negotiating our own way
through the storm, surrounded by opportunities and risks."

Various challenges affect the interrelationships between young people and governments at different levels. These are specifically related to the provision of public services and support systems for young peoples' effective self-development and participation in social and political life. Moreover, the multidimensional crises and changes that are affecting society have also transformed the perception of young people towards society, economies and governments.

In the last decades, youth participation in politics has been viewed negatively, with young people generally portrayed as passive or uninterested[1]. Also, the interpretation of youth as a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, between dependency and independence, has placed young people in an 'in-between' category requiring emancipation. However, recent post-structural perspectives propose a new view focused on the integration of young people, instead of our emancipation, and seek ways to integrate us in social and political life before we acquire the characteristics that fully define adulthood[2].

As political subjects, young people have generally been perceived and treated as a challenge, or reduced to an inspirational story. Policies are largely made for us, not with us. The Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, mandated by the UNSC, states that "in the absence of meaningful opportunities to participate socially, politically and economically, marginalized young people are strikingly creative in forging alternative places of belonging and meaning through which to express themselves." We emphasize that, while young people are inherently creative, it is also critical to ensure we have a conducive environment to channel and develop this creative energy.

Therefore, in order to channel this inherent creativity, need for self-expression and social cohesion into the sustainable development of our society, we need the development of inclusive, caring and challenging spaces. In the following pages, we present an overview of the main challenges faced by young people, divided into (1) the UCLG Town Halls thematic areas, (2) policy recommendations to address them and (3) a proposition of how UCLG and its constituencies can advance a renewed intergenerational partnership that meets the needs of all life stages, and ensure full contributions to development from across society.

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[1] Benedicto, 2008
[2] ibid

Methodology

This policy paper was developed using both primary and secondary sources, drawing from academic research from across the world, as well as the recommendations from the work of different youth organizations and activists. These include: Youth Council of Barcelona, Talento para el Futuro, the Youth Track of the EU-Africa Week at the European Commission, the global, regional, and national consultations held from 2018 - 2021 by the Migration Youth & Children Platform from the Major Group for Children and Youth. The first draft then underwent a review process through an online consultation held by the Migration Youth & Children Platform with 30+ youth from across the world across different areas of expertise and engagement with their respective local governments. Though this first paper is limited by the networks of the current Caucus, the active inclusion of sources and perspectives from global youth allows the presented policy recommendations to represent a cross-section of young people's needs. We hope to continue building on this representation through activities proposed in The Way Forward, which proposes ongoing dialogues and consultations conducive to an Intergenerational Social Contract.

Overview of Main Challenges Faced by Youth

Trust and Governance

Inefficient and Under-resourced Public Processes

The relationships between young people and government are complex, structural, and heavily intertwined with other societal issues. According to the Union of International Associations, "in developed market economies, public administration functions are funded by a large tax base. Governmental organization tends to be disproportionate to authority and need and civil servants may often have inadequate managerial backgrounds and their administration of the public services are, by business standards, incompetent. In less developed areas, the country depends on public administrators, but the lack of infrastructure implies a lack in educational and managerial infrastructure as well, with a result of trial-and-error management." Inadequate public administration capacity issues, related to a lack of funding, technical resources, or knowledge of local institutions, combined with overburdened administrators, make it difficult to implement necessary structural transformations for improved efficiency and functionality. As a result, young people suffer from administrative backlogs that make transitions between life stages and seeking support unnecessarily painful, and breeds a lack of trust and faith in governance institutions.

Lack of Meaningful Youth Participation Avenues

This is compounded by the general exclusion of youth from real decision-making, due to a lack of inclusive, pro-youth platforms for engagement, political participation and advocacy, rooted in the social structures and distrust in young people's capacity for meaningful contribution[3]. Not only does this produce policies and programmes at risk of being irrelevant and inaccessible to young people, but it contributes to a disillusioned perception of government as an institution that does not take young people seriously. Across the past decades, research has shown that inclusion at any level (political, financial, academic,...) brings more innovation and improves processes. For example, with the inclusion of women in economic structures, economies become more productive. By including people of different genders, races, economic backgrounds or sexual orientation in decision-making ladders, the capacity to innovate, make profits or maintain social cohesion is increased.

Regional Example: Europe

The Council of Europe has stated that "the participation of young people in decision-making processes - be they political, civic, civil society or other - fosters their active citizenship, enhances their inclusion, and strengthens their contribution to the advancement of democracy." As the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe states: "participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society."

