

How Cities are Designed and
Governed for the Next Generation

Shaping urban futures through youth participation



Why this matters

This case matters because long-term urban prosperity depends on institutions that can learn from the next generation and design for their daily lives.

The urban pressure

Young people often do not experience formal participation spaces as safe, accessible or genuine. Babies, toddlers, young children and caregivers are often invisible in local decision-making, leading to poor access to green space, mobility, public realm and services.



The partnership response

LSE Cities acted as the convening and delivery partner, connecting academic expertise with philanthropic funding, local government experience and global city networks. The model brought together research, education and practical municipal support.

What the project did

The intervention consisted of two linked programmes: NextGenC, which explores youth governance in Colombian intermediary cities, and Urban95 Academy, which equips city leaders to design public spaces and policies around young children and caregivers.

Interventions and outcomes

- Used research, geographic information systems (GIS), social network analysis, ethnography and digital tools to explore youth participation.
- Delivered executive education for city leaders on child-friendly urban planning.
- Supported municipal teams to collect data, engage communities and design public space interventions.

What made it work

Combining rigorous research with executive education worked well because it translated evidence into practical tools that city teams could use. Philanthropic support enabled free access and wider reach.

Challenges and lessons

The next step is strengthening post-programme networks so participating cities continue sharing practice and embedding change after the formal programme ends.

Relevance to other cities

Relevant to cities seeking to rebuild trust, improve child-friendly planning, design public spaces for caregivers and strengthen youth participation in governance.

Follow-up opportunity

This case could support further exchange on youth governance, child-friendly cities, urban leadership education, participatory data and next-generation public realm.

For more information visit: www.lse.ac.uk/cities



Partnerships to deliver

prosperous urban futures

Part of the UK's contribution to the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, this case study highlights how cities are responding to challenges through practical, place-based collaboration. It reflects a shared commitment to learning, collaboration and building partnerships for the future of cities.