



**World Urban Forum and Youth:**  
Vancouver 2006

## **Introduction**

The World Youth Forum (WYF) that was held three days prior to the Third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF III) was a response to a request by youth to UN-HABITAT during the Second Session of the World Urban Forum (WUFII) held in Barcelona, Spain in 2004. During WUF II, the City of Vancouver, the Environmental Youth Alliance and UNESCO Growing Up In Cities (GUIC) hosted a panel discussion on youth and local government, to examine how young people can be brought more into the mainstream at the WUF III that was to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in 2006. For WUF III, the WUF II participants insisted that young people be brought more into the fold by having a conference several days prior to the main forum. This would then give youth a chance to articulate their position during the main WUF III programme. The young men and women also appealed to institutions and delegations of governments to work more closely with the youth.

Leading up to WUF III, UN-HABITAT and the Canadian WUF3 Secretariat stated that the requirements for WUF III include:

### *Bringing Ideas to Action!*

- Attract 6,000 – 8,000 practitioners and participants from civil society
- Leverage synergies between and beyond existing partners
- Strengthen the WUF process – create a Citizen Forum
- Help mobilize local authorities
- Move beyond an event
- Be representative – in terms of participants and issues
- Showcase national and local experience to a global audience
- Increase its impact – not only size

The World Urban Forum and Youth Organizing Committee (WUFY), World Urban Café (WUC) (*Annex 1*) preparatory initiative and the World Youth Forum (WYF) activities were responses to this appeal. The theme of WUF III, *Bringing Ideas into Action*, indicated an overall philosophy, which invited various stakeholders, decision makers and generations into dialogue on the state of cities today and reflected on how together, we can build a sustainable future. Attendees included community leaders and seniors, politicians and decision makers, civil society groups, international agencies, First Nation communities, women's groups and young people.

Launched a year before WUF III at the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council (GC 20), WUFY aimed at providing young people the right to be heard and seen in important discussions regarding the state of the world's cities today through the WYF.

The focus of the WYF was to promote the recognition and increase the capacity of youth led initiatives, projects, programmes and action in cities. WYF brought together over 450 youth from over 40 countries around the world. The selected delegates were identified as

being agents of change already actively working on projects on a broad variety of urban themes promoting action towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. WYF delegates also participated in UN-HABITAT's WUF III the following week.

The WYF programme elements were focused on capacity and network building, identification of best practices in effective youth-led development, and mainstreaming the topic of youth and having a meaningful impact at WUF III discussions and beyond. The WYF also created an environment where young leaders were able to gain insight and develop their desired outcomes during WUF III. Through clustering (PODs), the delegates were divided into thematic clusters, to better advance their message. As a result of WYF, the voice of young people from around the world was heard at the panel discussions, roundtables, dialogue and networking sessions in WUF III. Youth were also represented on the Executive Directors (EDs) Advisory Committee that was responsible for advising the ED on issues that may arise, on a daily basis during WUF III. Every evening of the WYF featured exciting events around Vancouver – these events were not mandatory, but were a fun addition to the delegates' itinerary. (*Annex II*)

At the WUF III, the Youth Roundtable, the Youth Reception and the Youth Exhibition created a platform for all WUF III delegates to interact with and recognize the importance of the world's youth, and to develop ways to collaborate and work towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty. The Global Hip Hop Main stage Event and other youth driven and led initiatives through out the week demonstrated the amount of energy and passion that young people have and clearly presented the strength of their talents and abilities.

Based on the outputs of the events at the WYF and throughout WUF III the meaningful impact and success of WYF is evident. The role of young men and women as key stakeholders in the future of our cities and world is essential.

## **Elements of the World Youth Forum**

### **PODS**

The youth delegates at WYF were divided into thematic groups called PODS. A POD is a topic based group of young delegates. Developed on the input of selected delegates, there were 7 POD themes including:

1. Making a Living: Youth and the Living Sustainable Economy;
- 2 Health Care: On the Frontline with HIV/AIDS and Other Disease;
3. Environment: Creating Healthy and Sustainable Communities;
4. Safety and Non-Violence: Youth as Peace-Builders;
5. Youth as Leaders: Locally, Nationally and Internationally;
6. Gender: Achieving Balance and Equity;
7. Indigenous Youth: Redefining the Millennium Development Goals.

At WYF, in preparation to WUF III, the PODS created a community of youth-led action and education, sharing best practices and led to strategizing on how to mainstream the voice of young men and women throughout WUF III and beyond.

