



# EVIDENCE TO ACTION FRAMEWORK

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH  
TO ACTION LEARNING

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A Summary Guide of the Framework is available online at [https://melbourne.figshare.com/articles/online\\_resource/Evidence\\_to\\_Action\\_E2A\\_Framework\\_A\\_Participatory\\_Approach\\_to\\_Action\\_Learning\\_-\\_Summary\\_Guide/14714814](https://melbourne.figshare.com/articles/online_resource/Evidence_to_Action_E2A_Framework_A_Participatory_Approach_to_Action_Learning_-_Summary_Guide/14714814)

This Framework builds on a previous Discussion Paper, which is available on request from the Lab.

For more information visit [research.unimelb.edu.au/connected-cities](https://research.unimelb.edu.au/connected-cities)

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## E2A FRAMEWORK PURPOSE

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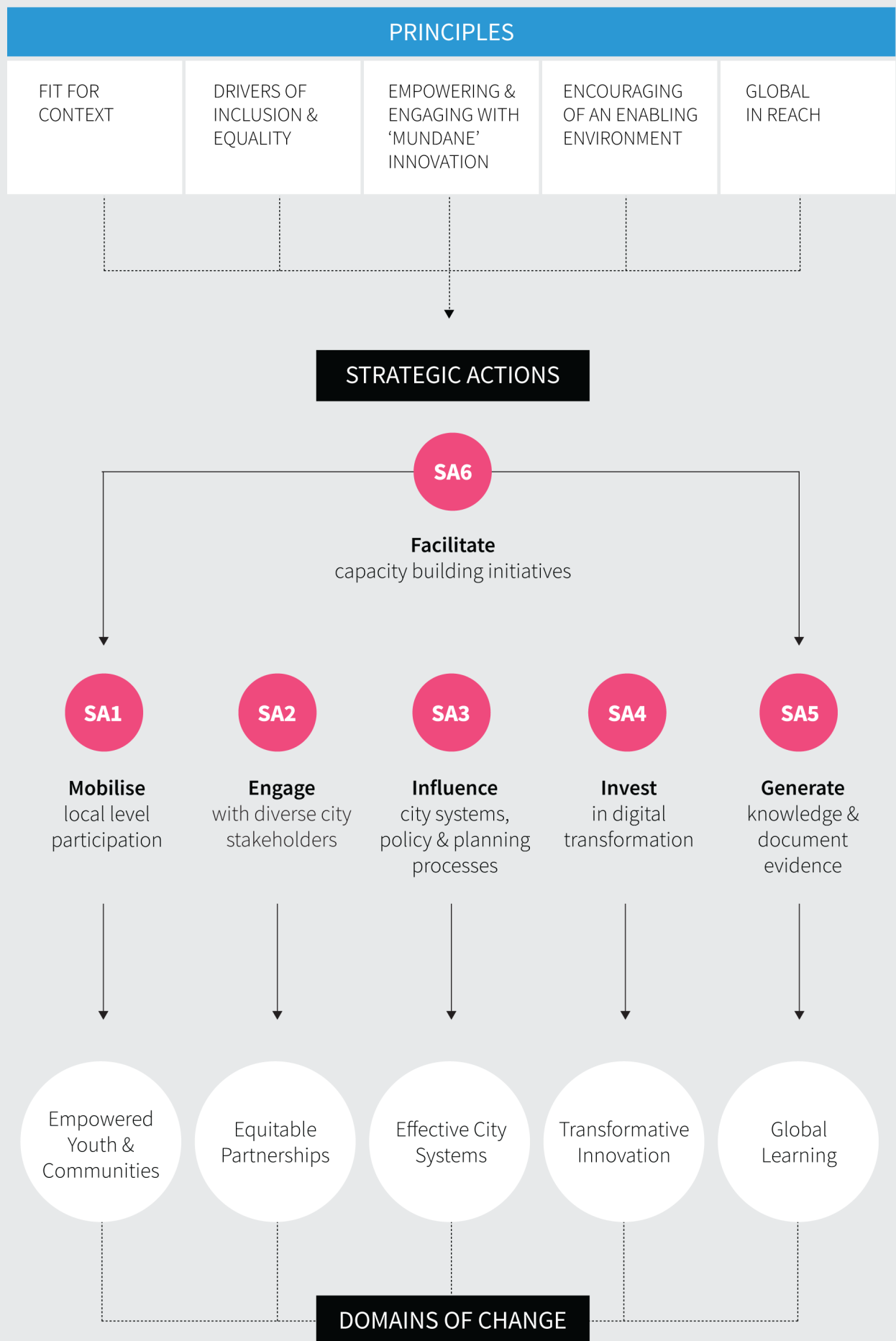
- Launch an *organisational learning agenda* across all Botnar city projects and initiatives to generate evidence of what works and what does not to promote systemic urban change.
- Enable Fondation Botnar staff to design a learning and evaluation strategy for Botnar cities portfolio.
- Provide critical *principles*, essential for inclusive and sustainable development to achieve ‘*cities fit for young people*.’
- Outline a set of *strategic actions* which can support the launch of a learning agenda through projects and programming.
- Apply key *domains of change* as a common instrument for monitoring and evaluation to measure the achievement of Botnar goals and objectives.
- Apply an organisational evidence building plan across all city initiatives funded by Fondation Botnar.
- Provide clear guidelines to establish an evidence building process in city initiatives that:
  - Promotes a formal learning process to assess, inform and refine action and approaches to understanding local issues and setting priorities.
  - Informs the design of program models using evidence-based solutions.
  - Achieves measurable improvements in identified program priorities and outcomes.
  - Generates data to inform policy change at local and global levels.

## E2A FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

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The E2A Framework is a tool that proposes essential elements and methodologies through which Fondation Botnar and their program partners can frame and operationalise a formal learning agenda at an organisational and program level. It also provides guidance on integrating an evidence building plan, including a learning and evaluation strategy across programs. The E2A Framework:

- Offers a set of **five principles** which underpin a transformative evidence, action and learning process. They outline that meaningful evidence and action processes should be: fit for context; drivers of inclusion and urban equality; engaged with ‘mundane’ innovation; encouraging of an enabling environment; and global in reach.
- Proposes **six strategic actions** that provide entry points through which the principles can be operationalised, and which can catalyse processes of change, resulting in an integrated, holistic approach to achieving wellbeing outcomes. These actions recommend: mobilising local level participation; engaging with diverse city stakeholders; influencing city systems, policy and planning processes; investing in digital transformation; generating knowledge and documenting evidence; and facilitating capacity building initiatives.
- Outlines **five domains of change** which reflect outcomes that support the wider aim of achieving ‘cities fit for young people’. These are: empowered youth & communities; equitable partnerships; effective city systems; transformative innovation; and global learning.



## WHY EVIDENCE MATTERS

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Generating rigorous, credible, and relevant evidence that captures the diverse ‘realities on the ground’ is key to informing a learning strategy focused on transformative action for youth wellbeing. Evidence is vital for organisational and programmatic strategy and agenda setting, informed decision-making, designing and implementing interventions aimed at improving wellbeing, and ensuring better outcomes. Gathering evidence across cities can generate valuable global lessons on how Botnar interventions enhanced young people’s wellbeing, and more broadly contributed to a process of social change. Evidence is a foundational tool for knowing ‘*what to do*’ and ‘*how to do it*’, and scaling for global impact.

Moreover, supporting young people to act as leaders and experts in evidence building can nurture their ‘**capacity to aspire**’ - that is, the “*social and cultural capacity to plan, hope, desire, and achieve socially valuable goals*” (Appadurai, 2006, p. 176). This means that the process through which evidence is generated and used, is as critical as the outcomes it generates in terms of enhancing young people’s relational wellbeing.

**Evidence for the E2A Framework is understood as:** Knowledge that is systematically gathered about ‘what works’ (or does not work) in a particular context. Knowledge is embedded in culture and context, and can emerge from diverse sources and actors - including from research processes, organisational or practice-based expertise, or cultural or ‘lived’ experiences.

Translating evidence to action is a product of several overlapping dynamics. These include the inclusion and credibility of actors and forms of research that are produced, the cultural context, formal and informal political systems, innovation which can disrupt or catalyse change, and the influence of global processes and agendas.



## E2A FRAMEWORK AUDIENCE

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- The E2A Framework is for all those who are interested in learning by doing, experimenting, and establishing iterative processes of knowledge development and translation to inform sustainable development outcomes in diverse urban settings.
- It is for development practitioners, knowledge builders and all stakeholders who are interested in driving an evidence building agenda formally and informally in cities.
- It is a resource for Fondation Botnar staff to make informed decisions on project funding allocations, monitoring and reassessing projects through the E2A lens, and developing a portfolio of cities based on learning and evaluation practices.
- It is a tool for local knowledge think tanks, institutes, and civil society organisations on knowledge translation methodologies and processes, to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities of grassroots action projects and policy initiatives.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ABOUT THE E2A FRAMEWORK

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework is the product of an ongoing collaboration between the University of Melbourne's Connected Cities Lab (CCL) and Fondation Botnar, a Swiss philanthropic foundation, committed to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in urban environments. This Framework aims to facilitate the collaborative generation of evidence pertaining to young people's needs, capacities and aspirations, to inform transformative action in secondary cities.

