

# 5 years of LPF

Review Report 2018-2022



# Local Pathways Fellowship

Operating under the umbrella of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Local Pathways Fellowship supports architects, engineers, urban planners and social studies practitioners under 30 to develop projects within their home cities that deliver SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

"We ask them to choose like what topic they're going to be focusing on based on their expertise," explains Ynestrillas. "Throughout the 10 months of the fellowship, they work on research, connecting with stakeholders, developing the idea and prototyping it. Ideally, they implement at least a pilot."



5

cohorts



550+

fellows



225+

cities involved across 85 countries

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report do not reflect the position of any organization, agency or program of the United Nations.

## Acknowledgements

The report has been prepared by the current Local Pathways Fellowship team of SDSN Youth. The writing team consists of Bessy Thurania, Nnaemeka Phil Eke-okocha, Ana Cristina García, Zakaria A. and Amer Qawasmi.

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## List of Acronyms

**ICSD** - International Conference on Sustainable Development

**LPF** - Local Pathways Fellowship

**SDGs**- Sustainable Development Goals

**SDSN**- Sustainable Development Solutions Network

**SDSN-Y** - Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth

**UN**- United Nations

**WUF** -World Urban Forum

## Foreword

**Cities** are home to more than 50 percent of humankind, by 2050 this number will increase to 70%, leaving no doubt that our ability to transform the cities we live in plays a crucial role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We must acknowledge the need to cut down on our current production and consumption levels to ensure the sustainability of our planet. It's crucial to recognize that we have only one planet, and we need to consume less to live within its boundaries. The city is the center of our future way of life, we need cities where people live in close proximity to each other so that they can share as many resources as possible. Therefore we need to build inclusive, safe, affordable and resilient cities with inspiring living conditions in order to address the needs of our urban dwellers as urban migration will be integral to the delivery of the SDGs.

Half of the world's population today is under the age of 30 – the vast majority of them already living, or aspiring to live, in urban areas. Today's youth are acutely aware of climate change as they directly experience its consequences. This first hand exposure reinforces their understanding that climate change is not an isolated, geographically limited issue. Thus, they are ready to contribute their energy, creativity, ambition, and ability to conceive of a better world.

City planning decisions are predominantly made by people over 30, often without seeking feedback and input from the younger generations who are the primary users of these future cities. Nearly 50 percent of the world's population is under the age of 30 and their voices are rarely brought into the conversation, this is talent that shouldn't be wasted.

There are thousands of young people around the world with the skills to contribute to development that is sustainable and, more importantly, a vested interest in doing so. After all, youth will bear longest-lasting impacts of decisions made today. This is why we at the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF), work to enable the youth to be part of the global

need to advance problem-solving for sustainable development at the local level. The programme also includes visibility opportunities such as participation at global events.

One significant strength of these young planners is their ability to adopt a holistic view, enabling them to bring together various components of a “multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach” within a coherent vision for change, in alignment with the aims of the SDGs. Their inclusive and integrated approach sets the stage for comprehensive and sustainable solutions.



conversation that will ultimately shape the world they will inherit. Cities hold an enormous concentration of the world's best knowledge and innovation resources. At LPF, a UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network program that I lead, we support growing knowledge capacity in cities around the world by training young urban sustainability leaders. We provide them with the resources they

By supporting the growth of knowledge capacity in cities and nurturing young leaders, we are fostering a generation of change-makers who have the vision and determination to build a more sustainable future. Together, their actions, projects, and endeavors represent a powerful force in addressing global challenges and advancing the cause of sustainable development.

## Where we are

**I**ntended to build on the momentum around the adoption of the New Urban Agenda at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2017 in Quito, the Local Pathways Fellowship was launched as the first global training program aimed at empowering youth to advance progress on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within cities and human settlements.

Today with 5 cohorts under its belt, LPF has successfully grown into a network of 450 fellows from 225 different cities across 85 countries, leading change on the ground and improving the quality of life in the cities they represent.

Throughout the years the program has received nearly 3000 applications

LPF participated in a number of global events including Innovate4Cities, Malaysia Urban Forum, International Conference for Sustainable Development, Vatican Youth Symposium, and the Zero Emissions Solutions Conference, The Ninth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9), the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), UN High Level Political Forum in Seville, Spain 2019.

Fellows connected through the LPF webinar series with representatives from City Councils, C40, Hack for Earth Foundation, World Bank, UN Environment Programme, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance, MOVE, and CityAdapt.

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***Our newly launched  
mentorship program  
which bridges current and  
graduated fellows proved to  
be a resounding success.***

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Phil Nnaemeka Eke-Okocha,  
Project Lead







# Introduction

For the first time in our history, over half of humankind lives in urban areas.

## *By 2050,*

cities will be home to 70% of the projected 9 billion people, making it evident that the success or failure of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be determined in cities.

In this rapidly urbanizing world, cities are forced to ask tough questions about how they can solve the unprecedented challenges ahead of them, ranging from housing shortages, to providing access to decent public transportation and ensuring supply of safe drinking water, to building resilience to climate change and providing walkable streets and green public spaces where all can live healthy and productive lives.

