



# THE OPPORTUNITIES FUND

FOR URBAN YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

The Opportunities Fund is now open for applications  
for more information, go to [www.unhabitat.org/opfund](http://www.unhabitat.org/opfund)

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## THE OPPORTUNITIES FUND FOR URBAN YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

UN-HABITAT's mandate is to transform cities into friendlier, healthier and more inclusive places with better opportunities so that all residents/people can live in dignity, including the urban poor. Part of UN-HABITAT's work has been to undertake pilot projects and research the activities of young people who have been acting as positive agents of change within their communities around the world. These young people have created change by undertaking thousands of local projects focused on environmental, economic and social issues. In its regular meetings with young people from every corner of the world, UN-HABITAT knows only too well how much young people want recognition and support for their work, and a say in their communities' affairs and the decisions that affect them.

In acknowledging the importance of young people, member countries passed a resolution during the 21st session of the Governing Council (which oversees the work programme and budget of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme), calling on the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT 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 (a 1 million USD annual fund) 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 Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.

### 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?

Young people (especially girls and young women) are most vulnerable to social problems caused by unemployment and poverty. 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 piloting innovative projects on employment, governance, shelter and secure tenure; sharing best practices, and assisting vocational training and credit mechanisms to promote entrepreneurship and employment for young people.

UN-HABITAT recognizes that research on youth-led development, especially in the developing world, is a new and expanding field. UN HABITAT wishes to 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 assist governments, civil society organizations and the private sector in addressing youth concerns, as well as support new information and learning channels for young people.

### HOW IT WILL 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 5,000 USD. Larger projects are eligible for grants of over 5,000 USD to 25,000 USD.

Applications for the Fund will be accepted until June 1st, 2009. For information on the Fund, please go to [www.unhabitat.org/opfund](http://www.unhabitat.org/opfund).