Through PODS, young people were able to express themselves through innovative dialogue and art based activities. The PODS also provided a platform to influence the panels, networking events and other formal aspects of WUF III. POD Outputs included the development of a statement which was presented to WUF III delegates, and local, national and international decision makers. This statement outlined the needs to support and facilitate sustainable youth led development.

### **Youth Reception**

The Youth Reception was recognition of youth at WUF III and provided the young men and women a chance to socialize and interact with other delegates from NGOs, governments, UN-HABITAT and other UN agencies. The event was co-hosted by Cornell University and The Environmental Youth Alliance and welcomed 350 attendees from all ages and backgrounds. The Youth Reception bridged WYF and WUF III through presentations on the outcomes of WYF and introducing the youth delegation to the WUF III. Highlighted at the reception was the *Image-In the MDGs – A Promise to the Youth of Mathare*, a photographic exhibition and book from the Mathare slum of Nairobi and an impromptu performances from all continents including Hip Hop from UN-HABITAT Messengers of Truth, Gidi Gidi Maji Maji.

### **Youth Roundtable**

The Youth Roundtable's most prevalent theme was centered on the need to move from token involvement of youth to mainstreaming youth engagement across all stages of policy and programming planning, implementation and evaluation. The overall sentiment was that youth need to break the inter-generational divide and work with all age groups.

This model of engagement should be applied at municipal and international levels involving informal and formal methods of inclusion. The youth delegates and other participants at the roundtable highlighted the importance of education and training opportunities. They also expressed a great need in the use of sports, music, arts and culture as a means of engaging young men and women in addressing and acting as agents of change.

As a result of the Youth Roundtable young delegates were able to take part in dialogue with important leaders and decision makers present at the WUF III. Delegates recognized the importance of creating these relationships and being able to clearly communicate their views. The importance and power of creating international networks was also an output of the roundtable.

### **The Exhibition Space**

The WUFY Committee and TakingITGlobal, an internet based dialogue facilitator, joined together to create a space called the World Urban Café Exhibition Space (WUC). The World Urban Café, otherwise known as the Youth Exhibition Space, acted as a platform for youth delegates to present outcomes from the WYF. The open space welcomed visitors to network, watch presentations or take part in the creation of the International Peace Tile Initiative. The WUC Exhibit Space creatively showcased the outcomes of active engaged youth involved in design, implementation, research, evaluation and management of projects and initiatives.

Outputs included daily video screenings and presentations by youth led and focused organizations that were present at WYF. The space acted as a platform for the outcomes of the WYF to be represented and for the youth voice to be disseminated throughout the week. It encompassed murals, a graffiti wall, and a 360 sq feet display featuring youth led initiatives across the world.

## **NETWORKING SESSIONS**

### ***Child and Youth Friendly Cities:***

This networking session was hosted by the One Stop Youth Centre, Nairobi, Kenya and the WUFY Organising Committee. It brought together important stakeholders to discuss the implementation of children and youth friendly cities. The core issues discussed were the lack of youth representation and participation in local authorities' affairs, the lack of local authorities in mainstreaming and working with children and youth and the lack of community ownership in the development of cities. During the session, a city-city partnership between UN HABITAT, One Stop Youth Centre and Oslo, Youth Council was signed to enhance cooperation of youth exchange programmes between Oslo, Norway and Nairobi, Kenya. The Child and Youth Friendly Cities networking session identified actions towards turning these ideas into a reality including: the guarantee that each city develops a youth engagement strategy; local authorities develop youth advisory boards and nominate young people as local authority representatives and that policies and planners incorporate interaction and involvement of all ages.

### ***Sustainable Cities and the Cross-Cultural Peace building Approach:***

This networking session was a participatory workshop hosted by YOUCAN, a Canadian youth led peace and conflict organization and Rock Paper Scissors. This session engaged participants to interact and develop new tools to their conflict resolution approaches.

