

Empowering Young People to Build Alliances with Urban Actors to Create Safer Cities

Evidence based recommendations from the Safe and Sound Cities (S²Cities) Programme

April 2024





Prepared for
The S²Cities Programme

April 2024

Guided by
Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation (GIB)

Authors
Vanishree Herlekar, Shreesha Arondekar, Tulsi Lashkari (City Collab)

Suggested Citation
Vanishree Herlekar, Shreesha Arondekar, Tulsi Lashkari. 2024. "Empowering Young People to Build Alliances with Urban Actors to Create Safer Cities." Published by S²Cities www.S2Cities.org.

Disclaimer
The brief is based on reports and digital content generated by the programme, featuring case studies and insights from the six participating cities. The detailed case studies mainly focus on Years 1 and 2, reflecting the greater availability of data and information from these periods. Any omissions in the content are unintended.

Summary

This policy brief addresses critical gaps in ensuring the safety of young people in urban environments. Firstly, it emphasises the necessity for adopting a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to urban safety, recognising the interconnectedness of various factors. Secondly, it underscores the significance of involving young people in decision-making processes regarding the design and development of their urban surroundings. Drawing upon insights and case studies from the [Safe and Sound Cities programme \(S²Cities\)](#), this brief offers actionable recommendations to address these challenges and enhance the well-being of our youth.

S²Cities is an initiative that aims to enhance young people's safety in urban environments. It is proudly led by the Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation, in partnership with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), hosted by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, with the support of Fondation Botnar.

Central to the programme's methodology is the Relational Well-Being Approach, which transcends conventional safety concerns to address the underlying conditions influencing well-being. It identifies three forms of underlying well-being drivers; personal, societal, and environmental (Jha, 2022). Acknowledging urban areas as intricate socio-economic ecosystems with diverse challenges and stakeholders, the programme recognises the influential roles of governments, private enterprises, and civil society organisations. It emphasises that the interplay and dynamics among these actors profoundly impact the safety and holistic well-being of young individuals. The S²Cities programme places young people at the forefront of interactions among these stakeholders, fostering an inclusive support system where they can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

[Section 1](#) of the brief offers the context for defining and addressing urban safety from the perspective of young people.

[Section 2](#) explores the impactful collaborations between young people and stakeholders in six participating cities. Drawing from case studies and insights, primarily from Years 1 and 2, this section highlights tangible outcomes in spatial interventions, policy development, and community building.

[Section 3](#) outlines recommendations for other programmes, governments, institutions, and civil society organisations to empower young people and create safer urban spaces. These recommendations include integrating holistic approaches to urban safety into programme and policy design, developing context-sensitive youth engagement methodologies, forging partnerships with governments, supporting institutionalisation of youth-led initiatives, and adopting iterative evaluation approaches to monitor progress. Through these measures, S²Cities and similar initiatives can pave the way for safer, more inclusive urban environments, prioritising the well-being of young people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>1. Introduction: Prioritising Youth-Centric Urban Safety</u>	03
<u>2. How the S²Cities programme is empowering young people to build alliances with urban actors to create safer cities: Case Studies</u>	04
2.1 Collective identification of city issues to align youth and municipal priorities	
2.2 Foster collaboration between youth, governments, and communities to reclaim and revitalise public spaces and preserve ecological commons	
2.3 Support youth participation in local decision making and political affairs	
2.4 Amplification of youth voices on civic forums	
2.5 Leverage private industry expertise and resources to develop and refine business models to scale youth initiatives	
<u>3. Learning and Recommendations</u>	14
3.1 Holistic approach to youth safety	
3.2 Youth engagement methodologies	
3.3 Securing government support	
3.4 Institutionalisation of youth-led initiatives	
3.5 Participatory approach to learning and evaluation	
<u>4. Conclusion</u>	17
<u>References</u>	18
<u>Annexures</u>	19

LIST OF CASE STUDIES

- [Case Study 1: Protecting natural water resources through sustainable waste management | Bandung, Indonesia](#)
- [Case Study 2: Using placemaking approaches to co-create safe and vibrant public spaces | Bandung, Indonesia](#)
- [Case Study 3: Building community awareness for ecological preservation Envigado, Colombia](#)
- [Case Study 4: Involving youth in local decision-making: A case of Colombia's Youth Councils | Envigado, Colombia](#)
- [Case Study 5: Jajaka App- boosting youth entrepreneurship | Bandung, Indonesia](#)

1. Introduction: Prioritising Youth Perspectives in Urban Safety

1.8 billion people in the world are young, between the ages of 10-24 years old. 90% of this population is situated in the Global South, wherein the pre-existing social inequities, economic stresses, depletion of environmental resources, and challenges of urbanisation have a direct and considerable impact on the youth (United Nations, 2015). By 2030, it is projected that 60% of the world's urban population will be under 18 (United Nations, 2022). These statistics underscore the critical need for cities to be inclusive, safe, and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of young people.