To launch a formal dialogue on evidence building, a Discussion Paper outlining key elements of an E2A Framework was submitted by the Lab (CCL, 2019). This current document builds on the Discussion Paper and presents a comprehensive strategy for mobilising evidence to action about 'what works' or 'what does not work' to support youth wellbeing in secondary cities. The E2A Framework supports Fondation Botnar's wider mission to improve "*relational wellbeing*" by "*supporting research, catalyzing diverse partners, and investing in scalable digital solutions*" through the establishment of OurCity Initiatives and other urban programs.

The purpose of the E2A Framework is to create a common language around principles, actionable strategies, and key learning questions against the domains of change to enhance young people's wellbeing in select secondary cities. This is intended to support the launch of an organisational learning agenda across all Botnar city projects and initiatives, to generate evidence of what works and what does not to promote sustainable and systemic urban change.

The E2A Framework is made up of **five principles**, **six strategic actions** and **five domains of change**. It is expected that investing in interventions which are guided by the principles, programmed through the strategic actions, and informed by participatory approaches to evidence building and action, will generate transformative outcomes across five key domains of change. A set of strategic learning questions are provided which can support reflexive evaluation at the Botnar organisational level and in programming in urban settings.

The uniqueness of the E2A Framework lies in its focus on bridging the often-seen knowledge disconnect between research and practice by institutionalising a process of collaborative learning and evidence building that informs Botnar's interventions across diverse cities. Stepping away from the traditional approaches of viewing development interventions and knowledge generation as separate processes, the Framework integrates learning with doing in a way that ensures not only that programs are informed by evidence but also that programs generate credible evidence for shaping local and global development agenda.

The Framework is written in two parts: **Part 1** presents the key concepts, theories, and case studies which have informed the different elements of the Framework. It concludes with the comprehensive E2A strategy, and presents key learning questions which can guide its evaluation. **Part 2** offers guidelines for operationalising the Framework, offering practical tools and examples for adopting a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to evidence building and action.

## Guide to this Document

**Part 1 Section 1** introduces the E2A Framework and the wider context in which it is situated, including its alignment with Fondation Botnar's broader strategic goals. It also outlines the methods adopted to develop the Framework, and expands on seven key themes which emerged from a rigorous academic review, as well as rich insights from practitioners of the Global South. These themes are: health and wellbeing; inclusion and equity; voice and participation; city systems; capacity building; digital technologies and data; and partnerships. They represent lessons and reflections on evidence, knowledge building, and learning for wellbeing in urban development practice and are closely aligned with Fondation Botnar's organisational mandate and goals.

**Part 1 Section 2** draws from these themes to further outline the E2A Framework, including an explanation of the principles, strategic actions, domains of change, as well as key learning questions to guide evaluation.

- Firstly, a refined set of **five principles** is proposed, drawing on the original Discussion Paper (CCL, 2019). These outline that transformative evidence and action processes should be: fit for context; drivers of inclusion and urban equality; engaged with 'mundane' innovation; encouraging of an enabling environment; and global in reach.
- Secondly, the Framework proposes **six strategic actions** that provide entry points through which the principles can be operationalised, and which can catalyse processes of change, resulting in an integrated, holistic approach to achieving wellbeing outcomes. These actions recommend: mobilising local level participation; engaging with diverse city stakeholders; influencing city systems, policy and planning processes; investing in digital transformation; generating knowledge and documenting evidence; and facilitating capacity building initiatives.
- The Framework then outlines **five domains of change**, reflecting key outcomes informed by the strategic actions, which can support the wider aim of achieving '*cities fit for young people*' (see Fondation Botnar Strategic Objective 1). These are: empowered youth and communities; equitable partnerships; effective city systems; transformative innovation; and global learning.
- Finally, **strategic learning questions** linked with each domain are suggested to help guide monitoring and reflection in city programs and inform Botnar organisational strategy.

**Part 2 Section 1** presents a conceptual and practical overview of 'knowledge translation'; or the dynamic process through which evidence mobilised into action. This section first unpacks the concept of 'evidence', outlining an operable definition that acknowledges the diverse realities on the ground, and which is co-created at different stages. A model for how evidence is translated to action is articulated - drawing attention to intersecting facets of research types and actors, cultural context, political systems and histories, innovative processes, and the influence of global processes and agendas. A participatory approach to evidence building and action is proposed, to support the capacities of young people to act as agents of change, facilitate empowered communities which are in close dialogue with city decision-makers, and generate more equitable city systems that better respond to the aspirations of young people, and especially those from vulnerable groups.

**Part 2 Section 2** outlines implementation guidelines for embedding a PAR approach across the project cycle. Several examples of local level processes which can operationalise the strategic actions are outlined, alongside a series of case studies which illustrate the strategic actions in practice. This section concludes with guidelines for a phased approach to applying the strategic learning questions.

## Conclusion

This year, the UN launched its call for a '*Decade of Action*' (2020-2030) for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - calling for global, local and people action. Within this context, the E2A Framework charts clear principles and strategic actions for building and mobilising evidence towards the goal of creating '*cities fit for young people*'. Through building grounded urban knowledge, Fondation Botnar can embrace the opportunity to be a part of this global movement of action and innovation - supporting youth leaders to harness the power of digital technologies, and to be at the forefront of shaping new urban futures.



# PART 1: THEORISING THE E2A FRAMEWORK

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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### BACKGROUND

We live in an increasingly urban and increasingly inequitable world. Widespread adoption of major global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA) indicate the vital necessity of planning for more inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, charting clear pathways for enhanced wellbeing. Globally, there has been an acknowledgment of the need for new knowledge and evidence to achieve these transformative agendas, with the United Nations (UN) calling for a ‘*data revolution*’ (UN-Habitat 2014). This call is supported through powerful innovations in digital technologies - whether gathering citizen-led data through mobile phones or Geographic Information Systems (GIS), extending online access to vital health or education services, or connecting citizens to local governments through digital platforms. Critically, youth voices will be fundamental to seizing these new opportunities and championing intergenerational equity - representing over 60% of the world’s urban population (World Bank, 2016) - and as the future leaders of a more inclusive world.

Within this context, Fondation Botnar has a unique opportunity to support the ‘*Decade of Action*’ (2020-2030), supporting youth leaders to harness the power of digital technologies and be at the forefront of articulating and shaping new urban futures. In May this year Fondation Botnar launched their Strategy 2020-2022. Focusing on young people aged 10-24 (1.8 billion of the global population of 7.3 billion people), the strategy presents a refined vision - orienting the organisation towards achieving their 2030 goals, and their desire to journey from “*grant maker to change maker*”, through a commitment to collective learning and reflection. A major refinement in the strategy is the adoption of a relational approach to young people’s wellbeing that is reflected across Fondation Botnar’s operations. Grounded in self-determination theory, a relational approach is anchored in three core concepts: autonomy (having scope for choice and room for maneuver); relatedness (being able to give and receive support and being treated and treating others with respect and dignity); and competence (having knowledge and skills and the scope to exercise them) (see Fondation Botnar: A Relational Approach to Young People’s Wellbeing). These concepts are embedded in the refined strategy; providing a bridge between Fondation Botnar’s vision for young people’s wellbeing, and the need to operationalise relational wellbeing across organisational processes and in supported projects such as the OurCity Initiatives (OCIs).

The refined strategy also articulates two *Enabling Actions* including: *strategic learning and evaluation*, further emphasising a learning agenda and; *shaping agendas*, strengthening their focus on policy outcomes and their desire to “*become a trusted convener, catalyst and critical voice in the domain of children and young people’s wellbeing in urban areas*”. The E2A Framework aims to contribute to Fondation Botnar’s wider mission of enhancing learning processes and becoming a change maker at the local and global level. It is closely aligned with the *Principles and Approaches* outlined in their refined strategy: *systemic and sustainable transformation; relational wellbeing; children and young people’s rights, gender equality and inclusiveness; participation; catalyst for change; science based; and partnerships*.

The E2A Framework is also aligned with Fondation Botnars *Strategic Objectives* that guide their investments in secondary cities:

- SO1 Cities fit for young people
- SO2 AI & digital transformation
- SO3 Research for young people's wellbeing
- SO4 System enabler
- SO5 Entrepreneurship and innovative finance

While the Framework is an important investment in achieving '*SO1 Cities fit for young people*', it also aims to make an important contribution in achieving '*SO3 Research for young people's wellbeing*', by supporting systematic research projects to capture learning and evidence.

Building on the previous Discussion Paper (CCL, 2019), the E2A Framework presents a comprehensive strategy for learning and reflection about transformative action in secondary cities, to enhance youth wellbeing. It is underpinned by five key principles which guide a robust and transformative E2A process, six strategic actions which can guide knowledge building and action, and five domains of change which contribute to Fondation Botnar's aim of achieving '*cities fit for young people*'. The Framework has been developed through case studies of similar programmatic approaches, interviews with leading urban practitioners working on development, youth engagement, and technology, and a rigorous academic review from disciplines relevant to Fondation Botnar priorities. It is expected that investing in interventions which are designed in line with the principles and programmed through the strategic actions, will lead to positive outcomes across multiple key domains of change.

The E2A Framework outlines a meta-learning and research strategy, which aims to support reflection on what works and what does not work in urban environments, to inform periodic iterations of Fondation Botnar's approaches and goals. This ongoing research and learning strategy aims to:

- Overlay a meta-learning strategy to inform monitoring, evaluation and research activities across a range of Fondation Botnar funded urban programs and projects.
- Collate and draw on learnings from Fondation Botnar city projects to develop new knowledge about challenges and promising solutions across the domains of change in diverse urban environments and contexts.
- Support the refinement of Fondation Botnar's programming approaches and tools that facilitate integrated, holistic, innovative development in urban environments.
- Enable Fondation Botnar to deliver its goal to be a learning organisation, by applying the E2A Framework and acting on learning for further refinement of its global strategy.