Within these challenges, however, lies the immense power of cities to shape the world we live in. Occupying only 3% of the planet's surface, cities concentrate vast knowledge, resources, and innovation capacities. Moreover, they house millions of young people who possess the key to unlocking transformative change.

*“The Sustainable Development Goals are a young and urban affair”*

Half of the world's population today is under the age of 30, with a large majority of them already living or aspiring to live in urban areas. Young people are 40% more likely to move to cities, and they bring with them an unwavering belief in a great future and readiness to contribute their energy, creativity, ambition, capacity for activism, boundless imagination and ability to conceive of a better world. Yet, this potential to affect positive change remains largely untapped. Young people are often viewed as passive recipients rather than active enablers of change, or as a problem rather than a solution. Young people are rarely invited to the decision-making table and too often, they have limited means to participate in public life. This is the critical gap that the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) aims to fill.

Widely referred to as ‘the future’, young people have the potential to play a vital role in achieving the SDGs by transforming the cities they call ‘home’ into sustainable communities. Recognizing young people as the custodians of our collective future, LPF embarks on a mission to empower them as drivers of sustainable urban transformation. From Tokyo to Sao Paulo and beyond, the Local Pathways Fellowship aims to equip young people across the world with the essential tools and resources to promote local ownership of the SDGs and to create more prosperous and livable cities and vibrant

neighborhoods. By emphasizing urbanization and SDG 11, the Local Pathways Fellowship recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities presented by rapid urbanization and the critical role that young people can play in harnessing these opportunities and working towards creating better communities. Through the Local Pathways Fellowship, we embark on a transformative journey, embracing the notion that young people are not merely the future but an integral part of the present. Together, we can unlock their power, harness their innovative spirit, and pave the way towards a more sustainable and inclusive urban future.







# About the Program

**T**he Local Pathways Fellowship program is one of the initiatives under the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (SDSN-Youth) network, which specifically focuses on engaging young people in the implementation of the SDGs. The Local Pathways Fellowship aligns with the SDSN Youth’s mission of mobilizing youth to contribute to sustainable development efforts but has a specific focus on urbanization and SDG 11.

The Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) was launched in 2016 in Quito at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) intended to build on the momentum around the adoption of the New Urban Agenda.

Each year, LPF brings together a cohort of young thought leaders, urban planners, sustainability practitioners, researchers, and innovators from more than a hundred cities across the world to advance local dialogue, collaboration, and problem-solving around Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) to make cities and urban settlements “smart, fair and sustainable”.

The Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) is a transformative program designed to empower young leaders who are

passionate about driving sustainable development at the local level. The Local Pathways Fellowship seeks to provide young leaders with essential tools, a platform and a guiding framework for action, and connect them with leading experts and practitioners in the field of urban development, facilitating invaluable knowledge exchange and networking opportunities. Throughout the fellowship period, fellows embark on a transformative journey through which they explore pathways for “localizing” the globally adopted goals and targets, exchange knowledge and ideas, and work to engage local stakeholders in a dialogue around strategies and plans each of their cities need to build a better future for its citizens. The program is now in its sixth cohort with the latest 2023 cohort consisting of 100 young urban innovators from 80+ different cities and 48 countries around the globe.



*The fellowship experience goes beyond theoretical learning*

## Mission

Empowering Young People to Champion and Create Local Pathways for Sustainable Development.

Our mission is clear: we aim to empower young people to be catalysts for change, enabling them to champion and create local pathways that lead to sustainable development. We believe that by equipping young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need, we can ignite a transformative movement that shapes the future of our cities and communities.

## Objectives

The Local Pathways Fellowship has set forth clear objectives to empower young people as agents of change, enabling them to drive sustainable development at the local level. Our key objectives include:

- 1 Empower young people to mobilize citizens' support for the 2030 Agenda and secure local commitment to prioritize implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 2 Provide young people with the means to engage local stakeholders in dialogue and collaboration for sustainable development
- 3 Equip young people with the tools and resources to advance problem-solving for sustainable development at the local level
- 4 Train a young generation of urban sustainability leaders and SDG advocates by educating them about the process of "localizing" the SDGs



## Program Method

Each year, the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) carefully selects a cohort of talented and passionate early-career professionals and students, aged between 18 and 30 years old, to participate in its transformative 10-month program. This fellowship presents a remarkable opportunity for individuals who are eager to deepen their knowledge and expand their horizons in the realm of sustainable urban development. To be considered, applicants should possess at least one year of professional or academic experience in areas such as development practice, urban planning, community engagement, advocacy, architecture, or related disciplines. Selected fellows are expected to dedicate 4-6 hours per week to the program, allowing for extensive learning and collaboration, from March to December.

The program has demonstrated its impact and popularity by starting with a cohort of 50 fellows in 2018 and subsequently growing to accommodate cohorts of 100 fellows in each of the following six years (2018-2022).

The Local Pathways Fellowship employs a comprehensive and engaging program method to empower young fellows and guide them through the process of “localizing” SDG 11 in their respective cities. The program consists of the following key components:

**1. The Sustainable Cities Online Course:** Led by Aromar Revi, Director of the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS),

and with participation from other thought leaders from the sector including Jeffrey D. Sachs Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Sheela Patel, Founder Director of the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres; Edgar Pieterse, South African Research Chair in Urban Policy at the University of Cape Town; Raf Tuts, Director of the Programme Division at United Nations Human Settlements Programme; and more. The Sustainable Cities online course forms the foundation of the training, where fellows gain insights into urban development challenges, best practices, and innovative solutions, providing them with a solid understanding of sustainable urban development principles.