Urban environmental interventions for the improvement and betterment of young people's health, well-being and safety have been gaining momentum in recent decades. From 2000 onwards, urban planning started to recognise the links between urban environments and young people's and children's health and safety. Urban safety is a result of many complex factors. Threats to urban safety are due to widening inequity, poor urban planning, territorial segregation, and social exclusion (Petrella, 2007). Concepts of the safe city include a wide range of concerns, from crime prevention, physical protection of the environment, impacts of natural disasters to accessibility to food, shelter and health, and social, institutional and organisational aspects (UN-Habitat, 2007). Addressing urban safety for youth therefore requires adopting a context-sensitive and holistic approach that is informed by young people and their lived experiences.

Yet, young people are often excluded from decision-making processes in cities and hence, lack the opportunity to influence and shape their future effectively (UN General Assembly, 2018). A United Nations report (2021a) highlights physical, political, digital, and sociocultural barriers that hinder young people's access to and engagement with civic spaces. Furthermore, trust in public institutions among young people has been waning. Between 2018 and 2019, only 46% of individuals aged 15 to 29 reported having trust in their national governments across countries part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and



Development (OECD) (OECD, 2020). On the other hand, governments also lack awareness of the value added by youth participation (OECD, 2020). Globally, there are few examples of youth structures or government departments which young people can trust and consult in times of threat or danger (United Nations, 2021a). The Global Youth Development Index, which assesses progress across 181 countries, also indicates a decline in youth's political and civic participation over the last decade (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2020).

Bridging this trust gap is a vital step to improve safety for young people. It requires the development of inclusive platforms and accessible spaces where the voices of young people are heard, valued, and acted upon.

This policy brief serves to enrich the global discourse on the multi-dimensional nature of urban safety and its perception among young people. It underscores the importance of youth engagement in decision-making processes and the cultivation of meaningful, trusting relationships between young people and key urban stakeholders.

Drawing from impactful case studies and insights gathered from the S²Cities programme, the brief illustrates how empowered young individuals, equipped with skills, knowledge, and networks, have collaborated with diverse stakeholders to bring about tangible change at the grassroots level ([Refer to Annexure 2](#)).

2. How are youth securing support to address their unique safety concerns: Case Studies from the S²Cities programme

The S²Cities programme is designed to achieve three key objectives. Its first objective is to recognise and address the complex dimensions of safety and security, ensuring the protection and holistic well-being of young people adopting a Relational Well-Being Approach. The second objective is to promote youth engagement in creating safer urban spaces, empowering young people to play an active role in their communities. The final aim of the programme is to build the capacities of local municipalities, the private sector, and civil society actors, facilitating the incorporation of youth perspectives into policy development.

This section highlights the programme's key strategies, aligned with the aforementioned objectives. These strategies are substantiated with case studies, illustrating their effectiveness in action.

2.1 Collective identification of city issues to align youth and municipal priorities

Across programme cities, young individuals have partnered with government actors, the private sector, and communities on initiatives that address the safety concerns of the youth and align with the broader priorities of the city. The programme's adaptable and flexible design recognises each city's unique challenges and priorities, allowing for a context-sensitive approach to identifying safety issues.

With the aim to meaningfully involve young people in addressing safety issues, S²Cities has introduced Innovation Engines. These platforms enable young participants to brainstorm and collaboratively design solutions for safety concerns within their cities through rapid, intensive idea generation sessions. The programme's flexible nature allows for different contextual approaches to safety issue identification and framing of the Innovation Engine.

Young people who participated in Innovation Engines have secured government support for a range of complex issues, from the lack of inclusive streets and public spaces to environmental sustainability, stigmatisation and discrimination ([Refer to Annexure 1](#)).

The alignment between youth and government priorities is highlighted through the varied and contextually tailored youth-driven initiatives in programme cities. In Envigado, Colombia street sports and motorcycle stunt riding have a strong following among the youth but are also frequently stigmatised. To combat stigma and provide safe recreational spaces for young people, a team of S²Cities fellows initiated the project **More than Pikes**. This initiative promotes motorcycle stunt riding within legal boundaries, adhering to all safety norms. It has successfully gained government support by addressing the shared concern of street safety and transforming the perception of this sport (A. Betancourt, GIB Foundation, Personal communication, 2023). **Skateopia**, a similar initiative in Naga, the Philippines, establishes a safe, accessible, and dynamic space for skateboarders, bike motocross (BMX) riders, roller skaters, and kick scooter enthusiasts in the city.

In Bandung, Indonesia, waste management was identified as a critical issue early on in the programme by young participants, government officials, and local stakeholders (B. Lipu, World Research Institute (WRI) Indonesia, Personal communication, 2023). The programme has created avenues for young people and governments to tackle this urban environmental challenge collaboratively ([Case Study 1](#)).



CASE
STUDY 1Protecting natural water resources
through sustainable waste management

BANDUNG, INDONESIA

Indonesia is facing a significant waste management crisis, with the majority of its landfills reaching maximum capacity. The country produces approximately 7.8 million tons of waste annually, of which 4.9 million tons remain unmanaged (The World Bank, 2021). Specifically, the city of Bandung generates around 2,000 tons of waste daily, with 1,200 tons being transported to landfills at a cost of USD 6.8 million annually (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, 2019). The waste not managed properly often ends up in rivers, exacerbating environmental issues.