The uniqueness of the E2A framework lies in its focus on bridging the often-seen knowledge disconnect between research and practice by institutionalising processes of collaborative learning and evidence building that inform the complete project cycle of Botnar's interventions, starting from inception to impact assessment, across diverse cities. Stepping away from the traditional approaches of viewing development interventions and knowledge generation as separate processes, the E2A integrates learning with doing in a way that ensures not only that programs are informed by evidence but also that programs generate credible evidence for shaping local and global development agendas.

## CONTEXT

Humans are both a part and a product of their ecology and for an ever-increasing proportion of society, the city has become the principle ecology (World Bank, 2017). Currently more than half of the global population lives in urban environments, and this is expected to rise to 70% by 2050 (UN, 2019). Rapid urban growth has implications for the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, and around the world is often associated with increased inequalities. Yet this inequality is not inevitable. Well planned urban development can help minimise environmental degradation and simultaneously improve social conditions, community connections, health and wellbeing. In particular, a rich tradition has demonstrated the transformative possibilities of development planning ‘from the peripheries’. City interventions that support people to grow, live, work, and play must be locally appropriate, shaped by urban citizens and grounded in the rights and aspirations of its most vulnerable populations.

The fastest growing urban environments with significant potential to shape the future of urban living are secondary cities (Cities Alliance, 2019). Because secondary cities are smaller in size, they are well positioned to be more responsive to community needs, and smaller investments in city systems change can have relatively greater positive impacts on health and wellbeing. However, the reality for secondary cities is often a lack of investment in infrastructure and services, which means that many are poor, and struggle with limited social systems and support. Despite their critical importance in enhancing the wellbeing of urban residents, secondary cities are also frequently overlooked in international development programs.

Young people under the age of 18 comprise 60% of the world’s urban population (World Bank, 2016), making youth a critical focus of urban development. A booming youth population represents a potential for a youth ‘demographic dividend’ (i.e. increased employment and productivity due to a greater proportion of the population being employed). Addressing the aspirations of young people is an intrinsic right in of itself and key to a flourishing future. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) states that sustainable development cannot be achieved without “*assuring that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to economic growth*” (UNFPA, 2016).

Young people bring diverse perspectives on key urban issues, and when provided with the appropriate knowledge, space, and tools, can meaningfully influence urban policies and processes. The mobilisation of young people around the world on issues of climate change, inequality, and political reform demonstrates the profound power and capacity of these future leaders. However, investment is needed to establish participatory structures that support young people’s ability to shape urban planning and decision-making, and exercise active citizenship. Involvement can be through many forms including action research and learning, citizen participation, partnerships, inclusive governance and planning for sustainability. Whatever the means, it is essential that no decisions affecting youth are made without their involvement: ‘*nothing about us without us*’.

Several global frameworks have been developed to help respond to the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected and urbanised world. Chief among these are the SDGs. Seventeen global goals, underpinned by five pillars (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships) and ratified by 193 countries of the UN General Assembly in 2015 (Agenda, 2030; UN, 2015). The SDGs are a “*blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all*” (UN, 2016). More recently, the NUA, the resolution from the UN-Habitat III conference in Quito 2017, focuses more intently on SDG 11 *Sustainable Urban Development*. It lays out standards and principles for the planning, construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas and incorporating a new recognition of the importance of quality urbanisation in sustainable



development and contributing to improved and more equitable outcomes (UN, 2017). These frameworks, alongside others (e.g. UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities) have been critical for uniting countries toward a shared development agenda to ensure that no-one is left behind.

Despite the benefits these global frameworks have brought, overall action to meet the SDGs has been slow. As a result, in September 2019, the UN Secretary-General called on all sectors of society to mobilise for a '*Decade of Action*' on three levels; **global action** to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the SDGs; **local action** embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and **people action**, including youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations (UN, 2020).

Fondation Botnar recognises the value of learning in driving systemic change, and is committed to cultivating and nurturing learning both within and outside of the organisation to meet the '*Decade of Action*'. This aim is supported through the E2A Framework, which provides a comprehensive strategy for embedding learning and reflexivity throughout Fondation Botnar programs - outlining an approach which facilitates dialogue, builds connections across urban stakeholders, and establishes participatory processes of action research - with the aim of empowering young people, and creating more equitable cities.

## METHODOLOGY

Following the Discussion Paper (CCL, 2019) which explored key principles for embedding evidence to action, a second research phase was undertaken to develop the E2A Framework. This involved three research methods:

### Case Study Scan

Case studies were compiled to learn from existing approaches to knowledge and evidence building for action, across a range of cities in the Global South. Cases were selected because they represented at least two or more components of the Fondation Botnar mandate: they were grounded in the participation of local communities, worked to improve health or wellbeing, demonstrated multi-stakeholder involvement, aimed to influence local government, or harnessed digital technologies.

### Academic Literature Review

An academic literature review was conducted to summarise major themes from disciplines relevant to Fondation Botnar priorities: urban development, city systems and wellbeing, development studies, knowledge translation for policy and practice. This review was done to ensure rigorous evidence underpinned the key pillars of the E2A Framework. A review of theories of evidence and knowledge translation have also informed a theoretical approach and framework.

### Interviews

Primary interviews were undertaken with leading urban development practitioners focused on key lessons for: evidence building with communities, partnering across diverse stakeholders, influencing city systems and policy, and the role of digital technologies. The aim of interviews was to capture the richness of situated experiences and personal expertise in the field of urban development.

## KEY THEMES

The following section summarises the key themes which emerged from the research outlined above. It reflects the wealth of grounded knowledge and experience from practitioners and existing programs in urban centres of the Global South, as well as insight from academic reviews. These key themes have shaped the understanding of the core pillars of the E2A Framework.

### Health and Wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing is central to the mandate of Fondation Botnar. In defining this term, the E2A Framework draws firstly from the World Health Organization (WHO), which states that “*health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*” (WHO, 1946). This definition resonates with the social determinants of health model and which is well validated in public health academic literature (Wilkinson & Marmot 2003; CSDH, 2008). The model highlights the critical need of investing in “*upstream determinants*” (Zola, 1970) which shape wellbeing including social infrastructure and city systems. In this regard, attention to the ongoing climate emergency and implications of environmental sustainability are paramount.

Broadening this definition to inform a “*relational wellbeing*” approach (White, 2015a) acknowledges that individual and collective wellbeing is integrally shaped by the wider context in which individuals and groups live, work, and play. Wellbeing is therefore multi-dimensional and impacted by factors such as access to good quality housing, open spaces, transport, clean water and healthy food as well as opportunities for recreation and the ability to participate and ‘have a voice’ in decision-making (Wilkinson et al., 2003). This means that initiatives to enhance wellbeing require working across sectors:

**“to improve child health and well-being, it’s a matter not only of one sector” (former Director General, Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology)**

It also means that building evidence for wellbeing entails *objective elements* - such as the number of health or education facilities, quality and quantity of water and sanitation facilities - as well as *subjective elements*, including how people think and feel about themselves, their environment, and their social relations.

### Inclusion and Equity

The concepts of inclusion and equity are fundamental to the Agenda 2030 principle to ‘*leave no-one behind*’. This radical agenda requires an approach which seeks the fair and just distribution of opportunities to experience wellbeing regardless of: physical ability, gender, religion, sexuality, age or any other critical aspects of identity. Inclusion and equity are also articulated in SDG 16 which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

An attention to inclusion and equity means understanding the specific needs and aspirations of diverse social groups, and enacting interventions which can differently address these conditions. For instance, while residents in developing secondary cities might experience sanitation deprivations, this is cross-cut by social factors which shape accessibility. Issues of stigma, violence, or dignity, for instance, fundamentally shape how young women especially can access these vital services. Therefore, interventions to enhance wellbeing through sanitation access must go beyond the provisioning of toilets, to also address concerns of security

and autonomy. In academic terms, this is referred to as the principle of proportionate universalism, that is, providing access to resources and opportunities to all, but with different scales and intensities according to need (Marmot & Bell, 2012).

Critically, leaving no-one behind also means an awareness of the ‘intersectionality’ which occurs when different aspects of one’s social and political identities combine to create unique disadvantage. That is, though Fondation Botnar is focused specifically on young people’s wellbeing, the conditions which hinder or enhance wellbeing will be very different for young women and young men, or for young women from different religious, caste, or ethnic groups, or for young women and men of different abilities. Understanding the specific vulnerabilities that may emerge at the intersection of these social identities is key to leaving no-one behind. Without active engagement of the most vulnerable groups, we may see *“the further marginalisation of communities that are already marginalised in the local context”* (CEO, Safetipin). This can be achieved through investing in processes to obtain disaggregated and people-driven data (UNDP, 2018) and a commitment to *“putting the last first”* (Chambers, 1997) in development interventions.

## Voice and Participation

Investing in opportunities for voice and participation, particularly of young people, is key to producing the evidence needed to enhance their wellbeing. Involving young people in decision-making which impacts their lives and urban environments can lead to more appropriate interventions, but more deeply, creating spaces of participation for young people can enhance feelings of confidence and empowerment, which are fundamental aspects of inner wellbeing (White, 2015b).