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[3] Speziale, 2021

Lack of Political and Civic Education

This makes it difficult for citizens to understand the administrative, legal and political processes, and thus be active in them. National or regional education systems still lack legal and political education, resulting in youth movements that are generally driven by people with social science and humanities backgrounds, with the exception of some scientists or technical specialists in certain areas, who struggle to access information on localized procedures. By providing children with continuous and useful political, legal and civic education, they can increase both their level of participation as well as interest in local and regional government. Further, they can also contribute to the construction of well-functioning societies where every person is aware of their rights and duties, and can effectively exercise those rights. Moreover, inclusion at the local level may enhance the sense of community and facilitate the governance of municipalities, with the direct support of its inhabitants in a broad range of specific processes and common needs.

Corruption and Nepotism

Despite the efforts of governments, civil society and international organizations, corruption and nepotism are still part of public (and private) institutions. Especially in contexts of poverty and insecurity, these drive the delegitimation of institutions and cause people to search for alternative means of protection and conflict-resolution, leading to the fragmentation of societies, disengagement from official authorities, and an increase in social turbulence. Further, there is not only a mistrust from citizens towards different levels of administration, but also a lack of coordination between different levels of administration, resulting in inefficacy, information silos between subsidiary mechanisms and other negative effects. Corruption and nepotism also increase young people's disaffection with governance, and increase beliefs that governmental institutions are inaccessible and disinterested in the needs of the wider public.

Common Goods

Access to Youth-friendly Services

Access to adequate public health systems, which meet the needs of the youth population, remains a challenge across the world. This includes access to protected, child and youth-friendly family planning services, menstrual health, mental health support, amongst other forms of health provision.

Thematic Example: Young People and Mental Health

According to BeyondBlue initiative, over 75% of mental health issues occur before the age of 25, while suicide remains the largest cause of loss of life of young people in Australia. In Europe, after the lockdown, mental health problems and suicide among young people has been rising and is now the second leading cause of death among people aged between 15 and 29. In North America, there are similar figures. The U.S. suicide rate is the highest among wealthy nations, with 1 in 5 young women and 1 in 10 young men experiencing a clinical episode of major depression before age 25. In Africa, the data is not exact, and the lack of adequate mental health facilities prevents prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Access to Clean Water and Sanitation

Water is a global good. Despite this, 2 billion people worldwide still lack access to safely managed drinking water at home. 3.6 billion people, nearly half of the world population, do not have access to safely managed sanitation in their home, and 2.3 billion people lack basic hygiene services. This not only puts the health of billions of children and young people at risk, but can hinder physical and mental development as well as prevent continued education and employment.

Common Public Spaces

Ensuring appropriate and affordable access to common spaces, particularly for youth organizations, community-building and for our effective participation in local and regional life, is necessary for a healthy and thriving community of young people. These spaces, that can be used either for political, social or academic activities together with leisure, is a necessity localities shall aim to meet to ensure they maintain a local community engaged and bonded to their communities and jurisdictions.

Accessible Public Transportation

Lack of access to adequate public transportation, or private subsidies for facilitating the means of transportation, affect young people in particular as many do not have the means or legal age to access private transportation. Young people need to be connected with our surrounding areas and be able to move from one place to another, be able to develop an appropriate interdependent relationship with our local urban areas, and be allowed easy access to our academic, leisure and professional spaces.

Caring Systems

Lack of Decent Employment and Affordable Housing

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, youth and women were especially affected by increasing difficulties in finding and keeping decent employment: in 2020, we experienced employment losses of 8.7 percent and women experienced 5.0 percent, respectively, as compared to 3.7 percent for adults and 3.9 percent for men. Further, according to the United Nations, before the pandemic, the unemployment rate of youth was already three times that of adults. In tandem, rising accommodation prices and lack of rental control across many cities, in particular those with proximity to employment opportunities, have left many young people with lower disposable income, savings, and purchasing power in proportional comparison to previous generations. Facilitating and stimulating an inclusive local economy is a cornerstone for the development of all other aspects of social life.