Indonesia has prioritised waste management in its national policy. Through its National Plastic Action Plan, the country has set ambitious goals, aiming for a 70% reduction in marine plastic debris by 2025 (Global Plastic Action Partnership, 2020). Efforts are underway to enhance waste collection and processing capabilities, and there is a push for collaborative initiatives involving communities and private entities.

In line with the national policy, the local government of Bandung, in collaboration with young people and other local stakeholders, identified waste management as a pivotal theme for the 2023 S²Cities Ideathon event to encourage young participants to develop innovative solutions. A notable outcome of the ideathon is Team Amreta's initiative, **Imah Maggot Bantaran (Bantaran Maggot House)**. They launched a community-centric plan to address 70 tons of daily food waste. Their strategy involved the construction of a Black Soldier Fly (maggots) bio-waste processing facility, employing a circular approach to waste management.

The facility is established on government land owned by Bandung City Water Resources and Public Works agency along the banks of the Cikapundung River. This notably polluted area of the river was chosen in collaboration with the government. As of March 2024, the initiative has begun collecting and processing food waste from 50 households, waste banks and markets, in partnership with the local Cika-Cika community, safeguarding the river and its banks from diverse pollutants and supporting the government's environmental work programme.

This initiative is supported by Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) University, the principal government partner on food waste management, and by the Indonesian NGO 'River Clean Up'. Additionally, their work has attracted interest from 360 Energy Engaged, known for championing social enterprises and aiding communities in setting up clean energy infrastructure. It underscores the vital role that young individuals play as key allies for municipal authorities in environmental endeavours, particularly in advancing ecological sustainability.

2.2 Foster collaboration between
youth, governments, and
communities to reclaim and
revitalise public spaces and
preserve ecological commons

In numerous expanding cities across the Global South, public spaces are neglected due to inadequate urban planning, financial limitations, and other urgent challenges stemming from rapid urbanisation (The World Bank, 2020). This often leads to the deterioration of public areas into overcrowded, vehicle-centric, and polluted environments or deserted spaces that accumulate waste and become hotspots for illicit activities. Furthermore, the available public spaces rarely cater to the interests of young people, leading to a lack of venues where they can freely express themselves.

Recognising this gap, revitalising public spaces has become pivotal to government-youth collaboration across the S²Cities programme cities. Young people are partnering with governments to transform neglected public areas into functional, vibrant spaces. Young people have also worked closely with their communities from the design to the implementation phase, ensuring that solutions align with the community's unique needs and opportunities. In their dual role as both users and stewards of urban public spaces, local communities have emerged as

key partners in shaping urban public spaces and ensuring they are safe and inclusive.

The programme design incorporates placemaking as a tool that encourages collaboration between governments, local communities, and other stakeholders to collectively reimagine and revitalise public spaces, enhancing their value for everyone. In Baguio and Bandung, young people are actively using placemaking approaches to revitalise neglected spaces in cities. In Bandung, two public spaces have been transformed with the government's and local communities' active involvement ([Case Study 2](#)). In Cuenca, the **ArteRia** initiative focuses on creating safer pedestrian pathways that link educational institutions with key transit points, such as bus stations. This initiative encourages walking, reduces the dependency on private vehicles, and enhances the overall vitality of public spaces. The Municipality of Cuenca's commitment to upgrading the foundational infrastructure has been instrumental in these efforts (A. Tapia, Huasipchanga, Personal communication, 2023).

The critical role of community engagement in ecological preservation is demonstrated in the **Veo-Veo Lab** initiative from Envigado, Colombia. The Initiative is dedicated to educating and empowering local residents to protect and preserve Envigado's natural habitats ([Case Study 3](#)).



Kami Ruang Ketiga activating the public space by organising activities for kids

CASE STUDY 2

Using placemaking approaches to co-create safe and vibrant public spaces

BANDUNG, INDONESIA

Most parks and public spaces in Bandung, like in most other cities, cater to small children and older adults, leaving the youth with limited options to socialise and express themselves. Moreover, public space use and accessibility in Bandung is often hampered by safety concerns. Underutilised open spaces in the city are prone to illicit activities and crime such as drug dealing and gang activity (Hasanah et al., 2022). Literature reveals that the most common crime mitigation efforts in Indonesian cities involve using mobile phone applications that recommend safer routes to take while commuting, installing CCTV cameras, and building physical barriers such as portals and gates (Research methodological report, S²Cities programme, 2023). Although these efforts help in avoiding criminals, they do not address the roots of urban safety issues and might generate new social issues.

In this context, a more sustainable and systematic solution to urban crimes would be to empower local communities and generate community cohesion and a sense of kinship and belonging. **Kami Ruang Ketiga (We are Third Space)**, a winning youth initiative in Bandung from 2022, has adopted community-based placemaking strategies to transform dead spaces into safe and accessible public spaces for young people and the local community. This initiative was born out of dialogues among the local implementing partners, young people, and government bodies. These collaborative discussions pinpointed two underutilised areas ripe for rejuvenation: Film Park and the Futsal (Football) Field beneath the Pasopati Flyover. Since its initiation, the team of young people has collaborated with over 30 organisations, including government stakeholders from Urban Village of Tamansari, Water Resources & Public Work Agency, Youth and Sport Agency, the private sector, and local communities. Together, they have collectively envisioned the transformation of public spaces.