### **Global Hip Hop Main-stage Event**

The Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka honored local artist and aboriginal activist Curtis Clearsky as one of a handful of international Messengers of Truth. As the Project Coordinator for the Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, Clearsky is an experienced and devoted individual when it comes to tackling serious issues within his community. The recognition by the UN HABITAT for his actions will further his abilities to make a positive difference in his community and globally. Alongside representatives from Africa, Europe and South America, the British Columbian rapper will spend the next year raising awareness about poverty, education and other important issues.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Youth Declaration**

According to the Youth Declaration written based on the dialogue and networking that took place during WUFY there is an overarching theme that the most important challenge to overcome for youth today is to be engaged and involved in the decision-making process. The Youth Declaration discusses the importance of mainstreaming youth and that young people must be at the table when decisions regarding their communities are being made, no matter the authority, agency, or level of government. Local authorities cannot consider their youth constituency a nuisance, and beyond that, must mobilize and engage their young people as a community resource. This must be reflected in policy and budgetary priorities. The Youth Declaration also presents key recommendations and actions that should be taken in terms of representation, programming and creating access to and youth based resources. In conclusion the Youth Declaration states made an urgent call to UN-Habitat and local authorities to mainstream youth into all aspects of decision-making, from involving them at the table as equal partners, to encouraging and supporting their active presence in every sector.

### **The “Ayateway Declaration”**

The “Ayateway Declaration” is a living document which has been planted and fed by many minds and will continue to grow as it is shared amongst their communities. It aims to allow for the gathering of thoughts, beliefs and concerns of the Indigenous youth globally. The Declaration presents concern on how many United Nations bodies and processes, find themselves underrepresented at the WUF III, while indigenous peoples fight to have their voices heard. The declarations acknowledged the existing human settlement work initiated by UN-HABITAT that explores the connection between human rights, housing and Indigenous Peoples and assert the right to adequate housing for all

peoples with full sensitivity to cultures, traditions and needs. The declaration further re-affirmed the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of the Worlds Indigenous Peoples, the Declaration from the Youth Caucus of the Regional World Conference Against Racism and many other important declarations. The Declaration includes recommendations in the in the areas of : Recognition of Indigenous Self-Determination; Youth; Development Aggression & Urbanization; Housing, Poverty and Homelessness; Gender Oppression; Education; Adopting the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the World Forum on Indigenous Urban Issues.

### **The Youth Closing Statement**

The Closing Statement summarized the events and outcomes of the involvement of the 450 young leaders from around the world who took part in the sharing of local experiences and strategies for urban development at WYF and WUFIII. The statement referred again to the issue of youth mainstreaming and the importance of local authorities working with and in support of youth. UN-HABITAT involvement is now in urgent demand to recognize youth as key partners in solving urbanization problems. Delegates from the WYF called on UN-HABITAT to continue their commitment to youth by actively engaging a broad range of youth led agencies through signing multi-years MOUs at the next Governing Council. The recommendation for a Youth Trust Fund was put forth and an up-scaling of the Global Partnership Initiative for urban youth development Youth need to have access to resources to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.

The Youth Closing Statement congratulated the country of Norway, among others, for its support of UN-HABITAT and youth programs and called on UN-HABITAT, member states and the WUF III host Canada to build on this support and create a centralized youth fund within UN-HABITAT for youth-led ventures. Young people must be included at the table, no matter the authority, agency, or level of government. Youth need no longer be considered the leaders of tomorrow but need to be seen as today's leaders.

## ANNEXES

### *Annex I*

#### **World Urban Café Initiative April 2005- Vancouver 2006**

The World Urban Café Initiative (WUCs) consisted of a series of events undertaken leading up to and held at the World Urban Forum III. The WUCs engaged urban youth and civil society from around the world in urban sustainability dialogues and strategy development. They promoted youth best practices as related to the WUF themes and sub-themes, while using contemporary forms of communications and art. Though there was a strong focus on the engagement of young people and promotion of youth programmes and projects the WUC recognized the holistic nature of urban communities, and thus promoted programmes and projects from other civil society groups.. The WUC philosophy initially looked at community strengths and assets and from there addressed their needs.

#### **Program Elements**

The Three Goals of the World Urban Cafés:

1. *Local Action*: Support and promote community-based projects that can be disseminated as models of urban development.
2. *Knowledge Networks & Awareness*: Generate and advance global communities of understanding and action on urban and rural youth and civil society issues.
3. *Input into the World Urban Forum*: Facilitate Youth and civil society input into international and national outcomes from the WUF that shape cities' community development.

#### **World Urban Café Sessions**

World Urban Cafes are built on a belief that young people and civil society have models of positive urban development that need to be disseminated in a way in which they can be replicated in other urban communities. The Cafés, as a form of youth-driven dialogues, celebrated and reflected on the role of youth and civil society in shaping our cities and communities. The WUCs included community elders and seniors, politicians and decision makers, civil society groups and international and First Nation communities.