Perpetuation of Armed Conflict and Radicalisation

Structural deficiencies and socio-political extremism across the world continue to impede access to appropriate education, social bonding and employment opportunities, creating vulnerabilities and a desperation that can be exploited by armed groups and rebels. In part due to these risks, young people are often coerced or forcibly recruited as soldiers and combatants in conflict. Young women in these contexts continue to be at high risk of sexual and physical abuse. Also, aside from full-scale armed conflict contexts, polarization and violent behavior continue to be increasingly prevalent, either due to economic, legal or social reasons. There is a need to facilitate adequate mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the local level, and the management of inflammatory activities, which also include intergenerational and intercultural conflict.

Unequal Access to Education

According to the United Nations, in 2019, more than 260 million children living in conflict-affected areas did not go to school. About 50 percent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in such areas. "Young people should have equal access to education irrespective of their differences in gender, and the municipalities have a role to play in helping children and youth have access to quality education by prioritizing it above every other element of governance." This divide was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where school closures and the digital divide left many children and young people around the world out of school for extended periods of time, or subject to disruptive and distressing learning environments. The full effects of this are still yet to be fully understood.

Hostile Migration Policies

Internal and international migration is a natural dynamic and part of human history. However, borders have become further securitised and causes of human rights violation, with migration as a topic being increasingly exploited for political support and polarization. Young migrants make up more than 10 percent of the overall 232 million international migrants, according to the International Labor Organization. Even greater numbers experience intra-national and rural to urban migration. Local authorities play a key role in ensuring their protection, with integration efforts, access to services, and cross-municipal platforms proving effective facilitators of migrant contributions to sustainable development, and adequate responses to whole-of-society needs.

Discrimination, Xenophobia and Anti-diversity

According to Michelle Bachalet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,, "from the Soweto Uprising in South Africa 45 years ago, to the Black Lives Matter protests worldwide today, young people have been at the forefront of the fight against racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance." Even today, diversity issues remain a source of intergenerational divide and conflict. In addition, we can see from the recent End Sars protests in Nigeria, how the lives of youth aren't important to people in government, and how they are continually being discriminated against, and profiled by all kinds of atrocities.

Climate and Culture

Climate Change threatens people with food and water scarcity, increased flooding, extreme heat, more diseases, and economic losses. Tackling climate change requires coordinated government actions and informed efforts by individuals. If the climate is changing, there's therefore a need for young people to also change our culture, behavior and our day-to-day activities, by acting more consciously about the environment. Municipalities and urban areas are the space of execution of any international, national and regional law. Due to this, it is fundamental that municipalities, in collaboration with citizens, understand the dynamics of the changing climate, recognize peoples' needs in the face of climate change, and are involved in creating and implementing solutions.

Rural Exodus

One consequence of climate change is the increased rural exodus of young people, which has two key effects: depopulation and abandonment of rural spaces, and overpopulation of urban environments.

According to the United Nations, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. As people move from rural communities to urban communities in search of a better life and a healthy environment, without investment and development of rural areas and opportunities, young people who have grown up in an increasing digital and technology-reliant world will continue to leave and contribute to both the overpopulation of urban areas, as well as the 'death' or rural communities.

Ineffective Waste and Residue Management

Some municipalities lack the capacity and resources to put in place effective residual materials management systems, so waste is not properly disposed of, leading to environments at risk of hygiene and health issues. Collaboration between municipalities and young people working towards solutions has the potential to generate public employment, increase tax collection for different areas and improve the livelihoods of citizens.

Mitigation of Climate Change and Further Adaptation

Science shows clearly that in order to avert the worst impacts of climate change and preserve a livable planet, global temperature increase needs to be limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Currently, the Earth is already about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s, and emissions continue to rise. To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C – as called for in the Paris Agreement – emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. To this end, municipalities must join hands in order to collectively reduce emissions and influence national efforts for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

UCLG Youth Caucus- MYCP Session at the UCLG World Congress: Paving the Way for Sustainable Intergenerational Co-Creation with Youth

Session Overview

During the UCLG congress, the UCLG Youth Caucus, in partnership with the Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP), held a session titled '***Paving the Way for Sustainable Intergenerational Co-Creation with Youth***', which gathered approximately 35 participants between young mayors, members of local councils and parliaments, and different leaders from civil society at the local level.

The first part of the session was a panel moderated by Elana Wong, Co-Director of MYCP and UCLG Youth Caucus member, with panelists Daniel Akinsije, member of the UCLG Youth Caucus and TAD Nigeria, and Florencio Vente, Local Government Engagement Manager for MYCP and Youth Council member for the City of Maringá. The panel framed the session around understandings of real and meaningful engagement, and key recommendations and reflections on how young people could be more active from the whole panel's prior engagement with UCLG and local and regional governments.