The pioneering work of groups such as Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) is a good example of how to meaningfully engage urban citizens in urban planning, particularly through simple technologies such as GIS. Across a range of contexts, SDI have supported organized groups of the urban poor to generate their own maps of informal settlements - documenting households, community facilities and infrastructure, and areas of risk (Patel, Burra & D’Cruz, 2001). These maps have provided valuable information for local city authorities, allowing stakeholders to work together to improve aspects of the urban environment. Importantly, the value of these collaborations is not only improvements in physical conditions, but also as a mode of relations-building:

**“working with resident groups to map their own neighbourhoods builds a shared understanding of what needs to be done” (CEO, Safetipin)**

Critically, literature across academia and practice has warned against more tokenistic or consultative forms of participation, which can disempower citizens if they feel their voices are not meaningfully considered in decision-making (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Cornwall, 2011). This means ensuring that participatory processes create spaces for young people to have an active ‘seat at the decision-making table’, and investing in processes which can empower young people to engage confidently and interact as equals with other major stakeholders in the city. This process can be supported through the establishment of ‘local backbone organisations’, that can champion and facilitate such processes (see Case Study 1). For many urban practitioners, creating the conditions for meaningful participation is ultimately a question of justice:

**“...enabling marginalized voices to articulate their views and visions of the future, whether about mega infrastructure projects, or urban renewal or urban planning agendas... is connected with issues of social justice and equity” (Founder, Karachi Urban Lab)**



## CASE STUDY 1: OURTANGA INITIATIVE

The OurTanga Initiative in Tanzania aims to work with existing city systems to create an enabling environment for innovative solutions to improve the wellbeing of young people. From the outset, the OurTanga Initiative has focused on investing in people to ensure its activities are informed by an understanding of local culture and context.

Between 2018-2019 Fondation Botnar facilitated a multi-sectorial collaborative effort to explore opportunities to improve the wellbeing of young people in Tanga through a stakeholders' roundtable, meetings and workshops. The flow of information is being used to develop a theory of change that is unique and responsive to the city. From here it was decided to identify and strengthen a 'local backbone organisation' to ensure local ownership of actions undertaken by the OurTanga Initiatives.

The OurTanga Initiative illustrates the use of locally derived and community produced data and evidence for informing actions that improve youth health and wellbeing. It also highlights the importance of locally responsive initiatives that are created with an awareness of a city's unique political and resource constraints. The OurTanga Initiative also demonstrates the importance of building on relational opportunities that exist with government and decision-makers as a pathway to improving city systems for improved youth health and wellbeing.

Source: [fondationbotnar.org/ourcity-initiative/](https://fondationbotnar.org/ourcity-initiative/)

## Digital Technologies and Innovation

Innovation can be understood as strategies to address complex problems, with the potential to accelerate impact. Digital technologies can be a powerful form of innovation, and an enabler of broad wellbeing outcomes. Investing in innovative digital technologies can reveal 'hidden' issues, or empower hard-to-reach populations, enable crowd sourced data, facilitate broad based community participation in planning or decision-making, and speed up the processes that create cities fit for young people. Examples of this include: community groups using technologies to conduct surveys and research on local issues, as the Barefoot Researchers of PUKAR are doing in Mumbai; harnessing citizen sourced data to locate 'unsafe' urban spaces, as in the case of Safetipin App; or GIS mapping infrastructure and housing in informal areas, as in the case of SDI. Technology can be a valuable resource for young people and a powerful means to leverage their knowledge, expertise, and experiences to inform city policy or programming.

However, while acknowledging the benefits of investing in technological solutions, urban practitioners also highlighted the value the 'mundane' innovations and technologies that are already being adopted in everyday life. Mobile phones, for instance, can play a vital role in extending accessible finance and loan services for unconnected residents, and apps such as WhatsApp are an increasingly important communication tool. Moreover, technology is valued not 'for its own sake' (Chib, 2015) but rather for its role as an enabler:

**“I’m not convinced that technology is the missing element in these cities; I rather think it’s predominated by bad policy. Having said that, I do think certain technical applications can overcome the worst of bad policy and almost change the question, which is what is very often necessary.” (Director, Cities Alliance)**

Likewise, the purpose of using technology and how it might be an advantage over traditional methods, needs to be well understood by key stakeholders. If smartphones, AI, apps and other technologies are too expensive to be used, or are not used as intended because of insufficient training or infrastructure, then these important logistic and contextual factors need to be addressed first. It is also important to assess the potential risks associated with using digital technologies and develop a management plan to mitigate risk and ensure best practices are adhered to. For example, if the provision of smartphones to adolescents for GIS purposes in certain regions is likely to increase the risk of physical harm through theft and violence, then the risks will outweigh the benefits and alternative methods should be explored. While technology is a powerful enabler - especially when matched with youth engagement - it should be understood as means to an end. Ultimately, transformative innovation requires broader systems change (i.e. enabling political and institutional environments), in which innovative strategies can be facilitated and scaled.

### City Systems

Effectively translating evidence about wellbeing into action in urban environments requires a city systems approach. This is consistent with a multi-dimensional understanding of wellbeing that is rooted in the wider urban context. Adopting a city systems approach means understanding how local communities are linked within the broader urban fabric; while the emphasis on leaving no-one behind entails designing city systems that address the needs of vulnerable residents:

**“You can’t fix systemic faults through projects. So, we insist that any approach to a given sectoral problem has to be citywide, as a point of departure. And most policies that apply in urban areas, you can say as a default are anti-poor. Whether they are by design or by omission, commission or whatever. That is the reality. So, you have to view the city almost from the angle of the least favourite resident and work from that. Without this approach to citywide, it fails.” (Director, Cities Alliance)**

Adopting a city systems approach requires a deep understanding of local governance, and cultural and power systems in operation in the city. Interventions therefore must involve a range of actors in the city, from local government, private sector, grassroots groups, and youth representatives. Establishing city wide forums, or other spaces of dialogue and exchange, has been trialed in a range of contexts to bring diverse stakeholders together (see Case Study 2), identifying that impact at the city level, aimed at systemic change, is crucial for long-term impact.

## CASE STUDY 2: CITY-WIDE FORUMS

The process of developing the Jamaican National Agenda 2030 is a good example of how to facilitate city wide discussions involving diverse stakeholders. The process entailed a series of public sessions held in town halls and community centers, that were open to a broad range of actors - from policy-makers to residents in low income neighbourhoods. Participants were asked to share their experiences of the most challenging issues in their communities and generate suggestions for solutions. This information was collated and used to inform a national strategy, building a grounded, evidence-based framework for sustainable development.

Similarly, in Uganda, Cities Alliance supported the establishment of municipal development forums across 14 secondary cities. The forums became institutionalised structures of engagement between local authorities and organisations of the urban poor, and other non-state actors, creating a durable platform for the National Slum Dwellers Association of Uganda to engage as equals in city decision-making.

Source: [citiesalliance.org/how-we-work/our-programmes/country-programmes/uganda-country-programme](https://citiesalliance.org/how-we-work/our-programmes/country-programmes/uganda-country-programme)

### Partnerships

Urban dynamism presents a complex web of actors, networks and relationships that requires systems and processes to form meaningful collaboration for collective action to promote sustained change. In this urban century, SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals, rightfully calls to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. Effective urban development requires a multi-disciplinary approach. It is increasingly evident that no single actor can unilaterally achieve the type of large scale transformational change necessary to create inclusive cities and sustained impact. Adopting a city systems approach to mobilising evidence grounded in a multi-dimensional understanding of wellbeing necessitates a partnership approach. Several urban practitioners were explicit that working through broad consortia is fundamental to build the types of evidence needed to enact change for wellbeing:

**“The key thing is to get a range of stakeholders around the table; local government, civil society, NGOs, universities, students, youth groups, and others” (CEO, Safetipin)**

Though different partners may bring different skills, resources, or perspectives on change, investing in processes which can facilitate collective learning, and a shared vision for the future are crucial (see Case Study 3). This means:

**“bringing together different actors in the urban system to learn from each other in the different challenges that cities or urban systems are facing, and ... to find actionable solutions around those” (Associate Professor, Makere University)**

For instance, community generated data can be valuable at revealing realities on the ground, but may not exist in formats that are easily accessed by city decision-makers. As such, working in partnership with ‘knowledge intermediaries’ (e.g. NGOs, research institutes, universities) can support the translation of locally derived information into knowledge products such as reports or policy briefs that are actionable:

**“What we found is that communities have been collecting their own data for a long time. The value added as researchers, scientists and other experts is that we are able to bring the perspective of how we are communicating that data towards a goal. This means creating new kinds of data that can travel and can move ... to actionable intelligence.”**  
(Research Fellow, Manseuto Institute)

As discussed in relation to voice and participation, it is also important to recognise that diverse stakeholders in the city experience different forms of power and authority. Generating equitable partnerships therefore requires understanding which urban actors are driving the agenda, and the extent to which less powerful actors can influence change. Crucially, there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for good partnerships, but these different arrangements should be informed by principles of equitable engagement.

### CASE STUDY 3: OURCLUJ INITIATIVE

Cluj-Napoca is the fastest growing city in Romania. With a population of over 320,000 (of which one third are students) it is one of the country’s most important and dynamic academic, cultural, social, industrial and innovation hubs. Despite the large youth population, a focus on young people and their quality of life has not been integrated into the cities strategy.