Infrastructure enhancements, including upgraded walkways, additional trash bins, improved lighting, and accessible restrooms, implemented under the technical guidance of government departments, have notably improved the area. In collaboration with community groups and private entities, young individuals have spearheaded various events including movie screenings, awareness campaigns, aerobics classes, futsal tournaments, and tutoring sessions. These initiatives are specifically designed to draw more young people to these rejuvenated spaces. These revitalised public spaces have turned into lively centres for the community, attracting a thousand more visitors in just the first two months since their rejuvenation. The local government has recognised these improved public spaces as official hubs for youth activities.

The initiative has since evolved into a non-profit organisation, keen on collaborating with the city government to further enhance and rejuvenate other public areas, including Teras Cihampelas (Cihampelas Terrace) – a skywalk to accommodate street vendors, the Skate Park, and the Modern Market. Building on the success of this collaboration, another winning initiative **Lakuna Kota** from the 2023 S²Cities Ideathon uses tactical urbanism and design charrettes to reimagine public spaces in Kopo Village, Bandung.

CASE STUDY 3

Building community awareness for ecological preservation

ENVIGADO, COLOMBIA

Envigado, a municipality in Antioquia, Colombia, spans 70 km² and encompasses a diverse landscape of urban, rural, and peri-urban areas. Its rural expanse is home to rich forests and protected ecosystems teeming with biodiversity. This includes vital biological corridors and species recognised on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List (Interlace, n.d.). The municipality has declared 40% of its territory as a protected area through the creation of a Local System of Protected Areas (SILAPE), which materialised through a Municipal Agreement in 2016. Highlighting the cultural importance of the natural environment for the communities of the territory has also been a key objective of the municipality.

Aligned with this vision, the **Veo-Veo Lab** initiative strengthens and orchestrates community-oriented initiatives dedicated to promoting the care, conservation, and protection of rural land, natural resources, wildlife, and archaeological heritage surrounding the city.

What began as an initiative under the S²Cities programme has since flourished into a registered NGO, committed to raising awareness about the repercussions of urban development on rural ecosystems and fostering a harmonious relationship between nature, culture, and society. Through workshops and tours led by local community members, the initiative has engaged 265 people, encouraging them to adopt practices that contribute to the protection of Envigado's soils and rural areas. Veo-Veo Lab serves as a powerful example of environmental stewardship, demonstrating how collaborative efforts with governments and local residents can effectively preserve Envigado's unique ecosystems.



Veo-Veo Lab building awareness about Envigado's natural ecosystem through interpretive tours

2.3 Support youth participation in local decision making and political affairs

Beyond infrastructure and innovation, the importance of young people's democratic participation in civic and political affairs is vital (United Nations, 2023). By the year 2030, it is estimated that young people will make up 60% of the world's urban population (United Nations, 2015). However, their involvement in governance and decision-making processes is currently met with significant hurdles.

To support meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes, the S²Cities programme strengthens the skills and confidence of young people to take concrete steps to engage directly with government officials.

For instance, in Envigado, Colombia, youth fellows from the programme took the initiative to host and moderate a debate among candidates running for the Mayor's office, underscoring the importance of youth involvement in representative democracy (J. Gomez,

Fundación Mi Sangre, Personal communication, 2023). Furthermore, several fellows are actively engaging in local governance by voicing their opinions and concerns as members of Youth Councils, thereby playing a pivotal role in the discourse of local governance ([Case Study 4](#)). In Baguio, the Philippines, the government's commitment to inclusivity is evident through its allocation of seats for young individuals on various city councils and boards. These pivotal positions span crucial areas like local education, disaster management, creative initiatives, and community integration (C. Ruz, Cordilleran Youth Centre, Personal communication, 2023). Notably, several S²Cities participants currently hold these influential roles, representing youth voices and actively shaping their city's future.

Such direct involvement in decision-making not only amplifies the voices of the youth in crucial forums but also ensures that the perspectives of younger generations are considered in the formulation of urban policies.



S²Cities youth partners in Envigado's Municipal Youth Council interacting with mayoral candidates

CASE STUDY 4

Involving youth in local decision-making: A case of Colombia's Youth Councils

ENVIGADO, COLOMBIA

In Colombia, 6 out of 10 young people believe that politicians don't care for their opinions or needs, and 4 out of 10 young people do not vote (El Espectador, 2018). Recognising this trust gap, the nation is actively engaging young citizens by incorporating their perspectives and valuing their input in decision-making processes.

The Law 1885, approved in March 2018, reformed the Statute of Youth Citizenship, enabling young people aged 14 to 28 to elect and be elected to Municipal Youth Councils, a National Youth Council, and other governmental levels (Función Pública, 2021). Unlike previous legislation, this reform introduces advocacy mechanisms, fostering organised youth participation through government-endorsed Youth Platforms and Councils. 12 million young citizens in Colombia can now be part of the system and vote for youth representatives, opening avenues for political participation among youth and marginalised groups (Del Estado Civil, 2021).

