



REPORT ON INCLUSIVE CITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN INFORMAL SECTOR





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Introduction

The role of young people in inclusive city development is often neglected. However, their active involvement is crucial for creating vibrant and sustainable urban environments. By including young people in decision-making processes and providing them with opportunities to contribute their ideas and perspectives, cities can harness their energy and creativity to address pressing issues such as social inequality, environmental sustainability, and community development.

Young people can come up with innovative ideas and solutions that could lead to city development. And they need proper mentorship and financial assistance from the government as well as private organizations to turn their ideas into reality. This support can help create a brighter future for both the youth and the city as a whole. For developing or LDC countries, young people are the key to driving economic growth and innovation. They possess the potential to transform the nation's economy and bring about significant advancements in various industries. They just need the right resources and opportunities to thrive.

At COP28, in a side event of Resilience Hub consisting three different organization organized a session on INCLUSIVE CITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN INFORMAL SECTOR. The speakers discussed their valuable insights on the topic and the session ended with a constructive interactive session.





About the event

ICCCAD has been an active participant in this conference annually since COP 26, where it hosts capacity-building side events and shares research findings and policy recommendations to combat the climate crisis. In addition, since COP 23, ICCCAD has been celebrating Capacity Building Day in an effort to unite disparate communities of development practitioners. Additionally, ICCCAD organised and facilitated several webinars concerning COP 26 and the future since 2020. This has contributed to increased stakeholder collaboration and awareness regarding the climate crisis.

Following the light of previous COP side events, A session was conducted by the Cities Alliance, YCC Global Alliance and ICCCAD. The session was themed on "INCLUSIVE CITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN INFORMAL SECTOR IN LEADING CHANGE" at the Resilience Hub of COP28. The session discussed strategies to empower young people in the informal sector to lead change in inclusive city development. The keynote speakers of the session were, Sarah Darcie, YCC Brazil, Arne Janssen, Environmental Lead of Cities Alliance and Sumaiya Binte Selim from ICCCAD. The session was moderated by Margaret Impariam from YCC Global Alliance. The session Started by a Presentation from Al Mamun Rakib, who is also a youth fellow of ICCCAD. After that the keynote speakers shared their insights and experiences on the topic of Inclusive city development and the youth roles for it. The session was engaging and informative. There was an Interactive session where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss ideas with the speakers. The participants actively participated and gained valuable knowledge from the session. And Finally the session ended with beautiful song performed by Joyee Chakma in her own indigenous language.





Story of Al Mamun Rakib

The session started with a brief presentation from Al Mamun Rakib, who is from the southern part of Bangladesh. He shared how he lost his home overnight to river erosion, leaving him and his family homeless and devastated. After he migrated to city, he found how climate change is affecting the lives of many people in his community. He became determined to raise awareness about the impact of climate change and advocate for solutions. When he was living in the city, he met some young people doing work for climate change, and then he decided to work for sustainability. They came up with an innovative solution to reduce plastic use in our daily lives. They made some sustainable plates from areca trees as a substitute for plastic plates. They believed that this small change could make a big difference in reducing plastic waste. But soon, they faced a huge challenge when it came to scaling up production and meeting the increasing demand. There were no organization or individuals to fund them for their social enterprise. They had to find alternative sources of funding to keep their social enterprise running. At the end of the presentation, Mamun raised a question to all the participants and speakers of the session How can we make an inclusive approach to ensure the participation of youth in city development. The question sparked a lively discussion among the attendees.

Inclusive ecosystem and engaging youths in city development by Sumaiya Binte Selim, ICCCAD

Sumaiya binte Selim is the coordinator of Gender and Climate change program at ICCCAD, and she is also supporting the youth loss and damage program. In response to Margarete Impraim's question, "How can we bring that inclusive ecosystem, including youths like Rakib, to also be part of city development that is inclusive for everyone, she said we represented LDCs, like BD, overpopulated, and major cities are victims of it; they are not in a sustainable position to work, so focus on secondary cities like Rakib's city. We are trying to approach the local government to include youth in the development of the city, so mentorship is needed for entrepreneurs like Rakib. She emphasised the importance of engaging with local governments to include youth in city development. Mentorship programmes for entrepreneurship can help empower youth like Rakib and ensure their inclusion in the development process.