**2. Monthly webinars with sector experts:** Featuring carefully selected sector experts and practitioners, the monthly webinars provide fellows with insights into emerging trends and practical knowledge on diverse topics related to sustainable urban development. Experts share their experiences, success stories, and challenges, empowering fellows with a deeper understanding of the field.

**3. Project development and assignments:** Through a series of monthly assignments, fellows are guided through the development of a project proposal for a solution to the challenges in their cities. The first half of the fellowship is focused on localized research and the second half is on idea generation and the design process of solutions.

**4. Peer-to-peer network:** Fellows become part of a vibrant peer-to-peer network comprising young urban leaders and innovators from cities worldwide. This network

fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and peer support, creating a platform for ongoing learning and inspiration. Fellows have the opportunity to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas with like-minded individuals who are equally passionate about sustainable urban development.

**5. Mentorship program:** Fellows are also paired with mentors carefully selected from alumni of the program or other experienced industry volunteers. These mentors play a vital role in guiding and supporting fellows throughout the development of their projects, providing valuable industry insights and sharing their own experiences. Mentors serve as a source of inspiration, sharing practical knowledge and lessons learned from their own journeys in the field of sustainable urban development.

**6. Visibility:** Exceptional fellows can be selected to participate in international conferences and events such as the International Conference on Sustainable Development, Vatican Youth Symposium, or the World Urban Forum etc. or recommended for awards such as the Local Project Challenge by the Center for Sustainable Urban Development at Columbia University to or Habitat’s Youth Advisory Body. Fellows also have an opportunity to showcase their work and achievements as well as write blogs to be featured on the Local Pathways website and amplified across our social media channels, enhancing the visibility of their contributions.



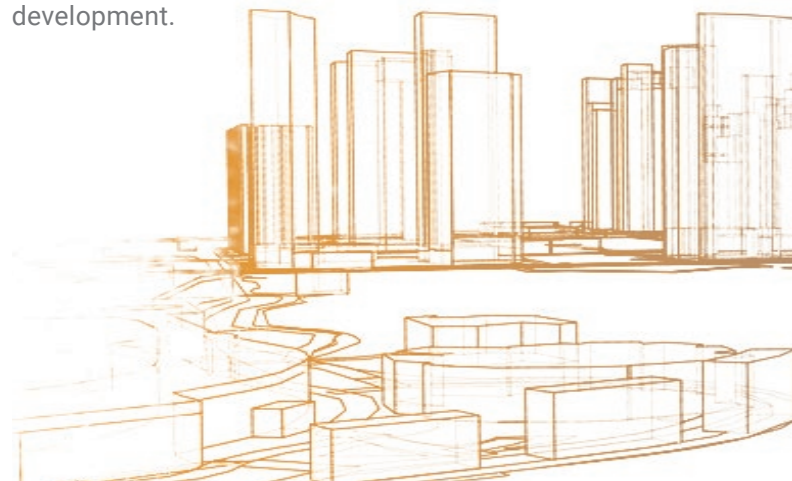
## *Assessing progress (2018-2022)*

**I**ntended to build on the momentum around the adoption of the [New Urban Agenda](#) at the [UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development \(Habitat III\)](#) in 2016 in Quito, the [Local Pathways Fellowship](#) was launched as the first global training program aimed at empowering youth to advance progress.

The Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) annually announces a call for applications for a period of six weeks, inviting passionate individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who are interested in SDG 11 to become part of this transformative program. The call for applications is effectively promoted through various channels, including the LPF's official website, as well as the websites, social media platforms, and newsletters of SDSN Youth and SDSN. Additionally, the program's partners and former fellows contribute to spreading the word and generating awareness about the opportunity.

The Local Pathways Fellowship launched its inaugural cohort in 2018, attracting significant interest from cities worldwide and receiving a total of 300 applications. The momentum continued to build, reaching its peak in 2020, just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic with

an impressive total of 1191 submissions (following the December 2019 call). While the pandemic temporarily impacted application numbers, there has been a resurgence of interest, as evidenced by the 2023 call receiving over 1250 applications. It is worth noting that a significant majority of the applicants hail from the global south reflecting the disparity in access to knowledge and content related to SDG 11 between youth in the global north and south. Despite these disparities, the Local Pathways Fellowship remains committed to inclusivity and strives to bridge the knowledge gap by empowering young individuals from diverse backgrounds to actively contribute to sustainable urban development.