On January 17, 2022, 21 young people from Envigado took office as Municipal Youth Councilors for a 4-year term until 2025. They proposed and evaluated actions in education, health, recreation, culture, and employment. Of the 21 young people, 10 are S²Cities fellows, engaging with local governments on urban safety and inclusivity.

This legal reform and active youth involvement mark a positive shift serving as a model for other countries to open spaces for youth where they can genuinely participate.

2.4 Amplification of youth voices on civic forums

S²Cities enables young people to share knowledge and insights and form city-level coalitions with other civil-society organisations focused on critical issues linking safety and inclusivity. These platforms manifest in both physical and digital spaces. For instance, the **Public Space Festival** in Envigado, Colombia in October 2022 organised by youth participants and local partners, as part of the government's Youth Week, united various youth movements within the city. It catalysed a network of youth groups and organisations dedicated to promoting safer urban environments. In Ambato, Ecuador, youth groups are collectivising and raising awareness about the meaning of safety for various

groups of civil society, finding consensus and solutions to improve a local park. In Cuenca, the [Safe and Sound Podcast](#) serves as a digital forum where young people, representatives from civil society, and advocacy groups come together to voice their perspectives and experiences.

2.5 Leverage private industry expertise and resources to develop and refine business models to scale youth initiatives

The United Nations (2012) underscores the importance of the private sector's contribution to sustainable urban development, encouraging public-private partnerships, investments in technological

innovation, and entrepreneurship and business skills training targeted at the youth.

Engaging strategically with the private sector enables young people to gain crucial insights into sustainability, technical feasibility, innovation, and systemic approaches from experienced urban stakeholders. The S²Cities programme plays a pivotal role in facilitating connections between young entrepreneurs and the private sector in various ways. This includes organising events where industry experts participate, engaging professionals as reviewers in ideathons to evaluate the feasibility of youth-led projects, and offering training on developing business models. This collaboration model ensures that projects maintain viability and also remain adaptable to the dynamic demands of the ever-evolving landscape.

Through S²Cities, young innovators have had the chance to showcase their initiatives to companies in the private sector, seeking partnerships to amplify their impact. In Envigado, brands like Éxito, Tennis, and Laboratorios Echavarria actively participated

in the innovation process adding value by providing guidance, resources, and platforms for initiatives to thrive (J. Gomez, Fundación Mi Sangre, Personal communication, 2023). Similarly, the **Jajaka app**, a youth-led initiative to boost entrepreneurship in Bandung was developed in active collaboration with the private sector (B. Lipu, WRI Indonesia, Personal communication, 2023) ([Case Study 5](#)).

The collaboration with the private sector extends beyond mentorship and training to launch and scale initiatives through financial and in-kind support. Initiatives like **Flow and Bars** ([Annexure 1](#)) that have established collaborative partnerships with brands to fund events, and showcase practical examples of how industry collaboration extends beyond monetary assistance (Impact report, S²Cities programme, 2024). In Bandung, young people received donations of materials like paint and sound systems for the **Kami Ruang Ketiga** initiative. These partnerships with private businesses provide comprehensive backing for the growth and sustainability of youth-led initiatives, encompassing both financial backing and contributions.



Meeting with Private Sector stakeholders to seek partnerships in Envigado



Team Jajaka with the mobile app solution for boosting entrepreneurship in Bandung

CASE STUDY 5

Jajaka App: boosting youth entrepreneurship

BANDUNG, INDONESIA

Bandung is grappling with low entrepreneurship rates, with only 4% of the total population engaged in entrepreneurship, as revealed by the 2016 Badan Pusat Statistik census. This trend is consistent at the national level, where only 3.1% of the population participates in entrepreneurship. The challenges are even more pronounced among the youth in Bandung, attributed to the perceived high risks associated with small business failures. 99% of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Bandung face hurdles like a product-market mismatch, insufficient planning skills, lack of a business platform, and location mismatches (Blog, S²Cities programme, 2023)

Jajaka, a digital application-based business service, is a winning youth initiative aimed at boosting MSME development in Bandung, especially among tech-savvy Generation Z. The digital platform serves three primary functions: providing business consultations for users, suggesting suitable business locations, and facilitating connections between franchisors and users/customers. The app was developed through a collaboration with the IT Incubator, Himpunan Mahasiswa Informatika (HMIF) ITB, and WRI Indonesia, tapping into their respective expertise in IT product development and spatial analysis. Private sector partnerships with Digital Jabar, Perseroan Terbatas (PT), Geo-Environmental Analytics and PT Madani National Capital have further contributed towards incorporating spatial data into the app's product development. Another notable collaboration was with the Paguyuban Karya Salemba Empat event to reach out to groups of housewives in Cisitu Urban Village, who are home-based business entrepreneurs.

Through these partnerships, Jajaka successfully expanded its user community, extending its reach from Bandung to encompass neighbouring cities. Looking ahead, it aims to integrate 1000 young entrepreneurs into its network, providing them with opportunities to scale their enterprises (Impact Report, S²Cities programme, 2024).