Global Development, in collaboration with SDG CoLab, Fondation Botnar and local partners, have established the OurCluj Initiative for improving young people’s wellbeing. Using AI technology, a network of over 80 stakeholders was constructed, each with a distinct role within a distributed ownership model to co-create a new paradigm; a city that is focused on development that supports the health and wellbeing of young people. Through collaborative processes, the OurCluj Initiative aims to build evidence about the needs, challenges and opportunities of young people. While still in the early stages of development, the OurCluj Initiative has engaged in candidate interventions to workshop concepts to create a shared vision to address issues such as school absenteeism, community safety-nets for families with seriously sick children and behaviour change for healthy eating and physical activity.

OurCluj highlights the importance of stakeholder identification for engaging organisations who are familiar with the unique placed-based challenges that youth face. It also highlights the power of collaborative and inclusive processes for identifying priority issues, measuring relational systems, and identifying opportunities and leverage points for acting on issues.

Source: [gd-impact.org](https://gd-impact.org); [fondationbotnar.org/ourcity-initiative/](https://fondationbotnar.org/ourcity-initiative/)



## Capacity Building

Capacity building is a broad, multi-leveled concept that spans individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional domains (Brennan et al., 2017). In the context of putting evidence into action for wellbeing, capacity building involves strengthening individual skills and organisational structures to support a greater understanding of evidence, and how it can be practically applied. Capacity building is important for all stakeholders; relating not only to understanding how to access and apply evidence, but equally in understanding what the issues are, and what evidence is needed to help drive change:

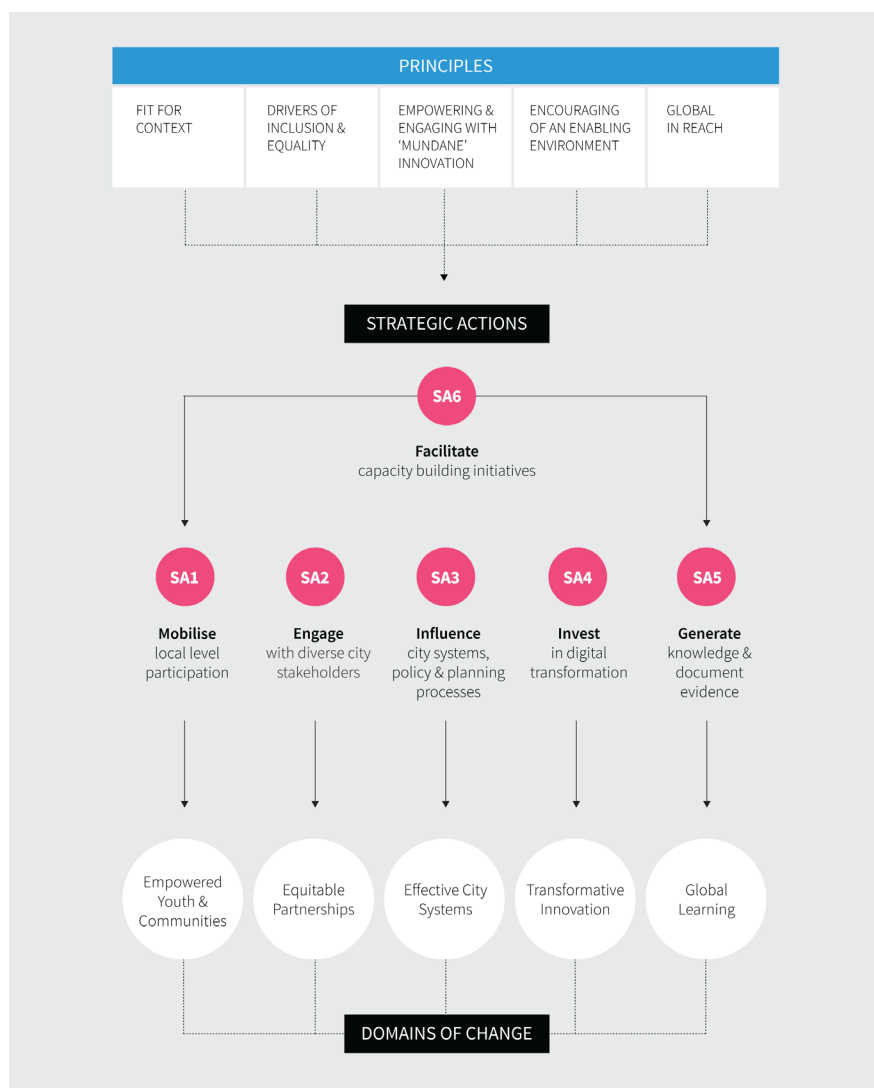
**“A challenge is to get governments to really understand data. They want data, but I don’t know if they really know how to use it. So, I think we have the opportunity to build capacity... to understand and use data.” (CEO, Safetipin)**

At an individual level, capacity building aims to increase skills and self-efficacy for understanding and applying evidence. Strategies might involve workshops to collectively prioritise or analyse wellbeing issues, or on how to source evidence to address key priority issues. At an interpersonal level, capacity building involves building networks and interacting with others to share and build knowledge. This can be done formally through establishing partnerships or ‘communities of practice’, or informally through sustained engagement with individuals or community groups (Sibbald et al., 2012). Capacity building at an organisational level is aimed at building environments that support evidence use. This might involve managerial or workforce training, but it can also be supported through developing tools or resources that support evidence use, such as investing in information technology and building information repositories. Capacity building at the institutional or environmental level, which aims to build greater social interest in evidence use in decision-making, is largely driven by increased capacity in other domains (Punton, 2016). Capacity building at all levels is critically important to fostering a learning agenda.

## SECTION 2: PROMOTING A LEARNING AGENDA

### THE E2A FRAMEWORK: PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIC ACTIONS AND DOMAINS OF CHANGE

The following section outlines a set of operational guidelines to inform the E2A Framework. This includes **five principles** - cross-cutting values that inform approaches to evidence and action, **six strategic actions**, through which principles can be operationalised, and **five domains of change**. These pillars have been identified, categorised and refined from the key themes outlined above, and Botnar priorities as outlined in the organisation's Strategy 2020-2022. The core elements therefore reflect practitioner and academic knowledge on wellbeing, development, sustainability, digital transformation, and young people, and have been designed to speak to the overarching aim of generating '*cities fit for young people*'. It is expected that investing in interventions designed in line with the principles and programmed through the strategic actions, will lead to positive outcomes across multiple key domains of change.



## PRINCIPLES

There are **five principles** proposed to guide the development and ongoing operation of the E2A Framework:

PRINCIPLES				
FIT FOR CONTEXT	DRIVERS OF INCLUSION & EQUALITY	EMPOWERING & ENGAGING WITH 'MUNDANE' INNOVATION	ENCOURAGING OF AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	GLOBAL IN REACH

The principles provide the framing to guide strategic and programmatic decision-making across Botnar programs (see Annex 1: Principles Checklist). They operate as reinforcing concepts that work in synergy to catalyse change. Each is expanded further below.

### Fit for Context

This principle refers to the importance of developing evidence and interventions that are grounded in the issues and voices of local communities. This means establishing programs which are informed by an assessment of core issues and concerns of local groups, even when those issues might not be apparent on the surface of formal(ised) city policies or planning priorities. Doing so requires investing in processes that builds evidence that can speak to “*institutional and cultural memory*” (CEO, Radicle Global), and seeing community experiences and youth voices as equally valid as those of research or policy experts in diagnosing city priorities, building evidence, and designing strategies for action. By applying this principle to projects, practitioners ensure they are learning about the critical issues of the local city context including- the socio-economic aspects, cultural norms that shape behaviours and preferences of local citizens, the political environment, or economic opportunities. In particular, it is critical for communities or youth groups to be understood as partners and leaders, rather than simply as ‘targets’ or beneficiaries of projects. Investment in community grounded initiatives both supports local ownership, and generates more relevant outcomes. It is key for programs to constantly review and revise based on ongoing learning mechanisms to ensure communities, local organisations, or youth voices are still driving interventions.

### Drivers of Inclusion and Urban Equality

Building more inclusive cities means ensuring access to affordable necessities such as housing and services, employment and skills development opportunities, as well as equal rights and participation for all, including the most marginalised. The adoption of the urban focused SDG 11 *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* within the 2030 Agenda presents an opportunity for promoting the rights and inclusion of the voices of all citizens in planning and shaping their cities. Building evidence and action processes that seek to empower young people, with attention to aspects such as gender, ability, sexual orientation, class, or other important identity markers is essential to ensuring that no-one is left behind. Keeping in mind the concerns of intersectionality, this means investing in technologies, capacity building, and programming which especially aims to empower young urban dwellers that might be marginalised or excluded for overlapping reasons (e.g. across gender, caste, class or religion) within their unique context.

### **Empowering and Engaging with ‘Mundane’ Innovation**

The concept of ‘mundane’ innovation recognises the bottom-up, everyday ways in which local actors, businesses and communities are drivers of technological innovation and change within their own unique context. A focus on mundane innovation highlights the value in identifying, building on and scaling up of everyday technologies; rather than focus on ‘technology transfer’. Investing in technologies that facilitate data collection and analysis by excluded communities or groups (such as youth) can be extremely empowering, and fosters a sense of ownership to a project or process. Supporting communities with simple technologies which can be used in daily life, and can help to address the critical urban questions that matter most to these groups, is key to supporting transformative outcomes.