During the panel, we received feedback and interventions from participants, from the mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, and young mayors from Krouktoto, Mali, and South Africa, who shared their experience from their local government and the commitments on engaging youth in administration, management and decision-making at the local level.

A video was then screened, which showcased four young people around the world who are heavily engaged with their local governments: Lara Parizotto, Councillor of Hounslow Borough in the United Kingdom; Keelan Heestermann, Youth Council member of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand; Ishaan Shah, Youth Representative in Barnet in the United Kingdom; and Mufradah Riadhah, Parliament Member of South Kalimantan in Indonesia. To frame the activity in the second part of the session, we asked these young leaders to share their experiences and advice on engaging youth that has inspired them to get involved. The video can be found **here**.

The second part of the session was designed to build upon the UCLG Youth Caucus Policy Brief, with guidelines, recommendations and experiences of local governments and representatives of civil society, with a focus on the thematic issues from the Pact for the Future. In particular:

People, including *Migration, Employment, Education and Sustainable Development*

Government, including *Meaningful Participation and Engagement*

Planet, including *Climate Change and Adaptation*

The reflection and comments presented in the four issues are based on the experience of local and regional leaders, civil society and members of the governments showcasing examples focused on the African region involving cities in Morocco, South Africa, Ghana and also the Pacific region.

Findings by Main Thematics

Migration

- <u>African Continent:</u> Africa's population is 2nd highest in the world, has the highest proportion of youth, especially youth up to 19 years old. Insufficient resources for the younger generation such as education and employment, have left many with no choice but to leave for other countries but socio-political problems remain in Africa.
- Lack of employment opportunities, especially in the field of politics and political participation opportunities can lead to migration to other towns and cities.
- Migrant youth and youth who are potential emigrants play a very important role and have to be able to participate in SDGs.

Participation

- Participants reported there is almost no opportunity for African youth to participate meaningfully in politics. Because of this political marginalization, countries in Africa are faced with limited growth potential, as a result of these problems, many young Africans are hesitant to participate. Poverty and unemployment remain obstacles that hurt development and participation of youth in politics and threaten the pillars of development.
- Even if legally it's allowed for youth to participate, it's rare to find young councilors and members of local government. There is a need to support the organization of young people as the majority stakeholder. Within this, participants emphasized the need for infrastructure to support participation- funding and resources, set seats at the table, and systematic inclusion of marginalized stakeholders.
- Youth must be given socio-political value, as essential to the development of local regions. Participation of youth in development will contribute to overcoming challenges faced by youth and so legal bases have to be established to involve young people and participatory local decision-making in the development of action plans and strategies.

Examples and Good Practices

Youth councils and congresses exist across many local governments and cities, many of whom also work closely with NGOs and grassroots organizations. Participants pointed to the respect, inclusive practices and collaboration prioritized in many of these examples as core to their success.

Participants pointed to the creation of the UCLG Youth Caucus as a good practice that can be modeled or replicated in local governments.

Employment, education and sustainable development

- Low education and employment rates accelerate social ills and problems. Youth are unable to participate in these due to lack of capacity building and opportunities, and absence of education policies for youth. Illiteracy and underdevelopment needs to be tackled, and minimum standards of education should be raised through investment and inclusionary practices.
- Governments have to provide various opportunities for youth to participate in activities, and allow youth to contribute to the development of nations. Youth can take on many different roles, as they are able to build peace and stability in future societies, including utilizing social media and can come up with creative solutions.
- Participants recommended further recognition of the positive influence of youth taking roles in the economy and policy-making, and the need for young people to be represented in not

just governments but boards. Some suggestions included the creation of Youth Consulting Committees across policy areas, the creation of mentoring sessions, and pushing for further funding and political commitment to youth employment solutions and youth-initiated projects.
- Participants emphasized the need to create job opportunities, including in sustainable development, within their local towns and provinces. Some recommendations for further opportunities for youth capacity development included creating a Youth Platform for Entrepreneurship in Development, and local prizes for creative innovations engaging in Youth2030 and localization of the SDGs.

