## UTC - Young City: Child- & Youth-Led Solutions to Urban Health Challenges

1. UTC Title: (*Title of your Urban Thinkers Campus)*

Young City: Child & Youth-Led Solutions to Urban Health Challenges

2. UTC Date(s): *(Beginning date of your Campus)*

October 25th, 2022

3. UTC Date(s): *(End date of your Campus)*

October 25th, 2022

4. Location of your UTC:

Online

5. Lead organizer: *(Please provide name of organization hosting the UTC)*

Plan International

6. Co-lead organizer: *(Please provide the Names and URL of partner organizations to be associated to the Campus)*

World Vision International

UNICEF

Slum Dwellers International

Dreamtown NGO

Global Alliance – Cities for Children

7. Other organizations that participated in the campus: *(Please provide the Names, URL of partner organizations, and contact email to be associated to the Campus)*

World Health Organization

UN-Habitat

8. Number of Participants:

45 participants (207 registrants)

9. UTC Action Day: *(Please describe the theme of your UTC Action Day and its impacts)*

The UTC was organized as a webinar bringing together participants from across the globe; mostly young people and staff of civil society organizations focused on children and youth’s urban health.

10. Background and Objectives of your Campus: *(Please explain the background and provide the list of objectives your campus aims to achieve)*

During the World Urban Forum 11 in Katowice, Poland, young people came together with civil society organizations to present and discuss the challenges they and other young people experience living in fragile cities worldwide. They talked about how to make their cities a better place for young people; and what they’re contributing to create resilient and inclusive cities. We have created a video that summarizes the WUF event and was used as promo material for this webinar.

Building on the June event in Poland, we organized this webinar to continue the conversation and direct the focus on specific challenges, opportunities, and solutions to securing and promoting urban health and well-being for children and young people in marginalized and poor urban areas. What are the social determinants of health from the perspective of children and young people? How do children and young people experience, negotiate, and connect with or resist their urban surroundings and how does this impact their health and wellbeing? What are some of the most successful examples of children and youth led solutions to those challenges? How should intergovernmental and civil society organizations respond to this?

High-density low-income neighborhoods, inadequate housing and infrastructure, limited access to basic services (weak primary health care system and outreach) and exposure to environmental hazards are major factors that contribute to a lack of health and wellbeing for children and young people in urban contexts. In fragile cities, the fear of violence and violence itself are a threat to the health and wellbeing of young people.

In cities, interconnected aspects of the physical and social environment affect children and young people’s health and wellbeing. Air pollution, malnutrition, and lack of safe public spaces and sanitation are all major global health and wellbeing challenges to which children and young people are particularly vulnerable.

In urban contexts, proximity to basic services does not always equal access. Disadvantaged children and young people continue to be excluded from basic health and social services due to various levels of institutional invisibility and social marginalization. Overall, causes of urban illness and death have shifted from infectious diseases to chronic diseases.

However, COVID-19 has compounded problems caused by existing structural inequalities of poverty, inadequate housing, and economic exclusion for those living in urban informal settlements and fragile/conflict affected urban areas in the global South – problems which have hit children and young people particularly hard.

With children and young people participating live (where possible, if not through recorded messages) this UTC will facilitate an exploration of the importance of partnership collaboration, local solutions, and youth movements/civic participation in relation to promoting health and wellbeing, with engagement from local mayors and policymakers to create an inter-generational and inter-organizational dialogue.

11. Relation of your Campus to the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: *(Please explain how the theme of your campus relates and contributes to the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs (maximum 200 words)*

Urban health is among the central tenets of the New Urban Agenda’s aspirations for sustainable urban development with specific commitments to:

“… Foster healthy societies by promoting access to adequate, inclusive, and quality public services, a clean environment taking into consideration air quality guidelines including those elaborated by the World Health Organization (WHO), social infrastructure and facilities, such as health-care services, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services to reduce new-born child and maternal mortality.”

“… Promote equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, including … safe drinking water and sanitation, safe, nutritious and adequate food, waste disposal, sustainable mobility, healthcare and family planning, education, culture, and information and communication technologies.”

“…Promote adequate investments in protective, accessible, and sustainable infrastructure and service provision systems for water, sanitation, and hygiene, sewage, solid waste management, urban drainage, reduction of air pollution, and storm water management, in order to improve safety against water-related disasters, health, and ensure universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; as well as access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all; and end open defecation, with special attention to the needs and safety of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.”

12. The City We Need Now - ACTION AREAS *(Please indicate which actions areas below that your UTC covers)*

1. **Health and Well-being**
2. **Peace and Safety**
3. **Climate Adaptation and Resilience**
4. **Inclusion and Gender Equality**
5. **Economic Opportunities for All**
6. **Culture and Identity**
7. **Local Governance**
8. **Urban Planning and Design**
9. **Housing, Services and Mobility**
10. **Learning and Innovation**

13. List of Speakers: *(Provide name, job title and organization for each speaker and the moderator)*

The webinar included 6 young speakers from 4 countries and 3 urban experts from international organizations:

Stanley Kelvin, young speaker, Kenya (SDI)

Esther Namiganda, young speaker, Uganda (SDI)

Parliament Mugume, young speaker, Uganda (SDI)

Tadziripa Madzima, young speaker, Zimbabwe (Dreamtown)

Casper Chigama, young speaker, Zimbabwe (Dreamtown)

Sharmin Sultana Borsha, young speaker, Bangladesh (World Vision)

Stephanie Burrows, technical officer, urban expert (WHO)

Pamela Carbajal, consultant, urban expert (UN-Habitat)

