



THE OPPORTUNITIES FUND

FOR URBAN YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME



UN-HABITAT



During the 21st session of the Governing Council that oversees the work programme and budget of UN-HABITAT, member countries in 2007 passed a resolution calling on the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT set up a special fund to help young people living in poverty. Championed by Norway, the new **Opportunities Fund for urban youth-led development** is designed to improve understanding, and lead to more effective ways of involving young people in sustainable urban development.



The Youth fund represents a milestone in the recognition at the highest levels of the need to practically support youth-led initiatives and lead the way for other organizations and governments to place youth at the centre of their development strategies.

In its regular meetings with young people from every corner of the world, UN-HABITAT knows only too well how much young people want and need a say in their own affairs and the decisions that affect them.



Young people are most vulnerable to social problems caused by unemployment and poverty. Girls and young women are most at risk. 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 invest more in youth.

Youth-led development is about young people making a living and future for themselves and their communities. It involves business and community improvement projects, devised and managed by young people, often working alongside adults with the know-how they can pass on.

The new fund is being set up to strengthen youth-led development that can improve understanding, and lead to more effective policies and strategies to strengthen the role of youth in sustainable urban development.



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THE INTENTION

The Opportunities Fund aims to facilitate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and their youth-related targets. It will help young people in the poorer neighbourhoods of cities in the developing world find new opportunities in life, especially when it comes to employment and entrepreneurship. It will also be used to strengthen youth-related policies, help governments, civil society organizations and the private sector address youth concerns, and support new information and learning channels for young people. It will help pilot innovative ideas on employment, governance, shelter and secure tenure; share best practices, and assist vocational training and credit mechanisms to promote entrepreneurship and employment for young people. It will also seek to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated into all policies.

Knowledge about youth-led initiatives around the world is very weak. One of the benefits of a mechanism for supporting local initiatives is that information on what is happening on the ground can be easily obtained. In this way the Fund will contribute to learning on the role of youth in development, providing input to strengthening international and national youth policies.

HOW IT WILL WORK

The Opportunities Fund will be managed by a committee of experts drawn from UN-HABITAT, donor governments and youth representatives.

For more information: Partners and Youth Section, Monitoring and Research Division (UN-HABITAT)
P.O. Box 30030, 00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya; Tel: +254 20 762 3710/4218; Fax: 254 20 762 4588, 3080;
Email: partners@unhabitat.org