She points out that although the Bangladesh government has a dedicated department for the development of youth, many NGO's and INGO's in Bangladesh are working to promote and educate the youth about entrepreneurship as a means of empowerment and inclusion. She added that ICCCAD is also trying to support youths' innovations and ideas through seed grants and strengthening their capacity. The goal is to enable young people to realise their potential and contribute to the development of the country.





Sumaiya raised three important points in her speech. Firstly, she said that almost 50 percent of the country's population is young. And we should use this manpower to foster the development of the country and create a brighter future for everyone. Secondly, she said how we can collaborate with the government in terms of promoting and engaging youth participation in development. She claims that youth participation is crucial for the progress and growth of our nation, and the participation of the youth was a big achievement for the year 2023. The youth's active involvement in decision-making processes and policy formation will undoubtedly shape a brighter future for all. And finally, she desired that if we could get more youth participation from the vulnerable communities, provoking recognition for them would be more effective in addressing social inequalities and promoting inclusive growth.

Climate policy Agenda at the city level by Sarah Darcie, YCC Brazil

Sarah discussed that YCC's main aim is to promote the meaningful and impactful participation of youth in the climate policy agenda. She points out how young people are the most affected group yet are not included in decision-making at the table. Sarah emphasised that the exclusion of young people from decision-making processes is a missed opportunity to harness their innovative ideas and perspectives. By actively involving youth in the climate policy agenda at the city level, YCC believes that more effective and inclusive solutions can be developed to address the pressing challenges of climate change.

She addresses how youth inclusion at the city level promotes engagement with policymakers to include youth, challenges a lack of city counsellors, and institutionalises youth participation. The idea is to have a council to advocate instrumental strategies for youth and institutionalise their participation. This will ensure that youth have a voice in decision-making processes and that their needs are prioritised.

She also suggests that there should be a space for youth participation at the city-to-national level. This would allow for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to tackling climate change, as youth perspectives and ideas can be integrated into national policies and strategies. By involving youth in decision-making processes at all levels, cities can harness their creativity, innovation, and passion to drive meaningful change towards a sustainable future. Additionally, this approach can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the youth, empowering them to become active agents of change in addressing climate challenges on a larger scale.

Then she shared the inspiring story of YCC in Brazil and how they developed a law proposal that could be adopted by the other cities in Brazil and demanded that policymakers institutionalise space for youths. It became a movement in different parts of Brazil.





Challenges faced by youth in advancing climate action in informal settlements by Arne Janssen from the Environmental Lead of Cities Alliance

In his speech, Arne Janssen mainly discussed two questions. What are the biggest challenges youths face in advancing climate action in informal settlements? What tools or mechanisms do you use and advise others to follow for inclusivity in climate initiatives in informal settlements? The biggest challenges youths face in advancing climate action in informal settlements are access to resources and funding, lack of representation and voice in decision-making processes, limited awareness and education on climate change, and inadequate infrastructure for implementing sustainable development. Young people are often seen as a distinct group, underestimating them and not capacitated and unskilled to participate effectively in addressing these challenges. However, they possess immense potential and should be empowered to contribute meaningfully towards overcoming these obstacles.

Arne Janssen, a renowned expert in the field, believes that with the right support and resources, they can become catalysts for positive change. From Cities Alliance, they are advocating and mentoring the youth with recent publications to connect what tools are successful and could be used in another part of the country.

Arne Janssen believes that when young people's motivation and participation are taken care of, mostly in climate-related projects, the implementation organization can effectively bridge the gap between different regions and replicate successful strategies. And education is the key to knowing how climate affects your daily life and being aware of climate change regardless of gender and age category. And to create a sustainable and resilient future for all.