### **Encouraging of an Enabling Environment**

This principle is key to the aim of achieving systemic change. To do so requires understanding the levers and contextual realities in each city that shape the opportunity context for intervention and recognising that there is no one prescription that works for every city. This principle also refers to the importance of establishing platforms or partnerships which enable long term knowledge exchange that continue beyond the life of certain projects or programs. The creation of multi-stakeholder platforms including civil society, local governments, communities, academics and the private sector, is critical not only to support better outcomes, but also as a process of building ongoing trust and respect. Capacity building, network strengthening and cross-sectoral (as well as community-to-government) linkages are central drivers of effective learning platforms, and mobilising evidence to action.

### **Global in Reach**

This principle refers to the fundamental importance of establishing programs which aim to generate change through a coherent global effort, not simply through discrete local programs. While recognising the necessity of remaining grounded in a local context, and driven by the priorities of local communities, this principle also indicates the value of maintaining strong links with a wider regional and international communities as a route to impact. Knowledge sharing across cities - such as through peer-to-peer exchanges, regional networks, or working with knowledge partners that focus on ‘global lessons’ - can facilitate global reach and enhance local capacity (Tejasvi, 2010). Importantly, learning should not be about ‘replication’ of successes across diverse contexts, but about facilitating discussions on processes undertaken in a city, and exploring how feasible they might be elsewhere. Investing in local and global knowledge partners and establishing durable platforms for knowledge exchange allows for a multiplication effect, through which lessons can be shared and scaled out across the city and beyond.

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fondation Botnar considers learning to be essential to program design and implementation and to support transformative action in secondary cities. At the project level, knowledge building is an investment in local capacity building. This is an important component of enabling local voices to be at the forefront of development initiatives, as well as ensuring sustainability of a project. At the organisational level, learning is considered fundamental to the ongoing refinement of the Foundations *Strategic Objectives* and investments, and achieving the aspirational goal of moving from “*grant maker to change maker*”.

The following **six strategic actions**, recommended for Botnar city initiatives, represent good development practices that enable learning, co-creation and knowledge development:



These actions could be integrated into a holistic program design, serving as core elements of any sectoral intervention. Likewise, any of these strategic actions could act as an entry point to launch a demonstrable or pilot project that could later support the scale out of a co-designed and community led program after a proof of concept is established. Key examples of how to operationalise these strategic actions, along with practical case studies are offered in *Section 2*. Each strategic action is outlined below, along with the key focus areas within each action that are vital to document, in order to support ongoing and reflexive learning.

### **SA1 Mobilise local level participation especially young people, to ensure projects are co-led with empowered local communities for sustainability**

This action refers to ensuring participation of local partners and grassroots groups in diagnosing city priorities, building evidence, and designing strategies for action. This can be done through the implementation of situated projects with clear objectives and targets, and through evaluations of their success. While adopting a citywide approach is fundamental to transformative change, the power of local-level projects that can demonstrate ‘quick wins’ should not be underestimated. Such demonstrator projects - small scale interventions to test different approaches - can be a way to incentivise engagement with community and other public or private stakeholders, help build trust in relationships, trial models of partnership, and support ‘learning by doing’, which can later be scaled up. The objective is to ensure local knowledge and information, as well as locally generated solutions, that are fit for context inform the program design. Likewise, the principle of inclusion and equity requires that marginalised and disadvantaged groups are at the forefront of participatory actions. Representation on committees, working groups, education and training programs and advisory roles needs to be diverse and inclusive.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting approaches to set up participatory processes and to engage local stakeholders and ensure an inclusive process.



**SA2 Engage with diverse city stakeholders to build equitable partnerships generating knowledge and a shared vision of the desired sustained change**

Cities are a complex ecosystem, with a range of issues, actors and decision-makers and multiple intertwined social, cultural, political and economic processes. This means that no single actor can unilaterally achieve the large-scale transformation required to support sustainable city-wide development. This requires collaboration between diverse stakeholders, and the formation of citywide networks which can unite around development goals to enhance wellbeing. Attention to inclusion and equity requires close attention to ensuring the representation of less powerful social groups in the city, whether in relation to class, gender, age, ability, or a range of other dimensions of identity. In all cases, time is needed to develop mutually beneficial and trusting relationships. Smaller scale collaborations (often around less contentious issues) can offer meaningful opportunities help to build familiarity and trust for long term engagement.

Creating platforms for engagement that allow stakeholders to share their expertise and experience with a wider audience and feel valued for their contributions, is a critical component of enabling local voices to be at the forefront of development initiatives, and ensuring the sustainability projects. Marginalised groups need to be included in a systematic way to ensure collaborations are equitable and allow trust to be built overtime. Representation of a diverse range of young people is necessary in projects to ensure the needs of all young people are being considered.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting processes of building partnerships, lessons of collaboration and planning, and strategies to build trust, respect, and a shared vision amongst diverse stakeholders.

**SA3 Influence city systems, policy and planning processes to promote equity, social inclusion and strengthen accountability**

Critical to the E2A process is a comprehensive city wide scan of key developmental issues and priorities to target for investment, as linked with the five domains of change. This assessment is best undertaken in collaboration with a range of stakeholders who represent formal and informal structures in a city (i.e. informal settlement representatives) and involves a process of identifying and prioritising key areas for action. With evidence of city and development priorities gathered through an in depth city assessment, and validated by diverse city stakeholders, a strategy can be framed to aim for city systems and policy change.

Advocating for policy change to ensure more responsive, inclusive and accountable governance processes for all urban residents is integral to launching long-term, sustainable programs for citywide impact. Influencing urban policy through robust evidence-building processes is critical for harnessing the abundance of political capital in the city, particularly youth with soft advocacy skills, to promote sustained change. It is critical to influence and shape urban policy at each tier of government (local, district/municipal, city, state and national), and to create engagement mechanisms for communities and development actors within 'official' planning processes.

Likewise, it is crucial to advocate for inclusive pro-poor policies, and for the active inclusion of youth voices in decision-making. Decisions in spatial planning, social planning and infrastructure provision present significant opportunities for creating inclusive cities, while facilitating democratic processes is fundamental to the longevity of more equitable projects and programs that enable city wide development actions.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting processes of engagement with various tiers of government, and capturing how engagement mechanisms were created across both 'official' and 'informal' structures of urban governance.

**SA4 Invest in digital transformation to enable democratisation of technology resulting in access, innovation and scale**

This strategic action reflects the dual acknowledgment that technology can be both a powerful enabler, as well as as profound generator of inequalities. As such, equality, inclusion, and relevance within the local context are key values which are fundamental for technological interventions. This means investing in strategies that are built on ‘mundane’ technologies, or processes that are usable in everyday life. For instance, SDI’s ‘Know Your City’ program is common platform that builds capacity for community driven mapping, GIS and photographic literacy; transferable innovations that can be applied by communities across a range of contexts and for different purposes.

This also means exploring technologies which can bridge diverse forms of knowledge, such as GIS maps which identify geographical areas of environmental hazards, as well as local understandings of risk and resilience. Technology is at its most powerful when designed and placed in the hands of often excluded groups and investing in processes which facilitate local level or youth participation at multiple stages: the collection of data, analysis of results, and the proposition of strategies. This action demonstrates the use of technology to build scale.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting how mundane and innovative approaches to technology are able to influence change at the local, district/municipal, city, state and national level.

**SA5 Generate knowledge and document evidence to advocate for justice, equity and rights of young people thereby shaping a global ‘inclusion’ agenda**

Engaging in an ongoing process of data gathering, documentation, and dissemination is fundamental to ensure institutional and collective learning over time. This requires establishing a systematic learning processes to assess how evidence (included from lived experience) has been generated, integrated and analysed; as well as mapping the opportunities and barriers to action this evidence within specific institutional and political contexts.

While much of this research and learning will be focused on specific cities, investing in systems of knowledge exchange across cities can also generate powerful global lessons, as well as build capacity locally. This entails investing in strong locally based knowledge partnerships - made up of diverse urban stakeholders - which can link up and network with similar knowledge entities elsewhere, to share lessons and discuss barriers. It also means working with knowledge partners to facilitate global learning across a range of cities and conditions, which can enhance the principle of being ‘global in reach’. The systematic gathering of community based information and promising solutions could enable the achievement of the SDGs at a local level with support from the municipal government. These locally-led solutions that includes diverse voices and groups could be shared through global networks to demonstrate commitment the the Agenda 2030 principle of *leaving no-one behind*.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting processes of shared learning and exchange across cities, and in global forums and agendas, for how this can shape a global rights-based inclusion agenda.

