Introduction to the UN MGCY

Open Ended Consultation with Youth for HABITAT III

This manual intends to cover everything you need to know about conducting a youth consultation for the HABITAT III process. You don’t need to have any specific qualifications or prior experience to facilitate a consultation. Everyone is encouraged to host their own consultation, and your contribution is important and recognised!

A consultation is a facilitated discussion on priorities. These consultations aim to capture young people’s realities, experiences, stories and concerns related to human settlements and urbanisation. In addition, it seeks to identify the key areas they feel need to be addressed, along with their respective solutions aimed at building a sustainable urban agenda.

What is an HABITAT III Youth Consultation?

An opened ended consultations is a means to voice the priorities, concerns and ideas of stakeholders. The technique is used in a number of UN processes to ensure that stakeholder opinions feed in to the discussion and negotiations. For the UN MGCY, the open ended consultations provide a very important tool to ensure that our policies reflect as many youth as possible.

Why open ended consultations?

The facilitators will not provide the answer, as there is no right or wrong. Instead of yes or no questions, the open ended questions and exercises will be used in order to bring the discussion forward and ensure a meaningful outcome.

What is the role of the facilitator?

A consultation is a group activity and there is no way to foresee how the discussions in your groups may progress. It is therefore important to use this manual as a guide rather than a set of laws. If you need assistance or want to become further involved, email us at habitat@childrenyouth.org.

Thank you for being one of many young persons ensuring that youth priorities gets recognised within the HABITAT III process!
Background

Cities are facing unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges. There has been a phenomenal shift towards urbanisation, with 6 out of every 10 people in the world expected to reside in urban areas by 2030. Over 90 per cent of this growth will take place in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Cities are where majority of the world's populations already live and will continue to live. How we redesign our existing cities and build new ones will determine how successful we will be in combating climate change, promoting social inclusion, maximising human development, minimising ecological footprints, and stay within planetary boundaries. As global society declared in the 2012 Manifesto for Cities: “the battle for a more sustainable future will be won or lost in cities.”

The consequences of this rapid urbanisation without effective and appropriate urban planning will be dramatic. In many places around the world, the effects have already been felt: lack of proper housing and growth of slums, inadequate and out-dated infrastructure – roads, public transport, water, sanitation, or electricity – escalating poverty and unemployment, crime, pollution and health issues, as well as poorly managed and preventable natural and human-induced disasters and other catastrophes due to the effects of climate change.

Mindsets, policies, and approaches towards urbanisation need to change in order for the growth of cities and urban areas to be turned into opportunities that will leave no one behind. We need to create a new urban paradigm for the city we want. Member States and relevant stakeholders, including Major Groups, especially young people, are hence invited to the HABITAT III process with the objectives of securing renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assessing accomplishments to date, addressing poverty and identifying and addressing new and emerging challenges. Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, with the goal of developing the “New Urban Agenda”, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996.

Historically, youth have not been considered an important demographic to engage with. This can no longer be the case in the new urban agenda. 50% of the urban population consists of youth and this demographic will continue to grow. We are too many, too vulnerable, and too desirous of a good future. We are not just victims of ill-conceived policies, but part of the solution.

The Methodology

An open-ended consultation with in this consists of facilitating discussions with and between the participants addressing the following areas:

1. What is sustainable urban development in their conception
2. Challenges to their conception of sustainable urban development and housing;
3. Priorities of actions to be addressed by the outcome of the HABITAT III process;
4. Thoughts concerning how youth can take actions to contribute to sustainable urban development and housing.

All participants are encouraged to fill in the UN MGCY HABITAT III Youth survey after the open ended consultation, in order to provide their thoughts to a quantitative exercise.
Objectives

The consultations aims to provide a platform to assure meaningful participation of young people in the HABITAT III process and ensure that their voices are recognised, heard and reflected through concrete actions. In addition, the consultation has the following objectives:

1. Enhance young people’s knowledge on the challenges of sustainable urban development.
2. Introduce young people to the HABITAT III process and the agenda it addresses, including possibilities and importance of youth participation.
3. Facilitate consultation concerning young people’s priorities for the HABITAT III process, including discussions on innovative solutions to address the challenges of sustainable urban development.
4. Facilitate consultation on young people’s commitments to contribute by effective and innovative actions on building resilient and sustainable cities.
5. Provide young people opportunities to contribute to the global and regional voice of youth and children within the HABITAT III process, and invite them to further contribute to facilitate and communicate this voice.
6. Provide necessary tools for participants to further the priorities and commitments of youth concerning sustainable cities in the HABITAT III and then work to implement its outcomes.

Expected Outcome

The consultation aims to achieve the following outcomes:

(i) Young people with knowledge on current challenges to sustainable urban development and with strong capacity and motivation to take actions to address these.
(ii) Develop policy to be further communicated in the HABITAT III process.
What do you want to improve in your city?
Manual for Youth Consultation

The consultation itself needs to be adjusted depending on the time available and the consulted group. In all scenarios, the consultation will depend on a good preparation and the subsequent involvement of the participants.