3. Lessons and Recommendations

3.1 Holistic approach to youth safety

The safety of young people in urban areas emerges from the complex interplay of various factors, such as increasing inequality, subpar urban design, territorial division, and social marginalisation. It encompasses an extensive array of elements and activities related to public spaces, spanning from crime deterrence to environmental physical safeguarding, accessibility, and inclusion. These interactions and activities are specific to each context and require the active involvement of young people to fully understand and uncover. Despite this complexity, numerous government initiatives and donor-funded programmes aimed at enhancing the safety of young people tend to adopt a top-down approach, with a predetermined focus and a limited scope, often concentrating on specific areas like traffic safety or gender-based violence.

In contrast, the S²Cities programme has introduced a methodology that is both context-sensitive and holistic. The programme refrained from imposing predetermined safety issues. Instead, it empowered local youth, along with the government and other stakeholders, to lead the identification and ideation process based on their unique experiences within their respective contexts ([Section 2.1](#)).

Recommendation: Programmes and policies aimed at nurturing healthy urban environments for youth should integrate a holistic approach to addressing safety, and well-being that includes youth perspectives.

3.2 Youth engagement methodologies

To effectively engage youth in decision-making processes, it is crucial to understand their unique behaviours and characteristics and adapt engagement strategies and methods accordingly. Key youth traits identified by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (2023) include a preference for immediate and tangible outcomes from their participation, being driven by incentives, and a deep-seated value for self-expression.

The Innovation Engines were a key engagement methodology employed by the S²Cities programme, allowing young people to co-create and implement solutions to urban safety and witness tangible changes because of their efforts ([Section 2.1](#)). Furthermore, the programme offers support for the expansion of selected initiatives via seed funding, illustrating its commitment to nurturing viable youth-led projects. This serves as a significant incentive for young people. Additionally, the programme created safe spaces for young people to express their views, opinions, and creativity openly ([Section 2.3](#)) ([Section 2.4](#)).

Recommendation: Youth engagement methodologies should be tailored to resonate with the behaviours and characteristics of young people, ensuring contextual relevance and effectiveness.

3.3 Securing government support

Government support is indispensable for the effective implementation and scaling of youth-centred initiatives. This includes financing pilot interventions to improve safety at the neighbourhood scale, integrating youth-centric issues into broader city action plans and policy agendas, along with creating spaces for youth participation in decision-making platforms like city councils and working groups.

The formal agreement between local governments and S²Cities established the foundation for local implementation, ensuring effective collaboration and sustained government support throughout the programme in the form of resources, expertise, and infrastructure. This commitment from local governments is demonstrated through several programme outcomes, including the establishment of youth innovation hubs in Baguio and Naga, the provision of funding and mentoring for youth-led initiatives, and the active involvement of young people in policy formulation processes ([Sections 2.1](#)) ([Section 2.2](#)) ([Section 2.3](#)).

Recommendation: Funded urban initiatives focused on youth safety should secure government support and buy-in to ensure their lasting success and amplify their transformative potential.

3.4 Institutionalisation of youth-led initiatives

Funded programmes play a crucial role in catalysing youth-led initiatives, and providing the necessary resources and support to get them off the ground. However, for these initiatives to continue making a difference beyond the duration of the programme, it is essential to institutionalise them, ensuring that the knowledge, skills, and networks developed through these initiatives are preserved and built upon, contributing to long-term and lasting impact.



Young people mapping safety issues in Envigado

S²Cities has supported institutionalisation by integrating these initiatives into existing structures to ensure their long-term sustainability and relevance. For example, youth-led initiatives like **Vevo-Vevo Lab** in Envigado ([Case Study 3](#)) and **Kami Ruang Ketiga** in Bandung ([Case Study 2](#)) have transitioned into NGOs with assistance from government and local implementing partners, offering a stable platform for young people to keep addressing the issues they are passionate about. Initiatives like **Parchate Con La Calle (Patch Yourself to the Street)** have influenced policy changes and played a key role in forming local government working groups on human rights and environmental issues ([Refer to Annexure 1](#)).

Recommendation: Contextually appropriate methods of institutionalisation should be a key consideration to ensure the sustainability of youth-led initiatives and amplify their impact.

3.5 Participatory approach to learning and evaluation

The absence of localised data remains a critical challenge in fully understanding the nuanced layers of safety issues and in shaping targeted interventions that are contextually relevant. Complex multi-stakeholder, multi-city programmes thus demand a comprehensive evaluation and learning framework to effectively capture the positive changes, impacts, and insights across various contexts and stakeholders.

The S²Cities programme's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (iMEL) framework adopts a [Participatory Action Research \(PAR\)](#) approach, to engage young people and diverse stakeholders in collecting and analysing the outcomes of the programme that is adaptable to different cities. By employing action-reflection cycles, the iMEL framework systematically collects evidence to measure the progress of youth-led initiatives and evaluate their potential policy influence.

Recommendation: Adopting an iterative and participatory approach to learning and evaluation to capture local data and evidence to improve urban safety and security for the youth.