**SA6 Facilitate capacity building initiatives to support young people, decision-makers, and knowledge partners to act collaboratively as catalysts for change, and to share learning locally and globally**

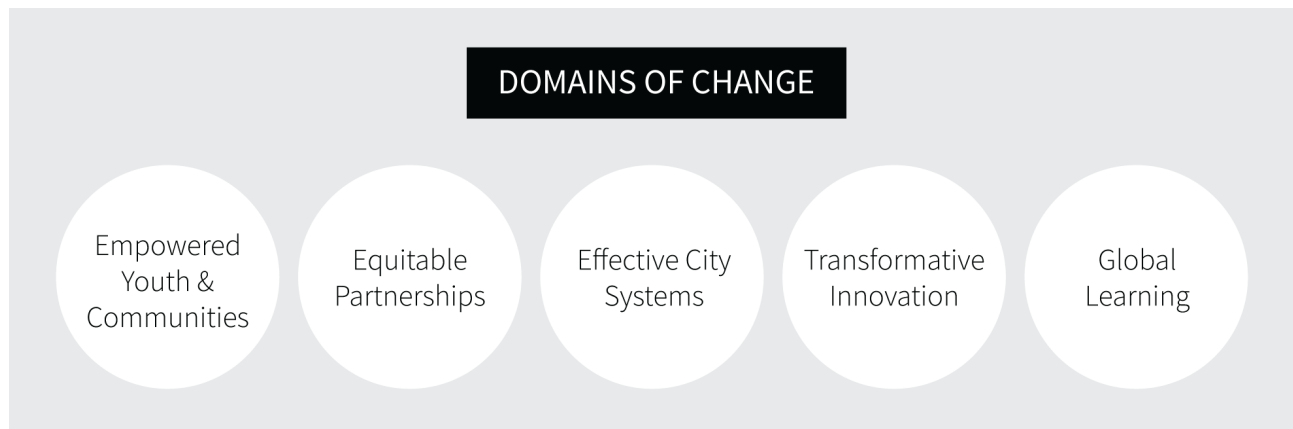
Facilitating capacity building initiatives is a cross-cutting action and outcome which informs all domains of change. A key requirement for long term sustainability is to build capacity of communities and stakeholders to identify development priorities, participate in development activities and generate the evidence needed to drive change. Community capacity building promotes the ability of local communities to develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems in a way that helps them shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments (Department for Community Development, 2006). Such an approach would also foster leadership within the community. Equipping and empowering young people and disadvantaged groups to find a voice and form compelling cases to create positive change is a key priority. This means that systems around them need to provide support by way of training, using technology to collect information effectively, providing opportunities to network with decision-makers and ensuring access to essential services such as transport, education and health.

Capacity building initiatives might include the provision of developmental support to youth leaders and entrepreneurs to become leaders, and engage confidently in city planning and decision-making platforms. However, capacity building also extends beyond young people. Creating effective systems change requires capacity building with a range of actors, for instance, with local authorities to be able to facilitate and integrate youth expertise into urban decision-making. Likewise, an ongoing process of reflection and learning requires capacities of knowledge partners, to produce knowledge products, support advocacy, and share lessons locally and globally. The objective is to ensure capacity building initiatives are relevant for local communities, and aimed at generating knowledge to inform program design.

**Evidence building action:** Documenting capacity building processes aimed at diverse urban stakeholders, and which are effective at building individual and institutional capacities to ensure sustained change.

## DOMAINS OF CHANGE

The E2A Framework includes **five domains of change** which represent areas for common investigation across all city projects:



These interlinked domains represent qualitative change that combined can help deliver on Fondation Botnar’s goal to “*contribute to the transformation of urban and peri-urban ecosystems to promote the sustainable development and wellbeing of children and young people.*” It is expected that monitoring and evaluation guided by these domains can generate a reflexive learning process for how Fondation Botnar can act as a catalyst for change across the range of secondary cities in which it works, as well as globally.

These domains have been selected to represent strategic areas of interest of Fondation Botnar, and are especially relevant to SO1 *Cities fit for young people*. They have been further refined and validated through expert interviews. Key learning questions for each domain can be applied to capture the strategies, processes, and outcomes of complex systems change.

The domains are also aligned with global frameworks. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stipulates that children (i.e. young people up to 18 years) have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and wellbeing (UNICEF, 1989). Article 12 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to voice their ideas about what should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have them meaningfully considered. Young people must be empowered to participate throughout the developmental process of their city as active and capable agents for change, so they can help transform their own lives and living conditions as well as those of their families, communities and societies. The UNCRC articles are well captured in the domains of change, as is Agenda 2030 principle to ‘*leave no-one behind*’ and the need for planning that supports healthy, safe and liveable cities which is emphasised in the NUA and the SDGs (see Annex 2 for more details of SDG alignment).

In addition to evaluation of specific project outcomes, Fondation Botnar is committed to learning from and documenting change processes to ensure continual improvement and efficiency of current and future projects. The domains of change present a common instrument to build evidence and report on the critical organisational priorities. Common measurement tools will also assist Fondation Botnar to examine and further their understanding of the contextual aspects of different processes and methods of social change, and the cultural articulation of that change. The domains can frame micro to macro level evidence building processes that integrate the core principles and domains, in all projects from grassroots action to advocacy initiatives; and from neighbourhood focused projects, to city initiatives, to national and global programs, campaigns and policy initiatives.

## Empowered Youth and Communities

This domain refers to meaningful participation - especially of young people and vulnerable groups - in city wide planning, agenda setting, and decision-making. This domain seeks to capture the strategies, processes, and outcomes through which young people are empowered to act as leaders and the establishment of city platforms to enhance participation and voice. This domain is informed by SA1 *Mobilise local level participation especially young people, to ensure projects are co-led with empowered local communities for sustainability*. Learning about various formal and informal methods and promising practices related to promoting the voice and participation of young people and their communities is fundamental to realising Fondation Botnar's overall vision of enhancing "the future for young people worldwide", empowering them to be change agents of their cities.

## Equitable Partnerships

This domain refers to the establishment of consortia and cross-sectoral partnerships - including with young people and vulnerable groups - that operate with mutual respect and on equal terms. This domain seeks to capture strategies, processes, and outcomes for building strong relations and trust across urban stakeholders. It is linked with SA2 *Engage with diverse city stakeholders that result in equitable partnerships generating knowledge and shared vision of the desired sustained change*. Creating an enabling environment to establish multi-sector and multi-stakeholder efforts from local to global level is fundamental to bringing change. This action is about fostering collaborations and trust building between diverse stakeholders, representing both formal and informal processes in city systems and examining how cooperation of diverse actors is gained over time. This domain seeks to capture if and how systems have been established to promote equitable relationships where each voice is valued for their contribution, however big or small, influential or insignificant.

## Transformative Innovation

This domain refers to the delivery of evidence-based, scalable and locally grounded strategies to address complex urban problems that shape wellbeing outcomes. This domain seeks to capture the strategies, processes, and outcomes of inclusive access and use of innovative technology, ideas and networks for transformative change. Evidence will be sought in identifying, building on, and scaling up everyday technologies, as expressed through the principle of *Engaging with 'mundane' innovation*. This domain is linked with SA3 *To invest in digital transformation to enable the democratisation of technology - resulting in access, innovation and scale*. This domain generates evidence about the availability of technology and the creation of networked smart communities, to ensure knowledge and reach of information is accessible to all, irrespective of citizen status and community.

## Effective City Systems

This domain refers to the systemic and sustainable transformation of urban policies, planning, and programs to create *cities fit for young people*. This domain seeks to capture strategies, processes and outcomes linked with achieving healthy, open, prosperous, equal, safe, connected and sustainable (HOPES-CS) cities. This is linked with *SA4 Influence city systems, policy and planning processes to promote equity, social inclusion and strengthen accountability*. Fondation Botnar's strategy calls for systems transformation, and this domain will provide evidence to effectiveness of city systems to support and uphold the wellbeing of young people. This involves documenting promising practices that resulted in formal and informal structural changes, and created connections between diverse groups - especially between young people and policy makers informing urban decision-making.

## Global Learning

This domain refers to the strengthening of learning and knowledge building processes, which can inform reflection and action at the local and global level. This domain seeks to capture strategies, processes, and outcomes for building knowledge and reflection that can lead to changes in policy, planning, and practice. This is supported by *SA5 Generate knowledge and document evidence to advocate for justice, equity and rights of young people, thereby shaping global 'inclusion' agenda*. This domain will investigate connections from local to global, including local level action on the SDGs, as well as if and how, capable voices from the grassroots level are sharing global platforms, presenting evidence for policy, and advocating for equity and inclusion.



## STRATEGIC LEARNING QUESTIONS

Key learning questions - linked to the domains of change - that seek to understand the strategies, processes and outcomes of complex systems change can provide valuable insight on 'what works' and 'what does not work' to facilitate city systems change, and enhance wellbeing. Strategic learning questions are intended to capture grounded learning that can be applied across each of the domains of change in different Botnar cities.

A list of questions linked with the domains of change are presented in the table below. These key questions promote learning about the evidence cycle, capacity building and how to enhance wellbeing across cities. They reflect Fondation Botnar's commitment to a learning agenda, the importance of building capacity across all domains of change, and the desired outcome of enhancing young people's wellbeing. These are not exhaustive, and are intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive. Additional or different learning questions may be included depending on specific city contexts and nature of development interventions.

Indicators can also be a helpful tool for evidence building. Specific indicators for answering strategic learning questions can be explored at the local level, taking the city context and the nature of the program into consideration. Some examples of indicators, aligned with the strategic actions, are provided in Annex 3.

From these grounded assessments across the domains of change, key organisational questions can support Fondation Botnar in the refinement of its strategies and approaches. These are:

How has the collective evidence from grassroots actions embedded in city projects informed:

- Botnar organisational strategy and investments on an ongoing basis?
- Collective learning across Botnar cities to inform programming approaches?
- Botnar's aim to shape global agendas and promote inclusive cities?

Strategic learning questions for both the domains of change and organisational learning are also available in Annex 4, and 5 respectively.