Climate Change

- The Pacific: Participants highlighted that children in the Pacific Islands are at threat of becoming politically and culturally stateless, and inheriting an unrecognizable Earth. Youth must have their own policy featuring their own voices and demands because time is running out. There needs to be a policy by youth for youth, grounded in roots and your principles, and young people must be supported to build the skills and access opportunities to co-design policies appropriate for the Pacific.
- Participants also recommended that young people needed to lead the discussions on the impacts of climate change in their communities, as they are culture leaders and influencers of the present and future, and they must be given significant and meaningful roles in driving culture-based climate action from local and regional governments.

Policy Recommendations: An Intergenerational Social Contract to Include Youth in the Social and Political Life of the City

1. Ensure that young people have accessible information about their rights to ensure our effective inclusion in the social life of the city, together with the capacity to be involved in more processes, with specific attention to:
   a. the right to decent work and/or entrepreneurial opportunities, through access to education, upskilling and training opportunities, protected and fair wages, access to unionizing, safe whistleblowing mechanisms and humane working and labor conditions in line with international standards;
   b. the right to appropriate, safe, affordable and sustainable housing;
   c. the right to access public goods and social services, such as quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health services;
   d. the right to safety in the private, public and professional spheres;
   e. the right to quality, safe, and affordable transportation, with measures to prevent sexual assault and harrassment;
   f. the right to access affordable legal assistance and free, reliable, and accessible information about our rights and avenues for engagement in local processes.

2. Ensure the effective participation, meaningful engagement and leadership of young persons, especially young people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, across all stages of policy development, budgeting (i.e. participatory budgeting), execution and evaluation, in order to address and center their needs and innovate with lived experience. We must be included as partners and key stakeholders in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies, for them to be future-proof. This requires:
   a. Ensuring comprehensive youth participation, i.e engaging not only the young people within and beyond existing structures to ensure a wide range and number of youth engaged with the local government.
   b. Facilitating young peoples' access and ability to engage in meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders on addressing chronic, structural and systemic power imbalances and dynamics, to ensure full, effective, meaningful and substantive participation and leadership of young people, in all our diversity. This includes the power to influence decisions, have a seat at the table, and agenda setting.
   c. Recognising the lack of meaningful representation of young women and girls in local governance and decision-making, and commitment to intensifying efforts to ensure they are centered as co-leaders in decision making processes.

3. Ensure effective political and civic education for children and young persons, in order to prepare and incentivize them for an effective engagement in urban life. This requires:
   a. Investing in and facilitating capacity building for young people from all backgrounds in both urban and rural areas, via workshops, conferences, and informal peer learning settings.

b. Creating and continuing flexible, accessible and sustainable funding for youth innovation and initiatives, including formal and informal youth-led organizations, networks, collectives and movements.

c. Integrating approachable and accessible active citizenship education into all stages of the formal education system. This includes education on democracy as a participatory process to 'localize democracy.'

4. Ensure that communications about youth within the public institutions and towards other actors are accurate and constructive, with a focus on combating prejudices and de-criminalising young persons. Sources of youth non-civic behaviors must be identified and addressed at their source instead of criminalized, with a focus on increasing access to rights, capacity for self-development, access to quality leisure, and a caring environment. This requires:
   a. Ensuring legal and support services are accessible by young people, regardless of legal status or history with the law.
   b. Developing dignified rehabilitation and reintegration programs with a focus on restorative justice, which view young people as holistic beings, and as rights-holders.

Best Practice: Restorative Justice in New Zealand

Restorative justice approaches towards young people who are in conflict with the law can uphold young people's rights, dignity, and contribute to sustainable solutions. Since 1989, New Zealand has made family group conferences the hub of its juvenile justice system, with courts and the criminal justice system involved but taking a secondary role. These restorative justice approaches can be adopted by the police as well, so as to effect good community policing, resorting to force only as a last resort and only reluctantly.

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5. Identify and develop the best channels to enhance equal two-way communication between institutions, authorities and citizens, especially young persons. If continuous communication channels and spaces for dialogue between young people and government representatives are lacking, these avenues should be established. Young people need to grow with knowledge of the governmental processes, understand the communication channels, and know the work of public institutions to ensure trust between people and governments.

6. Generate effective and simple mechanisms for young persons to successfully comply with public requirements and formalities needed to receive institutional recognition, and ensure effective direction and support can be provided from public administration. This includes:
   a. Improving and simplifying bureaucratic processes related to the acquisition of permits for public events.