## *Growth & Geographical Distribution of Applications*

### *2018-2022*

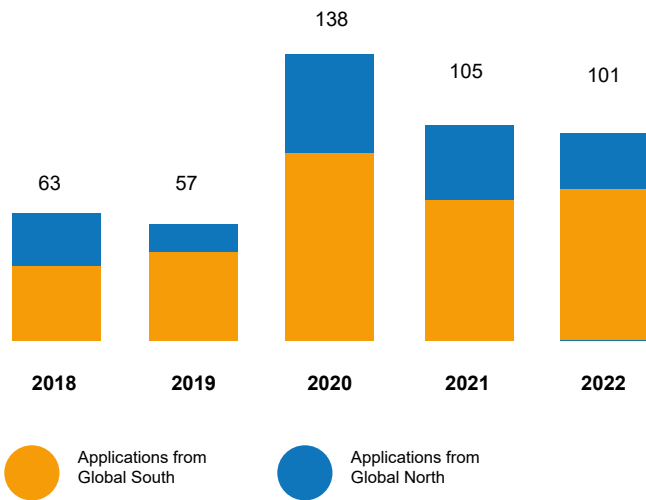
The selection process for the Local Pathways Fellowship utilizes a point-based system that assesses fellows based on their qualifications, experience, and proactivity. Additional scoring criteria include geographical representation, volunteering experience, awareness of SDSN Youth’s mission, and knowledge of SDG11, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of applicants.

Over the first five cohorts (2018-2022), the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) has garnered over 3400 applications from individuals across the globe, showcasing the program’s growing popularity and

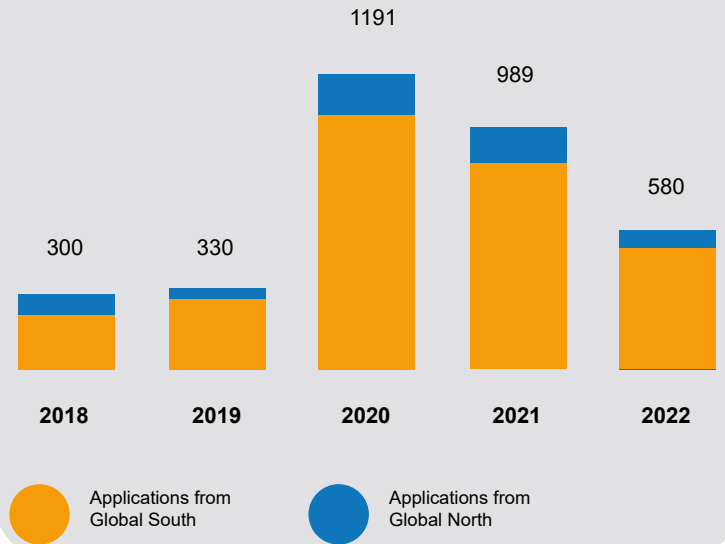
global reach. Initially, LPF aimed to select a minimum of 50 fellows per cohort, resulting in cohorts of 63 and 57 fellows for the 2018 and 2019 cohorts, respectively. However, in response to the increased influx of applications, LPF adjusted its desired number of fellows to 100 per cohort, allowing for a broader reach to talented individuals passionate about sustainable urban development.

The numbers of fellows across the five years are as shown below:


**Fellows Selected, 2018-2022**



**Applications Received, 2018-2022**







*Our performance was significantly impactful in most categories*



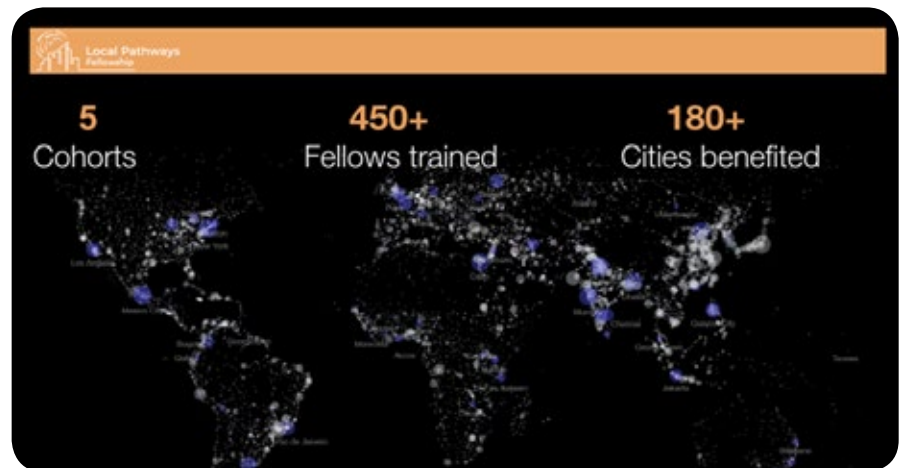
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## *Accomplishments and Milestones (2018-2022)*

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### *a) Global Outreach (5 cohorts, 450+ fellows)*

Today with 5 cohorts under its belt, LPF has successfully grown into a network of over 450 fellows from 225 different cities across 85 countries who are leading change on the ground and improving the quality of life in the cities they represent. Through their collective efforts, they embody the spirit of leadership and innovation, making a tangible impact on sustainable urban development globally.



### *b) Skills Development*

The fellowship continuously provides opportunities for skills enhancement, professional development, and learning. LPF has led its Fellows to acquire new skills, expand their knowledge base, and develop leadership qualities through training, workshops, and mentorship.

### ***c) Impactful Projects***

Fellows undertake projects that address critical challenges and make a positive impact in their respective fields or communities. These projects contribute to sustainable development, social change, or innovation in their respective domains. Projects initiated by fellows within the LPF have made a tangible impact at the local level, benefiting communities in various ways. Several of these projects have garnered recognition and accolades, receiving awards and securing crucial implementation funding from esteemed organizations.