In order to assure meaningful participation, the consultation consists of both capacity building and interactive discussions. The consultative part consists of open ended discussions facilitated by youth, followed by an individual survey that consists of questions addressing youth priorities for the HABITAT III process and their thoughts on challenges and solutions for sustainable urbanisation and housing. The individual survey and the leading questions are the same for each youth consultations for the HABITAT III process.

If the time is limited to an hour, it is advised to focus on part one and two. If you have more time, it would be beneficial to include the relevant aspects of part three.

Preparatory actions

- Select facilitators
- Recruit youth participants
- Select a suitable venue. When you arrive at the venue arrange the seating arrangement into a semi circle.
- Prepare presentations: Ideally you would approach speakers familiar with the Habitat themes. You could use the suggested slides to make your prepare your own presentation (If you require any assistance please contact the MGCY Sustainable Urban Development and Housing Working Group.)
- Select a suitable energiser for breaks and the introduction
- Prepare the consultation (See more information below.)
- Prepare your resources
- Think about follow up and feedback

Session outbreak

Introduction

The objective of the consultation is to assure that participant’s thoughts are reflected in the HABITAT III process.

The outcome will feed into policy positions on the UN MGCY. The participants and the facilitators have the option to be further involved in the process.

The consultation facilitators begin the session with providing the following information and action points:

- Welcome the participants;
- Present the agenda for the next coming hours;
- Describe and define the word consultation;
- Inform the participants that there is no right or wrong answers during the discussions, their thoughts are their own thought, and they are valuable;
- Briefly cover the objectives of the session;
• Inform the participants that the outcome will feed into policy positions, and that the participants are welcome to have a say during that phase.

Presentations
The presentations are either delivered by an external speaker, experts or by the facilitators.

Open Ended Consultation
The following section describes an open-ended consultation within the UN MGCY. The aim is once again to give an opportunity to create a space where youth can raise their priorities to be transformed into meaningful policy.

Part 1 - The line.
Part one aims to warm up the group and give you insight to group dynamics. The line is one of many value-based exercises. If you are familiar with another suitable interactive introduction exercise you may want to choose that one in stead.

Inform the participants to:

1. Take away their chairs and stand in two lines facing each others
2. You will say statements and their tasks is then to decide if they agree or not agree. If they agree they take one step forward, if they don’t agree they stand still.
3. After each statement they take one step back to original position in case they took a step forward.

Part 2 - Group discussion on priorities and way forward.
Divide the group into smaller groups of 3 - 5 people per group, ensure that each group has a facilitator, time keeper and a rapporteur. The rapporteur is the one reporting back after the discussion and is the one taking notes. The facilitator sets up the questions and makes sure that everyone in the group gets a chance to speak. It is also the facilitator’s task to ensure that the discussion stays on the topic, without steering the discussion. The time taker helps the facilitator to take the time for the group discussion, ensuring that each question is addressed.

Inform the participants that they have 30 minutes to discuss the following four questions.

1. Why are so many people in urban settings not living a fruitful life?
2. What needs to be done in order to enhance the quality of life in urban areas? (Prioritise the list you make up from largest priori to lowest priority.)
3. How can young people contribute to more sustainable cities and what support is needed to assure a meaningful contribution?

Part 3 - Technical Open Ended Consultation.
If you have additional time, or a specific group, you may want to facilitate a more technical consultation. You can either chose one of the HABITAT III thematic areas addressed below or cover them all. The number of areas you address depends on time available and background of the participants.

You address the HABITAT III thematic areas with the following leading questions of each theme:

• What are the current challenges to ensure that this is thematic areas are fully inclusive of all inhabitants in the city and have a sustainable approach?
• Discuss innovative sustainable solutions for urban social inclusion and economy etc.
• What can young people contribute with in order to provide sustainable solutions for each thematic area?

HABITAT III Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS</th>
<th>ISSUE PAPERS</th>
<th>POLICY UNITS</th>
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| 1. Social Cohesion and Equity – Livable Cities | 1. Inclusive cities (a.o. Pro-poor, Gender, Youth, Ageing)  
2. Migration and refugees in urban areas  
3. Safer Cities  
4. Urban Culture and Heritage | 1. Right to the City and Cities for All  
2. Socio-Cultural Urban Framework |
6. Urban Governance  
4. Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development  
5. Municipal Finance and Local Fiscal Systems |
| 3. Spatial Development         | 8. Urban and Spatial Planning and Design  
9. Urban Land  
10. Rural-urban Linkages | 6. Urban Spatial Strategies* |
| 4. Urban Economy               | 11. Local Economic Development  
12. Jobs and Livelihoods  
15. Urban Ecosystems and Resource Management  
| 6. Urban Housing and Basic Services | 17. Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services, including energy  
18. Transport and Mobility  
19. Housing and Slum Upgrading  
20. Smart Cities | 9. Urban Services and Technology  
10. Housing Policies |

Part 4 - Online Survey
The online survey is not only a complement to the offline consultations but a means to reach out to youth worldwide. By taking the time to ensure that your participants fill out the survey, you are ensuring that our policy more accurately reflects youth priorities and concerns.