Young people participating in the Innovation Ideathon in Cuenca



Young people getting feedback on their initiatives from the Municipal Officials in Ambato

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, while strides have been made in urban interventions to bolster the health, well-being, and safety of young individuals, the multifaceted nature of urban safety necessitates a more nuanced comprehension. Central to this endeavour is the active involvement of young people themselves in identifying and tackling these complexities. This policy brief advocates for the creation of platforms that empower youth to actively participate in the ideation, iteration, and co-creation of solutions customised to address their specific concerns. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of involving young people in decision-making processes concerning safety within their communities and cities. By doing so, it aims to provide guidance for funded programmes and governmental initiatives focused on youth safety, ensuring a sustained and impactful approach to cultivating safer urban environments for young populations.

REFERENCES

- Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). Global Youth Development Index and Report. Commonwealth Secretariat. <https://youth-development-index.thecommonwealth.org/assets/pdf/global-youth-development-report-2020.pdf>
- Del Estado Civil. (2021, December 5). ¡Histórico! Colombia vivió las primeras elecciones de los Consejos Municipales (...). Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil. <https://www.registraduria.gov.co/Historico-Colombia-vivio-las-primeras-elecciones-de-los-Consejos-Municipales-y.html>
- El Espectador. (2018, May). Por fin, con el 53 %, los votos le ganaron a la abstención. El Espectador. <https://www.elespectador.com/politica/por-fin-con-el-53-los-votos-le-ganaron-a-la-abstencion-article-791085/#>
- Función Pública. (2021). Ley 1885 de 2018 - Gestor Normativo. Función Pública. <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=85540>
- Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. (2019). ZERO WASTE CITIES ASIA SERIES Bandung City, Indonesia. Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. <https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/Bandung.pdf>
- Global Plastic Action Partnership. (2020). Indonesia National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP). Global Plastic Action Partnership. <https://www.globalplasticaction.org/indonesia-national-plastic-action-partnership-npap-reveals-recommendations-to-unlock-financing-gaps-to-cut-marine-plastic-debris-by-70-percent>
- Hasanah, D., Adiwilaga, R., & Widaningsih, I. (2022). Koordinasi pemerintah kecamatan dengan kepolisian dalam menanggulangi tindak criminal begal di kecamatan Pamengpeuk kabupaten Bandung. Jurnal Jisipol, 6(3), 99-116.
- Interlace. (n.d.). Envigado – Colombia | Interlace. INTERLACE project. <https://www.interlace-project.eu/node/33>
- OECD. (2020). Youth and Public Institutions: Stronger Together. In Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1a587081-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/1a587081-en#back-endnotea3z2>
- Petrella, L. (2007, September). Inclusive Governance - A Critical tool in the fight against Crime. UN Habitat Debate - A Safe City is a Just City, Vol 13(3), 4. [A safe city is a just cityUN-Habitathttps://staging.unhabitat.org > getElectronicVersion](https://staging.unhabitat.org/getElectronicVersion)
- S²Cities programme. (2023, June 27). Blog on JAJAKA: connecting youth entrepreneurs to opportunities in Bandung, Indonesia. Safe & Sound Cities. <https://S²Cities.org/blog/jajaka-connecting-youth-entrepreneurs-to-opportunities/>
- S²Cities programme. (2023, October). Literature Review and Methodological Protocol Report | S²Cities Research Partners.
- S²Cities programme. (2024, February 3). S²Cities Impact Report 2021-23. Safe and Sound Cities Programme. <https://S²Cities.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/28-11-23-Final-Impact-Report.pdf>
- UN General Assembly. (2018, June). Youth and human rights: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. UN Digital Library. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1640929?ln=en>
- UN-Habitat. (2007). Enhancing Urban Safety and Security. Earthscan. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/2585_2432alt1.pdf
- United Nations. (2012). The Future We Want. The United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf>
- United Nations. (2015, April 13). 10 things you didn't know about the world's population. United Nations Population Fund. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/10-things-you-didn%E2%80%99t-know-about-world%E2%80%99s-population>
- United Nations (2021a, June 18). If I Disappear: Global Report on Protecting Young People in Civic Spaces. the United Nations. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Global-Report-on-Protecting-Young-People-in-Civic-Space.pdf>
- The World Bank. (2020). THE HIDDEN WEALTH OF CITIES. The World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/publication/the-hidden-wealth-of-cities-creating-financing-and-managing-public-spaces>
- The World Bank. (2021, May 20). Plastic Waste Discharges from Rivers and Coastlines in Indonesia. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/indonesia/publication/plastic-waste-discharges-from-rivers-and-coastlines-in-indonesia>

ANNEXURE 1

Winning Youth Initiatives: Year 1

#	Initiative	Safety Solution Summary
Bandung, Indonesia		
1	Kami Ruang Ketiga	Recognising placemaking opportunities in the city and creating awareness by holding events, inviting the private sector collaboration and advocating with the public sector to improve existing spaces.
2	Jajaka	Developing a digital application-based business service that improves the business development of MSME communities in Bandung.
Envigado, Colombia		
3	Vevo Lab	Mitigate threats to Envigado’s natural ecosystems by building awareness and organising interpretive tours to train children, adolescents, youth, and adults of the region.
4	Casa Crea	Championing that incarcerated individuals can reshape their destinies through art, humanity, and cognitive therapy, fostering their reinsertion and resocialisation into society.
5	Flow and Bars	Promoting new sports trends to address the underutilisation of the city’s sports venues and to strengthen protective factors for young people.
6	Por Ahí Derecho	Generate awareness about street sexual harassment as a form of sexual violence.
7	Parchate Con La Calle	Establish a dialogue platform with the transient populations (street dwellers), in selected locations of the city.
8	Con El Lienzo Al Viento	Turning underutilised public buildings and spaces in Envigado into places for learning and culture.