7. Ensure government authorities operate with transparency, accountability, and are responsive to societal needs. This requires:
   a. Ensuring young people are able to hold authorities and stakeholders accountable through transparent and effective methods of governance.
   b. Creating transparent and accessible websites with detailed information on public budgets, assignments and public wages, and allowing third-party and public monitoring.

8. Promote and foster welcoming societies and communities that are ready to assist local governments with the inclusive implementation and provision of services to all, regardless of background. Specifically, dedicate further resources to combating xenophobia and discrimination, particularly within service providers and their staff through specialized, proactive training against discriminatory malpractices.

9. Establish urban networks of service providers and stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, advocates, community groups) devoted to sharing and developing best practices and cooperation to facilitate safe and inclusive implementation considerate to cross-society needs. These networks should advance the development of inclusive integrational systems to sustainably participate in society, thus ensuring that socio-economic class, place of birth and/or nationality, and other marginalized backgrounds, are not burdens for the development of all youth.

10. Ensure adequate access to public health education and services for young people, regardless of their legal and socio-economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity, including family planning, sexual and reproductive health and mental health services and prevention against ESTs, FGM and drug abuse.

11. Ensure access to sports and recreational community facilities for young people, as part of holistic healthcare provision and community building efforts. These should be accessible, affordable / free, and protected spaces for youth to gather and develop their interests and skills. Specific funding should be provided to strengthen 'future skills' such as entrepreneurship, digital skills, sustainable systems, and community leadership.

12. Ensure access to protected shelter / housing from extreme weather conditions, nutritious food, water and sanitation for all young people through a public network of safe water fountains, protected shelters, food banks / soup kitchens, and clean and accessible public toilets, with diaper changing stations and breastfeeding rooms.

13. Support the development of a socially cohesive local community, of which sustainable youth, civil society, and grassroots groups and organizations are integral, through:
    a. Ensuring the availability of public spaces at the local level, with the objective to have an adequate number and geographic spread in relation to population, that can be used by youth, civil society, and other grassroots organizations to develop social and community projects and safely associate for the advancement of the common good.
    b. Facilitating their development through a self-organizational model that facilitates growth that does not depend exclusively on public authorities.
    c. Providing accessible, flexible and sustainable funds and resources for the development of civil society organizations, with specific allocations for youth organizations, that work on solutions to pressing societal challenges.
    d. Recognising their contribution to the advancement of development and generating an enabling environment for their growth through partnerships, mobilization of resources, technical support and training.

14. Support the initiatives of the social and solidarity economy and promote responsible consumption, especially among the youth. For example, promoting and creating space for urban agriculture, urban gardens and proximity to local food production.

15. Implement stakeholder co-designed platforms for dialogue to enable debate and a space to address key societal worries, specifically focused on the proactive identification of polarization and social turbulence. This is crucial especially in municipalities, regions, or countries where social conflict, war or rising tensions exist.

16. Establish local peace and justice bureaus, independant from police stations, where people can report sensitive crimes, human and civil rights violations and receive safe and appropriate support for the use of official justice channels. These must be operated with policies and training so that residents can access them without fear of repercussions due to migration status or other marginalizing factors, and must build trust with local communities. The protection of and sensitivity to minorities or vulnerable groups such as women, migrants, disabled persons, aged persons, people from marginalized ethnicities, and people from different genders and sexual orientations, should be prioritized and embedded in the design of structure and processes. This includes creating information campaigns and trust-building community activities to ensure that young people are aware of the presence of these structures, and feel safe and empowered to make use of them.

17. Ensure young people are safe and protected from negative labeling, ostracisation, discrimination, violence, and political targeting as they advocate, participate or engage with their local government and authorities in various forms and levels.

18. Ensure a rights and safety-first role of local police and justice officials in the protection of minorities or vulnerable groups such as women, migrants, disabled persons, aged persons, ethnicities, and people from different genders and sexual orientations. Restorative approaches can be adopted to build restorative community policing, where the police engage in harmonious relationships with their communities and solve conflicts on the ground, without resorting to violent deterrence or incapacitation. Examples of this approach come from, amongst others, New Zealand, Australia, Canada.

19. Ensure, within their capacity, adequate accessible education and learning facilities, silent working spaces such as libraries or study rooms, and free materials for the educational development of young people. This should include language accessible services and resources for those with learning and cognitive disabilities, and the provision of materials and instructions on usage / access in languages spoken by the communities in the area.