### ***d) Participation in Global Events***

LPF has actively participated in numerous global events, establishing its presence as a key player in the field of sustainable urban development. These events include Innovate4Cities, Malaysia Urban Forum, International Conference for Sustainable Development, Vatican Youth Symposium, Zero Emissions Solutions Conference, and World Urban Forum (WUF9 & WUF10). Through its engagement in these platforms, LPF has showcased innovative ideas and solutions developed by its fellows, while also gaining recognition and contributing to the global discourse on urban sustainability.

### ***e) Diversity and Inclusion***

To achieve diversity and inclusion the LPF has actively sought candidates from diverse backgrounds and regions through inclusive and targeted recruitment practices. Inclusive language and case studies have been used in the learning materials, and we continue to execute our work according to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Additionally, the establishment of mentorship programs and networking opportunities that celebrate diversity creates a sense of belonging and community within the fellowship, encouraging meaningful interactions and support among fellows.

### ***h) Knowledge Generation and Continuous Learning***

The Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) has been at the forefront of knowledge generation and continuous learning, specifically focusing on the valuable role of youth in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through its participation in the International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD), LPF has actively contributed to the scholarly discourse by publishing insightful papers, including "A Comparative Analysis of the Role of the Youth in Localizing SDG 11 at the Local Level in the Global North and Global South - ICSD 2021" and "The Role of the Youth in Achieving SDG 11: Pathways to Build Sustainable and Resilient Cities".

These publications showcase LPF's commitment to research, knowledge sharing, and providing practical solutions that contribute to building sustainable and resilient cities.

## *g) Launch of a Mentorship Program*

The launch of a mentorship program in 2021 provides fellows with invaluable guidance, support, and expertise from experienced professionals in their respective fields. This mentorship opportunity enhances the fellows’ personal and professional growth, offering them a platform to gain insights, learn from the mentor’s experiences, and receive tailored advice to navigate challenges and maximize their impact.

## *i) COVID-19 Solutions for Cities*

In a proactive response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) demonstrated its commitment to addressing urgent challenges by publishing a remarkable report titled “COVID-19 Rapid Response Solutions for Cities by the 2020 Local Pathways Fellows” in 2020. This report showcased the innovative and impactful solutions proposed by the fellows to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on urban communities. By highlighting the expertise and creativity of the fellows, LPF contributed valuable insights and practical recommendations to help cities navigate the crisis and build resilient responses. The report serves as a testament to LPF’s ability to mobilize youth talent and knowledge to tackle pressing global issues and provide actionable solutions that benefit cities and their residents.



## Challenges Faced by the Local Pathways Fellowship (LPF) Program during the 5-Year Period (2018-2022)

While LPF has achieved numerous accomplishments and milestones in empowering youth to advance progress on SDG 11 during the period under review (2018-2022), it is important to acknowledge that the program has faced significant obstacles in delivering its mandate.

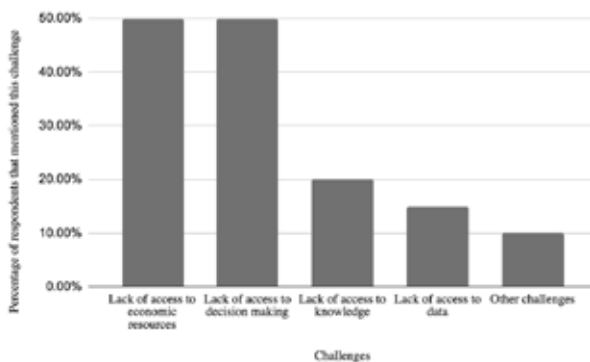
Such challenges include:

### a) External Partnerships and Collaboration:

The Local Pathways Fellowship program strives to provide its fellows with valuable exposure to thought leaders and experts in the sustainability sector. While strides have been made in this regard, the program continues to face challenges in establishing strong and sustainable partnerships. The LPF recognizes the importance of cultivating these partnerships to provide fellows with enhanced access to networks, funding opportunities, tools and other critical resources necessary for the success of their projects.

### b) Limited Financial Resources:

LPF aspires to provide fellows with opportunities to attend events, publish their work, and provide resources to support fellows in their sustainability endeavors



Graph 1: Percentage of respondents that mentioned each one of the challenges identified.

fully. However, the program has encountered difficulties in fulfilling these commitments due to limited resources. There is a need for innovative solutions to overcome these resource limitations, through actively exploring avenues for partnership development, and seeking collaborations with organizations and sponsors aligned with LPF's mission.

### c) Sustainability of Fellows' Initiatives:

Despite its valuable support in various aspects, the

Local Pathways Fellowship program currently does not provide direct funding for implementing fellows' projects. Consequently, many fellows encounter difficulties in sustaining and progressing their initiatives.

*Based on a survey conducted among fellows from different cohorts, youth face several challenges in localizing SDG 11. These include limited access to funding, lack of technical support, limited networking opportunities, knowledge gaps and capacity-building needs, policy and regulatory barriers, lack of awareness and community engagement, limited access to data and research, and limited inclusion in policy and decision-making processes.*

### d) Alumni Engagement and Follow-Up:

Engaging and maintaining a strong connection with program alumni with dedicated follow-up initiatives for ongoing support and opportunities for collaboration and networking among past fellows has remained poor. Although alumni have been involved in select activities and as mentors to present fellows, more initiatives should be conceptualized to ensure alumni remain engaged.

