Urban Futures Project: Youth Action For Inclusive, Climate Resilient Cities

Introduction

Hivos in partnership with Botnar Foundation aims to contribute to more inclusive, climate-resilient urban food systems, where young people collaborate to voice their priorities, influence decisions, and seize opportunities in the food sector to boost their country’s economy, with shorter value chains providing healthy, sustainable food that is accessible, affordable, and attractive to all. This will be achieved through the implementation of a 5-year Urban Futures Project (2023–2027).

This Urban Futures project will be implemented in five Countries - Zimbabwe, Zambia, Columbia, Ecuador and Indonesia where 2 cities per country will be selected for project implementation. The Urban Futures Project will ensure cross sectional learning across the countries of best practices and key lessons to strengthen systems with the implementing countries. This project will contribute to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) notably SDG11 (Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 12 (Sustainable Production and Consumption) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), as well as the Paris Agreement and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Multi-stakeholder Approach: Hivos aims to work in collaboration with multiple stakeholders including local authorities, councils, schools, Department of Health, Youth and Agriculture, creatives, journalists, actors in the food value chain, agronomists, young food entrepreneurs, climate change experts, innovation hubs, nutritionists, business hubs, gastronomists, civil society focused on youth.

Rightsholder group: The project will work with youth aged 15 to 24 years including marginalized communities and other key stakeholders in the food system. Young people are the core participants and rightsholder group of this project.

In the inception stage stakeholders will play major role in shaping the following:

- Mapping the agenda for their city (in collaboration with city council)
- Co-creation and participation within multi-stakeholder groups within the food system value chain
- Liaising with policy makers, food system and climate change experts
- Consultation with youth-oriented organisations
- Focus group discussions to ensure that their priorities feed into the strategy.
- Developing advocacy campaigns and contributing to publications

City Selection: Proposed Cities for implementation

- Zimbabwe: Bulawayo and Mutare
- Zambia: Chongwe and Kitwe
1. Problem Context

Urbanisation

Our food systems are not meeting the needs of people or the planet. Rapid urbanisation will result in 68% of the world’s population living in urban areas by 2050. As cities already consume nearly 80% of all food, urban food systems have a major local and global impact on issues including climate change, (youth) wellbeing, and economic opportunity.

Climate Crisis

Food systems are responsible for 30% of global emissions, with much of this coming from the production and use of synthetic fertilizer. Climate change has reduced food and water security for indigenous peoples, low-income households (including urban poor in informal settlements), children, elderly people and women, exacerbated by crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine. In addition, one-third of all food produced is wasted.

Economic Opportunities

Youth ages 15-24, are most likely to be unemployed than adults, and they are least likely to choose a future in food and agriculture sector. They need capacity building and access to financial support to run successful food business.

Governance

There is a need for increased inclusivity of youth in policy decision making around Food systems in order to add value to the whole Value Chain.

2. Project Vision and Objectives

Main Goal: To contribute to more inclusive, climate-resilient urban food systems.

Project vision: is for more liveable cities, with increased green spaces and edible landscapes that improve climate resilience, social cohesion and wellbeing. Where citizens have taken responsibility for their food system: they voice their priorities, and grow and demand healthy, sustainable food. Where young people, collaborating with other actors, influence decision making and access quality employment opportunities in the food sector. And where food value chains are shorter, providing healthy, sustainable food that is accessible, affordable and attractive.

Long Term Outcomes

a) Inclusive youth-friendly urban food policies and strategies are developed and implemented, with decision-makers held to account

b) Youth-led narratives on inclusive climate resilient food systems inspire behaviour change (Safe space for youth discuss and analyse and strategize how to improve food system in their cities, form innovative ideas and events)

c) Increased public and private financial flows to inclusive, climate-resilient food systems (so that young food entrepreneurs can flourish and increase in green job opportunities for youth)
Local Partners

Partnerships are at the heart of the programme. Collaboration is critical to achieving global, regional, and local policy change and sustainability to develop multi-actor initiatives. Working with partners on a longer term allows us to leverage resources and extend impact. This association is critical to developing a full appreciation of local circumstances and making links between local realities and global debates (see www.hivos.org multi actor initiatives, ToC, and strategies).

In each city, civil society partners will be critical drivers of change. These are NGOs or CBOs with a thematic focus/expertise (e.g. sustainable food, climate action, youth, health, nutrition), or representing a constituency (young people, women, urban poor) or neighbourhood. Other key local stakeholders include young creatives, media, artists, activists, influencers and gastronomists, business support hubs, accelerators and training institutes.

Partner relations and partnerships, are based on:

- Shared objectives and common values, although recognising diversity;
- Acknowledgement of the added value of working together;
- Complementarity, bringing in different capacities and resources, or localised expertise;
- Transparency and accountability, to each other and to stakeholders;
- Importance and commitment to learn, monitor and develop together.

Local partners will facilitate the co-design of city local strategies and coalitions (when needed), including multi-stakeholder platforms for inclusive, impactful change processes. Implementation will be led by local partners or a consortium of local partners in each city, supported by Hivos and RUAF. Through partner learning communities and (participatory/youth-led) research, we will seek to produce actionable learning that improves delivery and supports adaptive management. Local partners will support the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms to co-create, document and advocate for local solutions, linking and strengthening existing social and grassroots movements around inclusive food systems and climate action, Public-Private-Community-Partnerships (PPCs), by bringing the community, particularly youth, women, and those most vulnerable, and duty bearers together to influence policy. Local partners are also expected to participate in international virtual and face-to-face events and communities of practice.

Local partners will be coordinate with Hivos the M&E of the project, and the co-development of the Theory of Change, reporting and learning agenda in the country, supporting the regional M&E mechanisms implemented by Hivos.

ToC workshop, indicator development and preparation for In-depth Assessment

ToC workshop (Based on the Hivos manual: here) may take place after the Rapid Scan Assessment has been conducted by the Technical Consultants who will share information with partners (the length of the Rapid Scan will depend on availability of information, different per city). The Partner together with the Technical Consultants will co-facilitate the Theory of Change Workshop with support of Hivos. In terms of expenses the partner is responsible for the venue, food, accommodation and transport reimbursements of stakeholders attending the Theory of Change workshop (consideration for your budget proposal).
These workshops will be an opportunity to:

- Take stock of the findings of the City Rapid Scan (Research)
- Highlight and align to other existing initiatives and programmes related to Urban Futures
- Conduct participatory visioning to adapt the overall UF vision to the local context and identify local priorities (based on a combination of the vision and the Rapid Scan findings). Ideally this should involve a multi-stakeholder group (either an existing, or newly formed for this initiative) that is broadly representative of those identified during the stakeholder mapping analysis.
- Adapt the global UF ToC to the local context.
- Start thinking about actions (actions to be developed under Urban Futures after the In-depth Assessment with local partners).
- Develop the Assumptions and risk assessment for the ToC.

The information gathered from the Theory of Change workshops will help guide the researchers as to what other information is needed to be explored during the in-depth assessment which will assist in refining the programme and city strategic plans.

It is understood that the ToC workshop is planned as a two-day event. But, it is suggested to include a session (one extra day) on food systems and the relationship with the Urban Futures Program, as the event will involve relevant key food system stakeholders, including local government officials, local civic society organizations (CSOs), and local community leaders.