Link to the online survey in [English](#).

Closing
The closing or wrap up is your chance to sum up all that has been discussed. This is also your last chance to get clarifications before you sit down and transform the results into meaningful policy positions. Don’t underestimate the importance of a good wrap up to ensure that the participants leave the consultations with a positive feeling about the HABITAT III process.
• Remind the participants of the objectives of the consultations and that the outcome will feed into the policy to be delivered in the HABITAT III process;
• Inform them that in case they want to follow the process of youth participation in HABITAT III they should sign up to the UN MGCY HABITAT III mailing list;
• Thank the participants and the facilitators for their contribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slot</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Title of session</th>
<th>Areas to be addressed</th>
<th>Format of session</th>
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| 1    | 10 min   | Opening and Introduction | • Welcome message  
    |          |                  | • Presentation of facilitators & speakers  
    |          |                  | • Presentation of program  
    |          |                  | (Needed logistical information) | Opening |
| 2    | 15 min   | Urbanisation in todays society & HABITAT III Process | • Theoretical introduction to Urbanisation  
    |          |                  | • Challenges for Sustainable Urban Development  
    |          |                  | • HABITAT III Process | Presentation |
| 3    | 10 min   | Youth involvement within UN processes, including HABITAT III | • Introduction to the UN MGCY  
    |          |                  | • Introduction to the UN MGCY Sustainable Urban Development and Housing Working Group  
    |          |                  | • Decision making in the UN & International Frameworks | Presentation |
| 4    | 40 min   | Consultation Open Ended Discussions   | • Challenges for sustainable urban development  
    |          |                  | • Innovative and effective solutions  
    |          |                  | • Youth Actions for resilient and sustainable cities | Workshop & Presentation from Workshops |
| 5    | 5 min    | Consultation Survey - Part 4 | • Surveys filled in by all the participants individually. | Individual Work |
| 6    | 5 min    | Closing and Evaluation | • Wrap Up  
    |          |                  | • Source for further information  
    |          |                  | • Contact details and information on how young people can be further involved in the HABITAT III process  
    |          |                  | • Summary of the consultation outcome and presentation on how it will be used  
    |          |                  | • Closing | Closing |

Table 1: Proposed agenda for the open ended consultation. In case you have more than 1 h and 30 minutes as the proposed time frame in the agenda you can enhance slot 4 to either include part 3 or to provide longer time frame for part 2.

Facilitating Tips

• Think about some of the barriers to gathering everyone’s voices (one person dominating the conversation, people too nervous to speak up, language barriers etc.), what can you put in place to ensure that everyone has the chance to offer an opinion?
• Think about how you will keep young people engaged when they are in the consultation such as different ways of moving around the space, ice breakers, warm-ups or energisers that can keep engagement levels high.
• Have you explained concepts using language that is easily understandable (avoiding jargon and acronyms for example)?
• A lot of decision making processes take a top down approach so it is important to think how this consultation can ensure that we do not lose stories and concerns from the grassroots level should inform a new development framework.
• Think about how your consultation will enable young people to actively participate. Different people learn and retain information in different ways - so how can you present information so that it is accessible to everyone?
• Think about how you will give the young people involved a chance to take the lead during the consultation - could they facilitate some of the group discussions or take the lead in running end of day evaluations and beginning of day recaps? Make sure that it is possible for everyone to participate, not just those with the loudest voices - think about ways in which you can check that everyone has understood the information (for example by asking participants to recap the main points at the end of each session) and ways in which you can ensure that everyone has a chance to speak (for example by making sure it is not always the same participants presenting and making sure that there is a gender balance from those who are speaking).

Follow up from the Consultation

The outcome of the open ended consultation need to be summarised into meaningful policy.

1. Report the outcome of the Consultation to the UN MGCY Sustainable Urban Development and Housing Task Force
2. If you wish you can summarise the outcome of the consultation into a position paper, to be submitted to the UN MGCY and the HABITAT III Secretariat, this would feed into the global UN MGCY policy position. For assistance in how you summarize your consultation into policy contact the UN MGCY Sustainable Urban Development and Housing Working Group at habitat@childrenyouth.org.

The outcome of the survey consultation need to be transformed into the online surveys, we are thereby encouraging to use the online version from the beginning in order to minimise extra workload for consultation facilitators.

If there is any of the participants or facilitators of the consultation who wish to in person communicate the outcome during the HABITAT III process they are welcome to further contribute. Agenda for the following meetings can be found in the HABITAT III process website.

Keep in touch with us

Haven’t had enough yet? There are more ways to engage in the UN MGCY working group on Sustainable Urban Development and Housing. Make sure to follow the email group to get the latest information. You can also reach us through habitat@childrenyouth.org.