



Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development



Applications available at www.unhabitat.org/opfund

UN-HABITAT's mandate is to promote sustainable urbanization through the transformation of today's cities into friendlier, healthier and more inclusive places with better opportunities for all, especially children, youth and women who live in slums.



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Since its inception, UN-HABITAT has focused on meaningfully engaging youth in all its programmes. UN-HABITAT, with its partners, has actively supported youth to become positive change agents in their communities through innovative pilot projects focused on the improvement of young peoples' livelihoods, especially those most marginalized and living in slums. For example, UN-HABITAT has supported the establishment of One Stop Youth Resource Centres in East Africa and the training of youth in slums through the Youth Empowerment project.

At the normative level, UN-HABITAT has used findings from these projects to develop policy at the local, national and international level. UN-HABITAT is researching the aforementioned projects to determine their impact on youth, and the broader impact of these policies on sustainable urbanization. UN-HABITAT understands that young people want and need recognition and support for their work. Most importantly, they want a say in the affairs of their communities and the decisions that affect them.

In acknowledging the importance of young people and the critical role they play in development, member states passed a resolution during the 21st session of the Governing Council, calling on UN-HABITAT's Executive Director, Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, to set up a special fund to support youth-led urban development initiatives. Championed by the Government of Norway, the Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development, supports inspiring youth-led initiatives worldwide and engages the partnership and leadership of young men and women in working towards sustainable urbanization.

"Through this new fund, we are recognizing the urgent need to bolster youth-led initiatives, and are at the forefront of a growing movement to place youth at the center of sustainable development strategies," says Dr. Tibaijuka.

WHAT IS YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT?

Youth-led development is about young people pro-actively creating a better future for themselves and their communities. It involves business and community improvement projects, devised and managed by young people, often working alongside adults who are able to pass on their skills and experience.

WHY SUPPORT YOUTH?

Youth, especially girls and young women, are most vulnerable to social problems caused by unemployment and poverty and also, make up the majority of the population in many developing countries and their cities. With over 200 million youth living in poverty, 130 million illiterate, 88 million unemployed and 10 million young people living with HIV/AIDS, there is a clear need to meaningfully engage and support youth.

THE INTENTION

The Fund aims to advance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Habitat Agenda through the following:

- a) Mobilizing young people to help strengthen youth-related policy formulation;
- b) Building the capacities of Governments, non-governmental and civil society and private-sector organization to ensure a better response to the needs and issues of young people;
- c) Supporting the development of interest-based information and communication-oriented networks;
- d) Piloting and demonstration of new and innovative approaches to employment, good governance, adequate shelter and secure tenure;
- e) Sharing and exchange of information on best practices;
- f) Facilitating vocational training and credit mechanisms to promote entrepreneurship and employment for young women and men, in collaboration with the private sector and in cooperation with other UN bodies and stakeholders; and
- g) Promoting gender mainstreaming in all activities of urban youth.



Photos © UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT recognizes that to achieve these global benchmarks, advances must be made in BOTH policy and practice. For this reason the Fund is committed to supporting both leading edge youth-led project and research. In regards to policy and research, UN-HABITAT recognizes that research on youth-led development, especially in the developing world, is a new and expanding field. UN-HABITAT will contribute to this field by undertaking research on projects supported by the Fund. The knowledge obtained from this research will be used to strengthen local, national and international youth-related policies as well as to ensure that gender concerns are addressed in those policies.

The Fund will also assist governments, civil society organizations and the private sector in addressing youth concerns, and support new information and learning channels for young people.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Currently in its pilot phase, the Fund will be managed by a committee of experts, researchers and practitioners drawn from UN-HABITAT academia, donor governments and youth.

Small, grassroots initiatives are eligible for grants up to USD 5,000. Larger projects are eligible for grants up to USD 25,000.

Grants will be awarded to projects that best meet the following criteria:

1. Innovation – Project uses a new method to address a local or global challenge;
2. Impact – Project has potential to produce significant or measurable impact on the issue it addresses;
3. Sustainability – Project has potential to produce on-going positive change. In other words, it's not a one time event; and
4. Youth-led and youth-driven – Leaders of the project should be between 15 and 32.
5. Urban youth organizations dedicated to solutions that sustain communities.

Partnerships with governmental organizations, private enterprises and UN institutions are encouraged.



UN-HABITAT'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT FUND

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

DEADLINE: June 1st, 2009

Is your organisation working on innovative and sustainable projects that will improve your community and the lives of those around you?

If YES, your organisation could be eligible to receive a grant!

- The purpose of UN-HABITAT's Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development is to provide resources to address adequate shelter and secure tenure, employment, environment and good governance for the urban poor
- Youth-led development projects are eligible for small grants up to USD 5,000 and large grants up to USD 25,000
- Applications from organisations partnering with government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organisations are encouraged
- Project promoting gender equality are particularly welcome

Applications for the Fund will be accepted until June 1st, 2009 at:

www.unhabitat.org/opfund

The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development is managed by UN-HABITAT.

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UN HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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