



UN-HABITAT



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains - Programa de las Naciones Unidas para los Asentamientos Humanos

Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development

Tell Us What U Think!

World Urban Youth Forum IV Questionnaire

Introduction

The next World Urban Forum (WUF) will take place in Nanning, China from November 3rd - 7th 2008. The World Urban Youth Forum (WUYF) will take place, before the WUF, from November 1st - November 2nd 2008.

The theme of both Forums is *Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development*. This Questionnaire elaborates some thinking behind the theme and the sub-themes of the WUF and asks questions to solicit the experiences, opinions, and suggestions of young women and men on this theme. Input to this Questionnaire and thus to both Forums from young people is not only critical but also essential. The Questionnaire is one opportunity for young women and men to articulate and give meaning to what they consider *harmonious* or *disharmonious* in their lives; and in their towns and cities. It is also an opportunity for you to suggest ways to increase harmony in your neighbourhoods and cities.

The Reach of the Questionnaire

The Questionnaire is being circulated to a random but we hope, 'representative sample' of young women and men between the ages of 15-30.

We are requesting that three young women and three young men from each organization fill in the questionnaire and send it to us by June 25th 2008. We hope that the youth that are selected from your region will reflect the diversity in your town or city in terms of age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, etc.

Our apologies that the questionnaire is only in English. In lieu of this, we hope that you can have a discussion with other youth or youth groups in your town or city who may not be English speakers and document their answers and send them to us in English

Additionally, you will notice that in this questionnaire we are looking for information that reflects the specific realities and experiences of both young women and young men, so please ensure that the respondents always identify their name, age, gender, email address, socio-economic status, ethnicity and race, keeping in mind that we would like to

represent the diversity of the experiences of young women and men in urban centres as well as credit the source of the information.

IMPORTANT: The Questionnaire and Confidentiality

Please be aware that when young women and men consent to respond to the Questionnaire they are giving their permission for the use of the information provided without any reservation, i.e. anything you say (write) could be used in the public domain and will be used by UN-HABITAT for public purposes. **Please ensure all respondents are informed about this.**

Should you wish to submit additional information such as case studies to illustrate a particular point, or an interview with a young person on the themes of the WYUF, or submit photos to express yourself, please do so! Just remember to send us the relevant captions, sources, authors, etc. so we can credit you.

We recognize that responding to this Questionnaire is a significant amount of work and investment of your time. Please accept our sincere appreciation for your insights and time in doing so and you will be duly acknowledged.

**Questionnaire for the Development of the Background Paper
for the World Urban Youth Forum (WUYF) and the World
Urban Forum (WUF) IV 2008.**

June 2008

**IMPORTANT: Please return the completed questionnaire to:
prabha@idirect.com and partners@unhabitat.org by June 25th 2008**

Name: _____
Organization: _____
City: _____
Age: _____
Gender: _____
Email address _____

Other things you want to identify about yourself: _____

**Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced
Territorial Development**

Cities are both order and chaos. Sometimes both of these can be attractive and positive attributes, and at other times not. Cities are our everyday environments. We live, study, work, love, play, fight, and grow old in cities. Cities provide environments that both nurture and alienate us. We experience history, politics, togetherness, pleasure and joy as well as war, hunger, inequity, alienation, fear and sorrow. We can and do make our cities harmonious or inharmonious.

The concept of harmony within the city context incorporates notions such as environmental sustainability, equity, gender parity, participatory governance, environmental stewardship, equitable economic development, and justice and human rights. Harmony here refers to balance in the physical form of urban centres as well as in the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural spheres of cities.

What is a harmonious city for you? How can urbanization be harmonious? Can you elaborate what is harmony and disharmony in your town or city? Can we expand the harmony quota and reduce the discord? Here is an opportunity for you to tell us and others of your experiences, perceptions and visions.

Themes of the World Urban Forum are listed below. Questions follow short descriptions of each of the themes.

1. Territorial Balance in Urban Development

The objective of this sub-theme is to explore the relationship of the physical and spatial form of urban centres and their hinterlands as well as the relationship of the physical or tangible form of cities to social, cultural, economic, environmental and political harmony or discord. Specifically, this theme explores how the development of the physical form and spatial growth of the city can enhance or impede equity and equality for its diverse residents and economies.

Questions

- a) As a young woman or a young man, what spaces/places of your city do you like and why? Please elaborate.

- b) What kinds of spaces/places do you dislike and why? Please elaborate.

- c) What three changes would you like to see your city's urban planning that would make your city more harmonious for yourself and others of your gender?

- d) What is the role of young women and men in making these changes?

2. Promoting Social Equity and Inclusiveness

In most cities, wealth and poverty exist side by side. Rich, neighbourhoods exist along side low-income and under-serviced slums and informal settlements. Around the world, close to one billion people live in slum conditions with inadequate shelter, water, sanitation, food, and health and education services, not to mention lack of employment opportunities. Young women in slums experience greater inequity due to poverty and because they are female. They are subject to indignity and sexual assault due to inadequate sanitation and have to drop out of school at an earlier age to assist with fetching water and family responsibilities.¹

A city cannot be harmonious if some groups concentrate resources and opportunities while others remain impoverished and deprived. Income inequalities within cities create social and political fractures that can develop into social unrest or full-blown conflicts.