#### **WUC Jam Sessions**

World Urban Cafes and the Habitat JAM objectives were similar in that both processes sought to engage communities in meaningful dialogue on the issues of urban living. Creating a safe and generative space for dialogue, finding themes within these dialogues and using this experience to drive the creative thinking at WUF were the cornerstones of both programmes. Through this proven methodology the World Urban Café Sessions engaged communities in slum and impoverished human settlements in Asia, Africa, India and Latin America in the JAM. The WUC JAM Sessions leveraged the strengths of face-to-face interaction with the global reach of the internet. The WUC Jam Sessions engaged people in the theme of the seven JAM forums<sup>1</sup>. With the support of partners, facilitators and volunteers, all the WUCs were delivered in the most common language used by the attendees. The dialogue of over 19,000 participants was translated into English and entered into the JAM dialogue.

**World Urban Café Online with TakingITGlobal.com:** The World Urban Café Initiative also had a major online presence within TakingITGlobal.org's online community. During the fall of 2006, TakingITGlobal's monthly themes focused on 'Sustainable Urban Development', 'Information Technology' and 'Millennium Development Goals', engaging over 10 000 members in online

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see [www.habitatjam.com](http://www.habitatjam.com)



discussion. This site feature brought together informative resources on Cities including city-level activities <http://www.takingitglobal.org>

**Vancouver Art Gallery – World Urban Cafe Fusion:** In partnership with the Vancouver Art Gallery, WUFY co-hosted two Cafés as part of Fuse, a series of shows on urban issues held at the Gallery. One show was held in early spring and the second on the last Friday of the World Urban Forum. The themes were concurrent with the broader World Urban Forum theme of urban sustainability, with one of the shows focused on aboriginal peoples.

**International World Urban Cafés:** Engaging youth and other constituencies internationally was the greatest challenge. The low cost and easily replicated standardized format makes the World Urban Cafes successful at a global level. This participatory model was tested by the World Urban Forum and Youth Organising Committee in over 80 events around the world because of its highly interactive methods of engagement. The events provided a space for communities to put forward concrete ideas and strategies on addressing the issues facing them and their community.

**World Urban Café WUF III Exhibition Space:** The Environmental Youth Alliance and TakingITGlobal partnered together in the creation of The World Urban Café at the World Urban Forum 3 Exhibition Space Centre. The World Urban Café, otherwise known as the Youth Exhibition Space, acted as a platform for youth delegates to present outcomes from the World Urban Forum and Youth. The open space welcomed visitors to network, watch presentations or take part in the creation of the International Peace Tile Initiative. The youth led or focused organizations involved in the space displayed their projects and worked together throughout the week to ensure an inspiring, informative and involving atmosphere.

Table 1: Number of Engaged Groups and Participants

Region/Population	Urban Venue	Lead Partners	Engaged Youth
Asia	China - Beijing	Lead International	175
Latin America	Brazil - Pirapora, Buritizero, Ibia, Lauro de Freitas	Agente Joven Pirapora, Barra do Guaicui, Communities of Ibia and Lauro de Freitas.	314
	Columbia -Cali, Medellin, Toribó	Columbian Task Force, Corporación Sociedad Activa (United Way Latin America), Lila Mujer, La Ladera de Cali Communa 18, Picacho Confuturo, Asociacion Sin Limites, Movimiento Del Rap, El Parche, Ariz Fundacion Proyecto Gente, Red Juvenile, Taller Abierto, Quidbo Women's Group, Native Youth Movement	1290
Africa	<b>South Africa</b> Johannesburg, Soweto Slum	Global Hip Hop Summit, Black Sunday Productions, Native Rhythms Production, UN Habitat Partners & Youth Section	2350
	<b>Kenya</b> - Nairobi – Kibera, Korogocho, Mathare, Kangemi, Mukuru, Soweto Roysambu, Karen	One Stop Youth Centre, Junior Youth Council, Youth for Habitat, Green Alive Kenya, World Youth Forum Organizing Committee, UN Habitat Partners & Youth Section, Mazingira Institute, InHand Communications, City Council of	3175

Region/Population	Urban Venue	Lead Partners	Engaged Youth
		Nairobi, Groots Kenya, Miss Koch Initiative, Stratmore University, University of Nairobi.	
	<b>Nigeria -Lagos</b>	Pan Africa Vision for the Environment	250
	<b>Zambia- Ndola, Copperbelt</b>	World Youth Forum Organizing Committee, National Council of Swedish Youth Organization (LSU), Tackling Poverty Together Network	100
South Asia	India -Delhi – Jahangir Puri J.J Camp, Sabjimadi J.J Camp, Vidhyapati Nagar, Satyawati Colony, Rohini Sector, Ramlila Ground, Gautampuri, Shankar basti, Resettlement Colony Avantika, Wazirpur J.J Camp Shankar Basti, Guatampuri., Bangalore	PRIA Deepalya, National Alliance of Peoples Movements, Urban Labor Organization, Land, Housing & Livelihood Rights Network Foundation, Institute for Democracy & Sustainability, Social Action & Training,	11420
<b>Total</b>			<b>19,074</b>