## Impact on the ground

### a) “Maharashtra State Startup Policy 2018” by Umesh Balwani, 2018

#### *Local Pathways Fellow from Mumbai, India*

**Challenge:** Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra, the financial capital of India, and is a home to major corporate houses and financial institutions. Contributing nearly 15% to India’s GDP, Maharashtra is the most entrepreneurial state in India and is at the forefront of economic growth. For sustaining this growth, and creating an economy resilient to 21st-century global changes, there is an immense need to promote innovation-based entrepreneurship.

**Solution:** As a Local Pathways Fellow from Mumbai, India, Umesh leveraged his presence within the Government of Maharashtra to conceptualize and draft the Maharashtra State Startup

Policy 2018. The policy intends to catalyze the growth of an innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem for socioeconomic development of the state and was approved by the state’s cabinet of ministers on 17th January 2018. It adopts a holistic approach that involves establishing a network of incubators, relaxing regulatory requirements for startups, cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets among school and college students, creating linkages between all concerned stakeholders and making strategic investments to foster the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the state.

**Impact:** Over the next five years, the policy is expected to lead to the creation of 10,000 startups, bring in investments to the tune of \$800 million and generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for around half a million people in the state. The generation of livelihoods would further act as a foundation to achieve other SDG’s related to education, health, and quality of people’s lives in the cities of Maharashtra. The innovative startups would also bring efficiencies in the way resources are produced and consumed and thus reduce the trade-off between economic growth and environmental sustainability, making it possible to achieve both.

### b. “The voices of Belo Horizonte’s women: Collectively building public spaces that are safe and inclusive for all” by Leticia Pinheiro Rizério

#### *Carmo, Locañ Pathways fellow 2019 from Belo Horizonte, Brazil*

**Challenge:** In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, women and girls face violence not only in their homes and relationships, but also in public spaces. Intimidation, and harassment are forms of violence that limit women’s mobility,

influencing the way women use and occupy the city. These facts bring a deeper reflection on where women are allowed in their own cities - “where”, “how”, and “when” they are welcome to walk.

**Solution:** To understand how to plan and manage urban environments so that they are safe and inclusive for women and girls, managers and planners must have accurate information about women’s experiences in



the city. The best way to do this is by consulting and making them an integral part of the decision-making process. As a Local Pathway Fellow, Leticia organized two large seminars with the Belo Horizonte government, bringing together civil society, academia, and the city council to debate the lack of a gender perspective in the city's planning. In addition, she organized a Women's Security Audit in the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, in order to bring women together to evaluate public spaces

safety and to recommend changes and improvements. The Women's Safety Audit is a participatory methodology designed to provide detailed information on women's safety issues and to empower women to work with local decision-making for positive change in the community.

**Impact:** The events, workshops, and activities organized during the Local Pathways program brought together 200 people, including city

officials, students, urban planners, and civil society organizations. The women's safety audit carried out on the university campus gained national attention, as it was part of the urban circuit organized by the UN Habitat. In addition, in collaboration with civil society organizations, she secured a budget of \$20,000 from the state government to finance new mechanisms for reporting harassment on public transport, which will soon be implemented across the city.

**c) PROJECT "MT" (Mobile Toilets) by Michael Ojo, Local Pathways fellow 2021 from Nigeria**

**Challenge:** Goal and target 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.

**Solution:** Promoting social inclusion in cities by Bridging inequalities between the displaced, homeless fragile communities and the urban areas through the provision of sustainable, smart, and eco-friendly mobile toilets for a clean and healthy environment devoid of open defecation through circularity in the management of waste by creating a closed-loop system.

**Impact:**

- Promoting a hygienic lifestyle, Better sanitation, and hygiene conditions.
- Eliminating open defecation, which is an important part of the effort to eliminate poverty. among the Internally displaced peoples camps and rural communities.







# Future direction and outlook

**W**hile reflecting on the accomplishments of the program thus far, we also envision the future and suggest improvements for the next 5 years as follows:

Thematic area	Areas of Improvement
Public Engagement and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Enhancing public engagement outside the program.</li> <li>➤ Organizing public events, and workshops, and leveraging social media platforms.</li> <li>➤ Sharing the work and achievements of fellows.</li> </ul>
Visibility and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increasing prominence within universities and professional circles.</li> <li>➤ Collaborating with academic institutions, urban planning organizations, and professional networks.</li> <li>➤ Attracting diverse and qualified applicants and gaining visibility and support from key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Expansion and Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expanding the cohort size for a more inclusive and robust learning environment.</li> <li>➤ Ensure greater participation from underrepresented groups and regions, fostering a more inclusive and global network of fellows.</li> </ul>