Winning Youth Initiatives: Year 2

#	Initiative	Safety Solution Summary
Bandung, Indonesia		
1	Imah Maggot Bantaran	Working closely with communities to create maggot houses to treat organic waste, and reduce food waste ending up in landfill sites.
2	Bersuara Proyek	Bersuara is a bullying reporting platform focusing on recovery of victims of bullying using Judith Herman’s approach.
3	Lakuna Kota	With limited and mismanaged public spaces, using tactical urbanism and design charrettes to create zones for public use in Kopo village
Envigado, Colombia		
4	Sí Paz	Reduction of violent actions (bullying and hate speech) in the educational sector of the Municipality of Envigado through a methodology with a restorative approach.

5	More Than Pikes	Aims to address the stigma around motorbike stunt riding and promote the safety and legitimacy of the sport.
6	Weaving Stories	The appropriation of a public space in a neighbourhood through a tactical urban planning strategy that strengthens the intergenerational social fabric, environmental awareness, healthy coexistence and security.
7	Life and Noise	Raise awareness among young people about noise pollution in the Municipality of Envigado.
8	Barrios Vivos	Design community spaces that promote intergenerational interactions.
9	Galería A Pie	Raise awareness about urban graphic artists and their role in the transformation of public spaces.
Baguio, The Philippines		
10	Wellness on Wheels	Establishing a digital wellness hub alongside a mobile wellness hub, integrating both digital and mobile placemaking tactics to tackle mental health issues.
11	Pop-up Theatre	Providing a mobile pop-up theatre as a stage for performers and various communities to engage in cross-cultural exchanges.
12	Pagsasabatan	Revitalising neglected space into a vibrant hub of connectivity, creativity, and learning through placemaking.
13	Happy Paws Pet Park	Creating a green social and recreation hub for pet owners to enhance their bond with their pets, upholding the communities mental and physical wellbeing.
Naga, The Philippines		
14	Skateopia	Establishing a safe, accessible, and dynamic space for skateboarders, BMX riders, roller skaters, and kick scooter enthusiasts in the city.
15	Lights, Camera, Action	Integrating essential street fixtures into multipurpose, sustainable, and cost-efficient streetlights.
16	FloMo	An AI-equipped device to detect and deter illegal parking, notifying drivers of restricted zones and ensuring traffic compliance.
Ambato, Ecuador		
17	RenovArte	Implementing murals, street furniture and green areas in collaboration with existing businesses to create a safe and vibrant space for passersby.
18	Espacio Sano & Seguro	Generating a recreational and cultural axis in the streets to enhance the safety and wellbeing of youth and neighbouring communities.
Cuenca, Ecuador		
19	ArteRia	Revitalising sidewalks to motivate use of public transport, while establishing connections between local businesses and users of the area.
20	BiblioRío	Establishing a secure outdoor space for young people to engage in reading and foster connections with the environment and community.

ANNEXURE 2

Partners and Allies: Bandung and Envigado Year 1

Initiative, City	Government Organisations	Private and Civil Society Organisation
Kami Ruang Ketiga, Bandung	- Head of Urban Village of Tamansari - Water Resources & Public Work Agency - Youth and Sport Agency	- Institut Teknologi Bandung (Institution) - Meraki Asa (Community) - Kompas (Media Partner) - CIMB Niaga (Private sector)
Jajaka, Bandung	Kampong Dago Pojok Bandung City Government	- IT Incubator HMIF ITB - Pratisara Bumi Foundation - Digital Jabar - Karya Salemba Empat organisation - PT. Geo Environmental Analytics - PT Madani National Capital
Flow and Bars, Envigado	- Mayor's Office, Envigado - Inder Envigado, Recreational Institution	- Slack Art Corporation - EVG Extreme Corporation
Casa Crea, Envigado		- Epígrafe Corporation: adopted and supported the development of the initiative. - Mayún company: an ally in the commercialisation of the products made by the workshop participants. - True and Reanudando
Vevo Lab, Envigado	- Envigado's Secretary of Environment and Agricultural Development - Envigado's Secretary of Culture - Envigado's zonal committees, instances of citizen participation, Envigado	- Sofasa, private company - Boticario, Candle shop
Por ahí derecho, Envigado	- Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF): provided a pre-existing initiative, its social laboratory called JuventudES. - Women's Secretariat of Envigado: support in the creation of a women's circle with legal and psychological counselling. - Mayor's office of Envigado: support in developing an event to talk to the population about sexual harassment.	Cab drivers' union: ally in the implementation of a campaign to make cabs safe places
Parchate Con La Calle	- Educational institutions - Envigado's House of Justice - Envigado's Secretary of Welfare - Envigado's Secretary of Security	



The Safe and Sound Cities (S²Cities) programme is an initiative proudly led by Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation (GIB), in partnership with ICLEI, hosted by Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, with the support of Fondation Botnar.