Thomas George, urban lead, urban expert (UNICEF)

Aline Rahbany, urban programming director, moderator (World Vision)

14. KEY RESULTS: *(Explain the results achieved during your campus, in particular how it will impact cities and communities and help implement the SDG and the New Urban Agenda)*

The UTC was successful in:

Engaging children and youth in dialogue with urban experts: it gave space to children and youth to participate in discussions and share their experiences and solutions. It also gave legitimacy to youth led organizations and local youth groups who are making progress in on the social determinants of urban health in their cities

Widening the reach of children and youth by launching an online survey asking children and youth about their most pressing urban health challenges and some of the most impactful child and youth led solutions they have witnessed or participated in. The survey reached 261 respondents from 38 cities in 16 countries (results below)

Bringing the issues of children and youth to the attention of experts in urban health from WHO, UN-Habitat and UNICEF who also highlighted their organizational approaches to addressing some of those challenges and shared some tools and resources that can further equip children and youth for their initiatives:

o Her city tool box - <https://hercity.unhabitat.org/>
o Helping Adolescents Thrive Toolkit: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240025554>
o <https://unhabitat.org/news/31-mar-2022/youth-partner-with-cities-to-achieve-the-sdgs-by-2030>
o <https://unhabitat.org/news/08-mar-2022/youth-at-nairobis-biggest-informal-settlement-engage-in-un-habitats-the-city-we>
o Special Initiative for Mental Health: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-special-initiative-for-mental-health>
o Friendship bench Zimbabwe: <https://www.friendshipbenchzimbabwe.org/>
o Block by block - <https://www.blockbyblock.org/>
o WHO's social determinants of health department: <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health>

15. SOLUTIONS: (*Describe at least 4 solutions presented in your campus that demonstrate how to accelerate the SDG implementation in cities and communities. Explain WHERE (country, city, area), WHAT (what purpose), HOW (how it is achieved), WHO (by whom and for which beneficiary) and IMPACTS.)*

Outside the results of the survey with children and youth that indicated a number of good practices which included awareness raising (17% of the responses), children and youth empowerment programs (13% of the responses), community cleaning campaigns (9%), re-greening initiatives (7%), waste management (7%), equitable health services (5%), the children and youth in dialogue with the urban experts discussed a number of solutions and good practices. The recording of the dialogue is available [here](https://worldvision.zoom.us/rec/share/Hq7XDSlDJcFDB2BRoxBRegfJpfrZ4R_AEUkArQdiFixC4yQ2dZurBx5hqREUIrDb.ZCOiYrMuCfrpc6jf) (passcode: j9&NYtf9). Some of the recommendations shared during the UTC can be summarized with the following:

More intentional efforts and strategies by governments (local and national) and organizations (national and international) to hear from urban children and youth, especially those living in informal settlements and slums, about their health issues and concerns and to facilitate their participation in developing solutions.

Investment in mental health of children and youth is crucial moving forward, especially because of the impact of COVID-19 and its containment measures on the health of youth people.

Investment in health facilities, in general, and services should be prioritized in the most marginalized neighborhoods of cities and urban spaces.

Urban experts in international organizations have some useful tools and resources that could be valuable to urban young people but most of the time they don’t know about them or how to access them. There should be an intentional outreach from those organizations to the youth who are impacted most by the urban health challenges, and especially those with agency to act on those issues and have developed effective local solutions.

19. COMMITMENTS: *List a set of clearly defined commitments by stakeholders involved in the proposed priority actions (individual and joined commitments).*

All partners engaged in this UTC, who are members of the Global Alliance [Cities4Children](https://cities4children.org/why-c4c/), are committed to continuing to create opportunities for children and youth participations in discussions that affect their lives as well as their participation in key opportunities to influence the urban discourse, including the World Urban Forum.

22. ROAD MAP FOR NEXT STEPS: *(Provide a roadmap showing the key milestones, quick wins and longer-term landmarks to reach achievable goals)*

This campus was organized as a follow up to an event organized by the same partner organizations for WUF11 in Poland, highlighting the engagement of children and youth from fragile cities in solutions that address their urban problems. This [video](https://vimeo.com/763179657) highlights some of the key points shared during the WUF event. This UTC zoomed in on a specific topic that came out of the WUF11 event, which is urban health, more specifically the social determinants of urban health.

At the WUF11, organizations who planned this UTC and others from the Global Alliance [Cities4Children](https://cities4children.org/why-c4c/) were disappointed with UN-Habitat’s exclusion of children and especially marginalized children and youth from their own Children and Youth Assembly and Roundtable. The organizations submitted a joint letter to UN-Habitat’s executive director (attached in email) urging the agency to collaborate for a more representative WUF12 for children. This UTC provides another example of how children and youth – especially from marginalized fragile cities – is possible. Feedback from the children and youth who engaged in the UTC was that more of those discussions need to happen and as organizations working for the wellbeing of urban children and youth, we are committed to continue to create those platforms for their engagement. We will work closely for this purpose in the lead up to WUF12.

More importantly, learning from this UTC’s discussions and feedback from children will feed into the Cities4Children’s advocacy task team and subsequent strategy to help define who do we want to reach, for what objectives, what else can we do, and how to ensure that children have more participation space.

23. MEDIAS: *(Provide links to articles or stories published in relation to this UTC)*

The results of the survey were included in this [press release](https://www.wvi.org/newsroom/climate-change/urban-youth-survey-reveals-air-pollution-biggest-concern) in the lead up to COP27.

This [video](https://vimeo.com/763179657) from WUF11 event was released as a teaser for the webinar and disseminated through social media channels and the webinar recording afterwards.