20. Systemically apply the lens of intersectional feminism, ecologism, intergenerational collaboration and anti-racism in local public policy planning, budgeting, execution, implementation and evaluation through the official inclusion of both researchers and persons of different backgrounds in decision-making processes.

21. Protect and facilitate the cultural development of minorities grounded within community-led and advised practices, and promote positive and community-building exchange opportunities between young persons of different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds.

22. Promote and facilitate public-private partnerships to provide quality services, and ensure learnings are taken further to lobby regional and national governments, to promote inclusivity at a higher level.

23. Partner with small cities to ensure effective localized services through decentralization and the exchange of good practices and technical support for urban development, so that the impact of the rural exodus is distributed among urban areas and intermediary cities, and resources are distributed effectively to cities disproportionately providing more services to vulnerable groups.

24. Create and promote local activities for climate action which strengthen the resilience of the local communities to the impacts of climate change. This includes the provision of social services and public spaces for the proactive mitigation and adaptation of its consequences and to compensate loss and damage, such as:
    a. Identification, development and communication of pathways to regular status for displaced peoples, during events such as:
        i. floods, tornadoes and other events of similar characteristics;
        ii. fires;
        iii. heat waves and cold spells;
        iv. any other specific extreme climate events typical to the different parts of the world.
    b. Creation of legal mechanisms to mitigate climate-related damages caused by large and multinational corporations.
    c. Creation of community-based proactive and preventive measures and plans for climate mitigation and adaptation, co-designed and developed with community representatives- particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds.
    d. Facilitate training to advance on understanding and appreciation of nature, climate issues, alternatives for an ecological existence and support on transition, which includes transforming people's relationship with the environment and community that acknowledges our belonging to nature.

25. Promote and source partnerships for the installation of renewable energy projects making use of the potentialities of every locality (wind, rain, sun,...) and involve young persons into these projects.

26. Ensure quality residue management systems and develop it as a respected public service, embedded into sustainable urban systems. Young people from vulnerable backgrounds should receive specialized support to access training programmes and opportunities to enter the sustainable economy, both within this and other related sectors.

27. Channel resources to reach young people in vulnerable and underfunded communities in our municipalities, with special attention to those facing barriers in accessing and representation in technology   or   social   media.

28. Collaborate with national governments to implement and enforce environmental policies to address pollution.

Joint Way Forward

Going forward, as a Youth Caucus, we hope to engage, discuss and partner with local governments across the world to assist with buy-in and implementation of the above recommendations. We also hope to discuss with local councils to understand the capacities and limitations of different municipalities, include their perspectives and draft general strategies applicable to the concrete cases of different cities. To do so, we propose the following steps:

1. **Through UCLG, develop an annual youth consultation with activists, youth organizations and urban youth from across the world in order to re-consolidate priorities and concrete steps forward.**

2. **Develop two rounds of discussions between Local Governments and Young persons to agree on an Intergenerational Social Contract, which can be incorporated into the UCLG Pact for the Future programme.**

   a. This will be a simple, short declaration incorporating the vision for youth inclusion and youth rights in 10 years view, agreed goals for ensuring effective youth development, participation in the social and political life, and the responsibilities of all parties.

3. **Work with UCLG and their city networks, youth organizations and international institutions in developing an International Charter of Youth Municipal Rights.**

4. **Establish a recognition programme for municipalities achieving the aims and principles of the Intergenerational Social Contract and the International Charter on Youth Municipal Rights, and for effective intergenerational dialogue and collaboration.**

5. **Support research on evaluating and disseminating best practices exemplifying the implementation of the Intergenerational Social Contract and the International Charter on Youth Municipal Rights.**

6. **Work with UCLG and other urban development institutions to advocate for the establishment of a Youth Participation Fund aimed at supporting effective solutions to the challenges of young persons at the local level, and strengthening youth participation and partnerships between municipalities and/or city networks and youth-led organizations.**

We understand that the Youth Caucus is an evolving and living group of representative youth, which, due to the transitory stage of youth and its voluntary nature, will have a constantly changing individual membership. However, current and future Caucus members will commit, during their mandates, to advancing the vision and principles of these recommendations and facilitate the documentation, partnerships and plans needed to continue our mission as well as allow it to evolve and grow with the needs of young people.

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