Thematic area	Areas of Improvement
Program Name and Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Changing the fellowship's name to reflect urban issues explicitly.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring the program's focus on urban sustainability is clear from the outset.</li> </ul>
Competitions and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creating internal competitions among fellows to encourage innovation and collaboration.</li> <li>➤ Launching external competitions for individuals or teams outside the fellowship.</li> <li>➤ Fostering creativity, generating fresh ideas, and enhancing the program's impact.</li> </ul>
Mentorship and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Opening up the mentorship pool to professionals outside the network.</li> <li>➤ Encouraging collaboration among fellows within and across cohorts.</li> <li>➤ Providing platforms for fellows to connect, share experiences, and collaborate on projects.</li> </ul>

## *Future initiatives and projects*

**To further empower fellows in advancing progress on SDG 11, specific changes and initiatives can be implemented within the Local Pathways Fellowship program:**

Thematic area	Possible initiatives
Project Incubation Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ practical and scalable solutions get incubation</li> <li>➤ support, including access to resources, guidance, and mentorship,.</li> <li>➤ can involve connecting fellows with relevant experts, providing funding opportunities, and offering technical assistance</li> </ul>
Specialized Training	<p>Offer specialized training programs in addition to sustainable cities training. Proposed training areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Management</li> <li>➤ Data Analysis and Visualization (including mapping)</li> <li>➤ Communication and Presentation</li> <li>➤ Collaboration and Teamwork</li> <li>➤ Advocacy &amp; Public Policy</li> <li>➤ Fundraising and Resource Mobilization</li> <li>➤ Technology and Innovation</li> <li>➤ Community/ Stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>

Thematic area	Possible initiatives
Post-Fellowship Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Alumni network</li> <li>➤ Alumni networking events</li> <li>➤ continued access to training and capacity-building opportunities</li> <li>➤ Assistance in scaling up their project</li> <li>➤ Assistance in the transition to sustainability jobs/ leadership</li> </ul>
Creation of a Yearly Book (publication)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create a yearly book focused on a specific urban issue/theme.</li> <li>➤ Feature the work and contributions of fellows from the Local Pathways Fellowship program. Include their projects, research findings, and insights related to the chosen urban issue</li> <li>➤ Can incorporate insights from experts/ thought leaders</li> </ul>

#### Other future considerations:

- **Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Incorporate field visits, study tours, or internships to provide practical exposure to urban challenges.
- **Global Collaboration and Exchange Programs:** Facilitate connections and collaboration with youth leaders and practitioners from different countries.
- **Alumni Engagement and Support:** Establish a structured program for alumni to provide ongoing support, networking, and mentoring to current fellows.
- **Research and Innovation Grants:** Provide funding and resources for fellows to conduct research and pilot innovative solutions.
- **Collaboration with Local Governments and NGOs:** Forge partnerships to access local expertise, data, and resources, and address specific urban challenges.
- **Long-Term Impact Assessment:** Implement a mechanism to track the progress and impact of fellows' projects beyond the program's duration.
- **Integration of Social Entrepreneurship:** Encourage fellows to explore social entrepreneurship as a pathway to sustainable urban development.
- **Long-term Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the program's long-term impact.
- **International Collaboration Opportunities:** Promote collaboration with urban initiatives in various cities to provide fellows with local resources and opportunities.



# Our team

**Nnaemeka Phil Eke-okocha** is the Project Lead of the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth initiative. His background combines humanitarian action, public policy, and economic development. Phil holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Development Studies and a Master's degree in Global Governance, Conflict Management, and Humanitarian Aid. He is passionate about food security, migration, and exploring the climate conflict nexus.

**Ana Cristina García** is a Project Officer for the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Youth Initiative. Ana brings

over ten years of experience working in the public and private sectors in areas such as economic development, finance, business analysis, and logistics. Ana holds a Master of Science in Global Affairs from New York University, where she focused on climate justice, international human rights, and urban development with a gender perspective. In addition, Ana holds a Bachelor's in International Business (Summa cum Laude and Valedictorian) from Universidad Regiomontana in Monterrey, Mexico, and a diploma from the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Troyes, France. She is passionate about empowering youth and women to reach their full potential.

**Bessy Thurair** is the Deputy Project Lead for the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Youth Initiative. She is a seasoned development practitioner, project manager, and researcher focused on sustainable urban development. As the Deputy Project Lead for LPF, she combines her expertise in advisory, education, research & innovation to drive positive change. Bessy is passionate about liveable urban environments in African cities and advocating for community-based solutions. She holds an MSc in Development Planning from TU Dortmund University, Germany and UFABC, Brazil and a Bachelor's in Urban Planning from the University of Nairobi, Kenya.



**Amer Qawasm** is a Project Officer of the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth initiative. As an environmental activist, he continues to advocate for embracing sustainability and fighting climate change. On his professional career, Amer works as a Sustainability Analyst at Sustainability

Excellence, where he focuses on driving businesses and corporates towards a more sustainable future. Previously, he worked on various studies related to climate change, sustainable development, and green economy. Amer holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the Joran University of Science and Technology.

**Zakaria A.** is a Project Officer of the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth initiative. He is an architecture graduate and urbanist with a diverse and enriching experience in urban development in Morocco. He holds an Architecture diploma from the National School of Architecture



in Rabat, Morocco and has interest in advancing sustainable architectural and urban solutions. He pursued the Local Pathways Fellowship at the United Nations - Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth in 2021 as a Fellow, and in 2022 as a Mentor. By joining the Local Pathways Fellowship, Zakaria aims, first and foremost, at learning and sharing knowledge.