### **Programme Outputs**

**The World Urban Cafe Book:** This book is a step-by-step description on how to organize and run a World Urban Café World Urban Cafes are grounded by a practice known as Participatory Action. This is a process in which groups of people attain significant understanding and improvement of their situation through shared planning, participatory practices, observations and reflections. In this manual, you'll find descriptions of World Urban Cafés that have been hosted before, and how to organize and run one of your own. You'll learn how World Urban Cafés are connected with UN-HABITAT's Third Session of the World Urban Forum, an event focused on discussing pressing issues associated with urbanization and globalization (Vancouver 2006).

Table 2: Milestones and Indicators of Success

<b>JAM Milestones</b>	<b>WUC JAM Session Highlights</b>
Hold event in which target populations that have limited access to the internet can participate	Hold events minimally in 7 major cities in developing and under-developed countries
Have a meaningful number of target population participate in the event	Minimum 10,000 people attend events and minimum of 50,000 others touched by the events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% informal settlement dwellers</li> <li>• 20% aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• 50% women</li> <li>• 50% youth</li> </ul>
Have WUC participants engaged in expressing opinions on 7 JAM	Minimum 75% of attendees, 7500 people, fill out surveys

discussion forums	
Collation of surveys, surveys input into forums	100% of all surveys collected were inputted into JAM 3 day event
14 Community Champions (2 per urban site) participate in JAM	Over 100 community partners from around the world assisted in and coordinated the WUC Initiative.
Findings of JAM reported back to communities	<p>A Research/Evaluation Report Process is currently underway and the findings will be sent to communities on findings of WUC JAMs.</p> <p>Habitat JAM released a Findings Report at WUF III that highlighted actionable ideas that were discussed in the WUC JAM Sessions.</p> <p>A member of the WUFY Committee was invited to speak on a panel at the Habitat JAM Networking Session at WUF III</p> <p>Additionally, many WUC JAM Partners and Participants were featured on the Habitat JAM Video released during the WUF III Networking Session.</p>

## *Annex II*

### **EVENING PROGRAMMING**

Each night of the WYF featured exciting events around Vancouver – these events were not mandatory, but were a fun addition to the delegates' itinerary.

- **EYA Welcome dinner and 15 Years Of Youth Event**

*Friday June 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-10:00pm*

A celebration of both the Environmental Youth Alliance's fifteenth anniversary, and excellence in youth-engagement in general, this cocktail and dessert event featured a wide range of EYA alumni and great performances.

- **Exposure – Media, Film and Youth Led Development Screening & Workshop**

*Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm-12:00am*

Exposure focused on the use of video technology and training to catalyze, enhance and promote youth-led projects around the world.

WYF participants were encouraged to bring and screen their videos and short films. Local videographers and project-leaders taught digital video skills, as well as showcased methods to engage marginalized communities with video training.

Exposure was an official part of the Vancouver International Hip-Hop Film Festival, encouraging interaction between the local/national arts community and international delegates.

The evening culminated in a screening of *Favela Rising*, an award-winning documentary about Afro-Reggae, a successful, culturally-based youth-engagement project in the Favelas of Brazil.

- **For Word: Music and Spoken Word – WYF Closing Party**

*Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm-late*

For Word was a jam, a workshop and an open-mic session, featuring collaborative musical and spoken word performances by WYF participants and members of the local Hip-Hop community.

Envisioned as a musical expression of the WYF experience, young delegate/musicians had a chance to show their talents and bring together their various musical and cultural experiences.

A live band and a DJ provided beats and any WYF participant that wanted had an opportunity to get up and rap, sing or play.

The event was recorded in high-quality audio and video, creating a dynamic, documented legacy of the WYF experience. This legacy will be packaged, as a CD to be sent to delegate's home communities, and will be suitable for broadcast.

In contrast to the Global Hip-Hop Mainstage, For Word was mostly internal (WYF participants) jam and party. For Word functioned as both an opportunity to relax and make music and art together, and as the closing party for the WYF.