



Postcard From My City

Concept Note

Background

Urban October¹ seeks to raise awareness around sustainable urban development, with a month-long engagement that includes World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October, and ends with World Cities Day on 31st October. The agenda seeks to bring together various stakeholders such as national, local and international governments, civil society organisations, as well as individuals and constituencies to participate in various activities, events and discussions. The initiative aims to promote a better urban future for all.

In 2018, 55% of the world's population was living in urban areas. This number is projected to increase to 68% by 2050.² While urbanisation provides city inhabitants with opportunities for growth, when unplanned it also presents complex challenges. Therefore, it is important that urbanisation is backed by planning to make it sustainable while maximising the benefits it can provide. This is also in sync with the goal of "making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (SDG 11)³.

[Fondation Botnar](#) is a Swiss-based philanthropic foundation which champions the use of AI and digital technology to improve the health and well-being of children and young people in growing urban environments. To achieve this, the foundation supports research, catalyses diverse partners, and invests in scalable solutions around the world. The Healthy Cities for Adolescents (HCA) Program⁴ is such an initiative of the foundation. Managed by the [International Society for Urban Health](#), the program looks to improve the health and well-being of adolescents in secondary cities using a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral collaborative approach. In its third year of implementation, the program has projects running in secondary cities across Colombia, Senegal, Ghana, India and Vietnam. These projects are centred on empowering adolescents as change makers in their own communities, and focus on developing sustainable and scalable solutions that lend themselves to improving the quality of life of adolescents in secondary cities.

¹ <https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/>

² <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf><https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf>

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

⁴ <https://www.fondationbotnar.org/project/the-botnar-healthy-cities-for-adolescents-program/>

Campaign

With its focus on harnessing the potential of secondary cities to cater to the health and well-being of adolescents, the HCA program seeks to participate in Urban October beginning on World Habitat Day (4th October 2021) with the launch of its campaign “Postcard From My City”. The campaign seeks inspiration from the overall goal of sustainable urbanisation and will invite people in HCA program cities to talk about issues affecting young people. Every person featured will be a stakeholder who is invested in adolescent health and well-being. Their words will give life to issues faced by adolescents as they experience their developing years in secondary cities, and focus on the aspects of city life that can be augmented to benefit adolescent development. In its essence, the campaign will mobilise young people as well as diverse city stakeholders such as government officials, police officers, teachers, doctors, etc. and will encourage them to reflect upon the impact of urbanisation on adolescents, sustainability and their cities.

The campaign focus sits on cities and their role in adolescent well-being as adolescence is the formative time period that affects the long-term health and well-being of a person. Further, a well-designed urban environment has the capacity to provide its inhabitants with equitable access to resources and services. Improved access to health services, education, mobility, and public spaces can provide adolescents with the building blocks to experience healthy lives that will contribute to their future well-being. This is in line with Urban October’s agenda to promote a healthy urban future for all.

The myriad voices captured during the campaign will be exhibited in the program’s Community of Practice which is housed on the [HCA Knowledge Management Platform](#). This will enable everyone interested and invested in issues of urbanisation and adolescent well-being access to view as well as engage with the exhibit.

The campaign will conclude with a cityscape that will be launched on World Cities Day. This cityscape will be built using the diverse voices captured throughout the campaign and demonstrate what a healthy city for adolescents can look like. Put together, these voices will highlight the various services, resources and spaces that build a city that is inclusive, healthy, and safe, and one that caters to improving the well-being of adolescents. Thereby following suit of the overall theme of World Cities Day, *Better City, Better Life*.

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