**Cédric Bayiha** is a highly skilled communication and marketing professional serving as the Project Officer for Communications at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth initiative. With his vast experience in organizing and managing information, he brings in valuable expertise to his role. Cédric demonstrates exceptional proficiency in digital communications and boasts remarkable writing skills. He holds a B.A. in Advertising and a Master's degree in Communication and International Cooperation from ASMAC.

**Ana Ynestrillas** is a Senior Advisor for the Local Pathways Fellowship at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Youth Initiative. A sustainable cities and innovation advocate, her background combines experience from the public, private and non-profit sectors at the intersection of

smart cities, innovation ecosystems, and sustainable urban development. Ana previously ran operations at Smart Cities New York where she delivered events that convened global thought leaders to share effective strategies to deploy smart cities technologies. Prior to this, she gained experience in city infrastructure from her time at the NYC Department of Environmental Protection and at Efficiency Matters Corporation. She's passionate about network learning and best practices city exchanges. That is why she works as a Program Associate at the Urban Tech Hub and serves as an advisor to Civ:Lab on connecting local innovators with government, academia, business, and community both within their cities and around the world.

**Dayana Milieva** is a junior double-majoring in Economics and Politics at Bard College Berlin. This semester, she interned at SDSN Youth, specifically working with the Local Pathways Fellowship Team, as part of her study abroad at the Bard Globalization and International Affairs Program located in NYC.

Dayana aspires to use the multispectral knowledge she has gained from both this internship and the BGIA program to one day get involved in politics back in her home country, Bulgaria, and help bring solutions towards the improvement

of the Bulgarian health care system.

**Aastha Sharma** is an English major from University of Delhi. She possesses experience in both the communication industry and international sustainable development. Aastha works at NCERT where she delves into different projects related to education, e-content, as well as sustainable development. She is very passionate about making a positive impact in the world. Her unique fusion of project management and communication skills allows her to turn that passion into action.

**Elie Kallab** is a Senior Advisor for the Local Pathways Fellowship. Elie is a graduate student at Sciences Po Aix (Institute of Political Studies) in France and works in the committee of research and valorisation for the Oeil sur la Cite blog for Sciences Po Aix (Institute of Political Studies). He holds an Executive Master's degree in Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action from the University of Siena in Italy. Elie has co-authored a chapter in the book titled Harness it: Renewable Energy Technologies and Project Development Models Transforming the Grid which was endorsed by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs. He is currently co-authoring his new book on Environmental Diplomacy which will be published by Routledge.

## Partners and donors



# Conclusion and Way Forward

As the Local Pathways Fellowship concludes its remarkable five-year journey, we reflect on the significant strides we have collectively taken towards shaping sustainable and resilient communities for the future. This report serves as a testament to the dedication, passion, and innovation that have driven our actions and outcomes.

## Achievements and Impact

Over the past five years, the Fellowship has achieved remarkable milestones in advancing the 2030 Agenda at the local level. Through diverse projects, initiatives, and collaborations, we have:

- 1. Empowered Local Leaders:** Our Fellowship has nurtured a global network of local leaders, enabling them to champion sustainability in their communities. These leaders have emerged as change agents, fostering inclusive dialogues and driving action.
- 2. Innovated for Solutions:** By harnessing the power of innovation, we have developed and implemented solutions that address local challenges. These solutions have ranged from sustainable urban planning to equitable access to resources, leaving a lasting impact on communities.
- 3. Promoted Knowledge Exchange:** The Fellowship has been a platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices. This collective learning has enriched our understanding of diverse local contexts and enabled cross-border collaboration.
- 4. Catalyzed Policy Change:** Our advocacy efforts have contributed to policy shifts that prioritize sustainability, resilience, and equity. We have engaged with local governments, stakeholders, and institutions to drive systemic change.



## Way Forward

As we look ahead, we are filled with a sense of purpose and commitment to continue our journey towards more sustainable and resilient communities. The next five years hold even greater potential for impact:

- 1. Scaling and Replicating:** We will leverage the successes and lessons from our Fellowship to scale up initiatives and replicate best practices across diverse geographies. This expansion will amplify our impact and promote sustainable development worldwide.
- 2. Inclusivity and Diversity:** Embracing inclusivity and diversity will remain central to our mission. We will actively engage marginalized voices, ensuring that our efforts leave no one behind and contribute to creating equitable societies.
- 3. Partnerships:** Collaborative partnerships will be integral to our progress. By forging alliances with governments, NGOs, academia, and the private sector, we will pool resources and expertise for greater efficacy.
- 4. Innovation:** We will continue to harness innovation to develop context-specific solutions. By embracing technology, data-driven insights, and emerging trends, we can address evolving challenges effectively.
- 5. Advocacy and Policy:** Advocacy for policy change will persist as we work to influence local, regional, and global agendas. Our efforts will focus on aligning policies with the Sustainable Development Goals and driving tangible outcomes.

In closing, this report encapsulates a journey that transcends geographical boundaries and empowers local leaders to be catalysts for change. We extend our gratitude to all stakeholders, partners, and Fellows who have been instrumental in this transformative endeavor. As we step into the next phase, we remain resolute in our commitment to building a world where communities thrive sustainably.









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