Interactive Discussion Session and Question and Answer Session

Question and Answer Session

Question: You talked a little bit about institutionalizing space for youth participation; what does that look like, and what was the engagement like in your experience?

Answer: The idea of institutionalizing a council is crucial in the context of civil society and youth organizations in cities.





The council aims to bridge the gap between the Civil Society's activism and policy makers, ensuring that they have a lasting connection. In Brazil, many councils have been in operation for 30-40 years, providing valuable experience for future councils. The challenge in São Paulo is engaging different policy makers, as most chambers are not pro-climate. To address this, the council aims to be a multiple policy maker law proposal. This approach is not just about political parties or policy makers, but also about a democratic space. The main challenge is ensuring that the council has the necessary budget and policy makers to implement it. Currently, the council operates as a popular council, working with a network of organizations and gathering data from the youth on policy discussions.

However, the council needs to be institutionalized to ensure its success and relevance in the future.

Question: How does that look in the eyes of urban informal settlements? I come from Kber; it's an urban informal settlement. How does that look, and maybe if any of you are working in the inclusive city development space, how has it been for you working in the urban and for settlements given the challenge of space and climate change in that lens?

Answer: To answer the Question, Arne Janssen discusses the importance of education and capacity building for young people to influence local decision-makers and make a difference. He emphasize the need for a political environment that is open to these questions and not focusing on one charismatic leader or one politician. He suggest starting with basic planning, such as urban expansion planning, which focuses on conserving areas for development and preventing settlements. He also suggest including young people and neighbors in the planning process to make them the champions of their own planning.

Janssen then suggests starting with smaller planning sections in secondary cities, involving the neighborhood and focusing on making a difference. He emphasize the need for a diverse political environment and a focus on promoting inclusivity in cities. Arne also suggests that local governments should focus on planning and preserving essential ecosystems, while also involving young people and involving them in their own planning.

Interactive Discussion Session

At the end of the question answer session, Margaret Impraim invited if anyone would like to share their insight or experience.

Mary Molinda, a Zambian SDI Youth, grew up in George Compounds and works with slum dwellers International. They have been actively working on climate change issues, collecting data and stories from informal settlements. They have been able to come up with different solutions based on the challenges faced by the slums. They have also been amplifying the voices of the community through various activities, such as poetry, songs, and engaging local communities who can understand English.





One of the challenges faced by the SDI Youth is that people often don't engage them fully in climate change discussions. They have been involved in various projects but have not been fully engaged. However, they believe that it is not too late for young people to make a difference in their communities and adapt to climate change.

Exchange visits have been a key part of their efforts, as they have been able to share knowledge and challenges with local communities. They believe that it is not too late for young people to make a difference and adapt to climate change.

Another participant introduces a product called Loofah, which can be used everywhere and saves money by reducing plastic usage in kitchens and showers. It is also beneficial for skin health and is especially beneficial for ladies. The product is easy to use and doesn't require chemical growth. The speaker proposes adding Loofah to Al Mamun Rakib's enterprise and encourages others to do the same.

And Lastly, Rohim Malik, discusses her experience as a mayor in a big city in Gambia, focusing on inclusive city development and bringing the youth and informal sector on board. She believes that Africa will be a global village in the next 10-15 years, and that policymakers have a stake in changing the status quo for the youth. She argues that Africa is rich in human capital and resources, but the youth are still vulnerable and vulnerable.

She emphasizes the importance of addressing the issues of corruption and the vulnerability of women and youth in Africa. She believes that every politician should listen to the youth and that they are the only ones who can change Africa. She has a budget in her city that addresses youth issues, but as policy makers, they should encourage and push them to develop themselves.

She also emphasizes the importance of adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their budgets, which are more or less complementary to climate change. She believes that the youth of Africa are the ones who can change Africa and that they should focus on the empowerment of their youths.

Concluding Song by Joyee Chakma

At the end of the session, the moderator invites Joyee Chakma from ICCCAD to perform a song. The song was about a giving a farewell and Joyee sang the song and described the history behind it and how she and her brother came with the lyrics.