Questions

- a) How do you as a young woman or a young man experience **social equity**? You can write about any aspect of **social equity** that you wish. Please elaborate and give examples.

¹ UN-HABITAT. (2006). State of the World's Cities 2006/7. p124-127.

b) How do you experience **inequity** and **exclusion**? You can write about any aspect of **social equity** that you wish. Please elaborate and give examples.

c) From your viewpoint as a young person, what are the three key issues that need to be tackled to increase **social equity** and **inclusiveness** in your town or city? Who should tackle these key issues? Please elaborate.

d) What is the role of young women and men in increasing **social equity**? Please elaborate.

3. Making Cities Economically Productive and Equitable

Cities are major economic drivers. They provide opportunities to realise dreams as much as they destroy dreams. Increasingly, cities are not fulfilling dreams for many poor and young women and men living in them. Educational and employment opportunities, in both the formal and informal sectors, are few compared to the numbers of poor and young residents in need of these opportunities. Due to poverty, increasing numbers of young women and men have to forego school to work in the urban informal economy.

Harmonious urbanization can only be achieved when there is equity in economic opportunities and equitable distribution of resources, assets, and decision making power. This is especially significant for young women and men as they are a majority of the populations in most of towns and cities of the developing world.

Questions

a) In your town or city, what sectors of the economy (both formal and informal) are young women and men engaged in? What kinds of work are they doing?

b) What do you see as the consequences of urban economic inequality for youth? Are the consequences different for young women compared to young men?

c) What three strategies or initiatives would you recommend to your municipal government to increase the economic options for young women and men in your town or city?

d) What should be the role of young women and men in the abovementioned strategies or initiatives?

4. Harmonizing the Built and Natural Environments

Like any other organic system, cities consume, metabolize and transform energy, water and materials into goods and waste. As cities consume a significant share of the world's energy they are also responsible for a considerable share of the greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions. However, cities are not equal and there is not a direct correlation of population densities to the production of GHGs. Often the metropolises of the South produce less GHG emissions than smaller urban centres of the North. Consumption and lifestyles, types of transportation systems and infrastructure, city form, types of energy sources and consumption from households to industry and commerce, airport volume, etc. all have impacts on GHG emissions.

Other long standing urban environmental issues continue to challenge cities. These include: air pollution, discharge of sewerage and industrial effluent into water bodies, solid and liquid waste management, the growth of urban centers and thus human settlements into wetlands, mangroves, woodlots, forests, mountain and hill slopes and river channels and the accompanying loss of habitats and biodiversity. Parallel with this is the inequitable distribution of wealth and the poor quality of the living and working environments of poor women and men, young and old.

Questions

a) What are the major urban environmental issues in your town or city? Do you see a differential impact of these issues on women and men?

b) Are young women and men in your town or city engaged in urban environmental issues? Please elaborate how. If not, why do you think they are not engaged?

c) As a young woman or young man, what do you think are the three major urban environmental issues that could enable harmonious urbanization?

d) What do you see as the role of young women and men in bringing this about environmental change?

5. Preserving the Historical Roots and Soul of the City

Cities are not just brick and mortar; they represent the dreams, aspirations and hopes of societies. In a way, each city has its own 'personality', with its strengths and weaknesses, failures and successes. A city's 'soul' is exhibited through its cultural heritage (e.g. historical features, crafts and special agricultural or industrial products, musical traditions, natural features, etc) its traditions and its social fabric (e.g. language, culture, traditions, family and social struggles) – in other words, its 'intangible assets'. A city may have excellent facilities and infrastructure, but it may lack social cohesiveness, while another city may have high poverty levels but an extremely high sense of its own history and culture.

Well being is not only based on the material standard of living but also on the quality of our social engagements, our spiritual expression, our ability to take part in decisions that affect our lives and to engage intellectually and creatively. How does the 'soul' of the city influence your growing-up?

Questions

- a) As a young woman or man, what are the 'intangibles' that your city offers you?
- b) What expressions of this 'intangibility' give you the most meaning and why?
- c) What are the 'intangibles' that you do not like?
- d) What is or can be the role of young women and men in the abovementioned 'tangibles' and 'intangibles' for harmonious urbanization for your city?

6. A City for All Generations

Cities are about the people who live and work in them. Cities are socially, politically and economically vibrant and dynamic due to the creativity, engagement and investments of the diversity of their residents - young and old, men and women, rich and poor. Cities also reflect their age through history, as in the heritage of their physical form and cultural wealth. Cities reflect their age through the ages and lives of its current generations. For much of the developing world, children and young people are the majority population. In sharp contrast, the industrialised world is experiencing a significant increase in the population of elders. Demographics are key in city making. How cities involve and respond to the well being of their different generations is also a factor in harmonious urbanization. For towns and cities of the developing world, the younger generations are key constituents and actors.

Questions

- a) How does your city engage young women and men?

b) How are the priorities of young women and men addressed by your city?

c) What are three key issues that are important to young women and men of your generation and are not being addressed by your municipal government?

d) What is (or can be) the role of young women and men in realizing the abovementioned issues?

e) Does Internet Communications Technology (ICT) have a role to play in facilitating harmony or dis-harmony? Please elaborate.

Any other comments you would like to make?