

Youth-led urban futures: co-creating change across generations

A joint SDG Pavilion Side Event of UNU-EHS, UNU-IAS and Yuva India

Description of the event

Our cities and communities can be safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11), but only if people are at the center of change, especially young people whose futures are directly shaped by the decisions made today. Yet youth continue to face financial, institutional and capacity challenges that limit their ability to make transformative change. This interactive workshop explores how **youth initiatives** can drive real transformation and how they can be supported with practical tools. It addresses the obstacles that hinder meaningful youth engagement across different scales: from local community projects to international negotiations. It also encourages to work together on tools to make better futures tangible.

The session will start by presenting practical experiences: a Community Climate Action Planning Toolkit developed in partnership with Indian youth and grassroots communities; a youth-led empowerment programme to address urban flooding in Southeast Asia, and community action towards ethical consumption and education. After these short presentations, participants will take part in a **time-travel visioning exercise**, imagining a desirable urban future in vivid detail. This immersion invites participants to experience what climate-resilient and inclusive cities could feel like.

Next, in a **tool prototyping lab**, participants will return to the present to identify the tools needed to make that imagined future possible. Guided by youth facilitators, an intergenerational dialogue will then focus on the policies, resource flows, partnerships and mental models required to sustain meaningful youth engagement. Together, we will explore youth-led threads to weave our sustainable futures.

Interactive workshop

- **Welcome**
- **Preparing to depart: Presentation of 3 practical experiences**
 - **Community Climate Action Planning Toolkit (YUVA India, Ms. Dulari Parmar):** need for context-specific approaches leaving no one behind.
 - **Youth-led Empowerment Programme to address urban flooding in Southeast Asia** (Ms. Vennessa Kuek, a student from the University of Malaya, Malaysia)
 - **Community Action towards Ethical Consumption and Education** (Ms. Haruna Sakai, a student from the University of Osaka, Japan)

- **Time-Travel: Immersing participants in a positive urban future**
 - Imaginary “travel” 25 years into the future - imagine a city that is safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable – collect vivid images of desirable community-led futures.
- **Tool Prototyping Lab**
 - Identify means needed to achieve the envisioned future: tools, strategies and actions needed, based on materials and tools developed by session leads
- **Closing and Next Steps**
 - Summarize key takeaways
 - Reflect on how they can apply these insights in their own cities or projects.