DOMAIN	LEARNING PRIORITY	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Empowered Youth & Communities	What works (or does not) in creating spaces and platforms for empowering young people to act as change leaders and enhance their participation and voice in city-wide planning, agenda setting and decision making.	<p>In what ways were young people empowered to co-produce <b>evidence</b> in collaboration with diverse urban stakeholders?</p> <p>How were organisational and institutional <b>capacities</b> built for delivering participatory and inclusive processes that empower young people and marginalised communities?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in building autonomy, relatedness, and competence (ARC) of young people to act as change agents in their communities, and effectively engage with decision-makers to enhance <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>
Equitable Partnerships	What works (or does not) in building trust and strong relations across diverse urban stakeholders towards effective collaborations and collective actions.	<p>How were issues of power, equity, and knowledge biases negotiated through <b>evidence-based</b> partnerships, models and processes?</p> <p>How was institutional <b>capacity</b> built to promote multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships that foster sustainable collaborations and collective actions?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in creating shared vision and commitment among diverse stakeholders to enhance <b>relational wellbeing</b> of young people?</p>
Effective City Systems	What works (or does not) in transforming city systems to be healthy, open, prosperous, equal, safe, connected and sustainable (HOPE-CS).	<p>What processes were most/least effective in engaging city officials to share <b>evidence</b> and influence governance issues to strengthen inclusive policy and planning?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in harnessing the <b>capacity</b> of diverse city governance sectors and service providers to address problems impacting young people?</p> <p>What barriers and facilitators were identified in bringing together formal and informal systems and structures to produce synergy towards enhancing young people's <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>
Transformative Innovation	What works (or does not) in creating inclusive access to and use of innovative technology and ideas that can lead to transformative changes in urban systems.	<p>What strategies were most/least effective in increasing young people's <b>capacity</b> to access and use technology to drive change in urban systems?</p> <p>What new technology focused methodologies were useful in generating <b>evidence</b> and data to influence city planning and policies?</p> <p>What processes were most/least effective in identifying and scaling of mundane innovations across city systems to enhance <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>
Global Learning	What works (or does not) in building knowledge and learning that can influence positive changes in policy, planning, and practice at city, region and global level.	<p>What strategies were most/least effective in scaling of <b>evidence</b> and knowledge from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local level actions to influence city systems?</li> <li>• city systems to influence global development and policy agendas?</li> </ul> <p>What <b>capacities</b> were developed among key stakeholders that facilitated the exchange of knowledge and learning across diverse cities?</p> <p>What processes have been effective at applying, monitoring and measuring <b>relational wellbeing</b> in diverse urban settings?</p>

# PART 2: OPERATIONALISING THE E2A FRAMEWORK

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of Melbourne

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The E2A  
Framework

*fondation*  
**BOTNAR**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

## SECTION 1: E2A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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**“Evidence is from indigenous knowledge, it’s from grassroots, its communities who don’t have the technology to actually give you what [might be traditionally seen as] ‘accurate data and evidence’. But they do know; because they see it and they feel it.”  
(CEO, Radicle Global)**

### UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE

Generating rigorous, credible, and relevant evidence that captures the diverse ‘realities on the ground’ is key to informing a learning strategy which is focused on transformative action for youth wellbeing. However, the concept of ‘evidence’ is deeply contested, and reflects very different perspectives on who is considered a legitimate producer of knowledge, and how issues of validity, reliability, and relevance are determined. This section outlines a conceptual and practical approach to how evidence is shaped and can inform action, to generate knowledge on youth wellbeing, towards the aim of more equitable and inclusive cities.

‘Traditional’ models of evidence building, or knowledge translation, have been conceived of as a unidirectional and linear process from research to change in practice or policy. Such conceptualisation assumes that the creation of rigorous evidence will be sufficient to generate positive policy and practice outcomes. In this model, the focus is placed on how to generate ‘more and better’ data, based on the assumption that policy gaps are a product of missing information (Jones, 2009). Research and evidence are therefore understood as being produced by research institutions, think tanks, or universities - and then applied by policy-makers and practitioners.

More recently, however, such approaches have been critiqued for being ‘apolitical’, missing how political context, values, and institutional histories shape the ways in which policies and practices are enacted in reality. Building evidence to influence action - particularly within the field of international development - has increasingly been conceptualised as a set of dynamic interactions between context, culture, and values (Jones et al., 2013). Likewise, the ability to shape action - particularly towards global aims of inequality, sustainability, or wellbeing, has been acknowledged as requiring multiple forms of urban expertise - necessitating inputs from diverse stakeholders and disciplines (Rydin, 2006). The emphasis on involving a broad spectrum of actors in evidence building and action also highlights the diversity of places and ways in which knowledge is produced. That is, in addition to research or policy knowledge, valid knowledge sources can emerge from practice (i.e. the learnings from practitioners), or from the lived experience of young people or marginalised communities.

Drawing from this perspective, and explored through key expert interviews, the E2A Framework defines evidence through an interactive model. This model understands scientifically derived information, practitioner experience, or tacit knowledge from lived experiences to all be valid forms evidence that interact and influence each other (Weiss, 1979). Expanding on this model, our definition emphasises knowledge and evidence as situated in specific contexts and culture, and equally values the experiences of a range of urban stakeholders – including the ‘lived experience’ of local communities – as well as more traditional forms of knowledge production. This means that evidence can be produced to speak to both objective ‘material’ realities, subjective experiences, including beliefs and emotions, and ‘relational’ aspects, referring to aspects of trust and connection across social networks.

***Evidence for the E2A Framework is understood as:*** Knowledge that is systematically gathered about ‘what works’ (or does not work) in a particular context. Knowledge is embedded in culture and context, and can emerge from diverse sources and actors - including from research processes, organizational or practice-based expertise, or cultural or ‘lived’ experiences.

## IMPORTANCE OF EVIDENCE BUILDING

Evidence is essential for organisational and programmatic strategy and agenda setting and making informed decisions. Evidence can speak to policy and governance to meaningfully and transparently influence decision-making, design and delivery of actions that improve wellbeing. Good quality evidence is thus a foundational tool for knowing ‘what to do’ and ‘how to do it’, and for scaling learnings globally. It is also vital for justifying the value and importance of an action, and thus engaging and empowering communities, demonstrating the value of collaboration and partnership, justifying strategic actions, and mobilising resources. Likewise, learning and reflection should not only be focused on ‘success stories’. That is, there is much to be learned from ‘what did not work’, which is often little acknowledged. Good evidence from such interventions allow learning and building knowledge on what not to do so that they are not repeated, and the lessons learnt are applied in further action. Gathering evidence across cities can generate valuable global lessons on how different interventions enhanced young people’s wellbeing, and more broadly contributed to a process of social change.

Beyond the importance of evidence for better outcomes, involving young people or marginalised groups in the process of building evidence can also contribute to a deepening democratic process. That is, involving young people or marginalised communities in building evidence around their realities, experiences, and needs can be powerful tool for achieving wellbeing outcomes related to autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Supporting young people to act as leaders and experts can nurture their **‘capacity to aspire’** - that is, the “*social and cultural capacity to plan, hope, desire, and achieve socially valuable goals*” (Appadurai, 2006). This means that the process through which evidence is generated and used, is as critical as the outcomes themselves in terms of enhancing young people’s relational wellbeing (see Case Study 4).

## CASE STUDY 4: UNICEF CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE

UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities Framework proposes strategies to facilitate young people’s meaningful participation, including: storytelling, citizen’s juries, town hall meetings, community-led mapping, vox pop surveys, or online polls, to name a few. Other ways to engage young people include training programs, using digital technologies they are familiar with (e.g. smartphones), or the provision of safe spaces to linger and participate.

Working towards the principle of inclusion and equality means maintaining a strong representation of young people especially from marginalised groups on committees, working groups, education and training programs or in advisory roles. Creating spaces for the participation of young people is understood as a fundamental right, and critical to shaping cities where young people can flourish.

Source: [childfriendlycities.org](http://childfriendlycities.org)



## A PRINCIPLED APPROACH TO EVIDENCE TO ACTION

An integrated approach to evidence suggests that generating knowledge to inform transformative action is a product of overlapping dynamics, including how research is produced, and by whom, (formal and informal) political systems and structures of representation, and culture and context. In other words, generating highquality evidence is one of many factors at play in shaping decision-making and inclusive action (Marschall, 2018). By adopting a principled approach, the E2A presents a conceptual overview of evidence building and action, outlining the overlapping factors which shape how evidence is produced and actioned (see table).

PRINCIPLE	APPLIED TO A KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION FRAMEWORK
Fit for Context	<p>The ways in which evidence is produced, interpreted and actioned are shaped by local <b>culture context, and values</b>.</p> <p>This calls for locally owned or led participatory approaches to evidence building and action that are appropriate for and grounded in the culture and context of the community.</p>
Driver of Inclusion & Urban Equality	<p>The ways in which evidence is produced, interpreted, and actioned are shaped by the actors involved, and the <b>types of research and knowledge</b> they produce.</p> <p>This calls for rights-based approaches that enhance the capacity and credibility of young people, engage with multiple forms of knowledge, and actors.</p>
Empowering & Engaging with Mundane Innovation	<p>The ways in which evidence is produced, interpreted, and actioned are shaped by the nurturing of <b>innovations that enable and catalyse</b> change.</p> <p>This calls for valuing the innovation that comes from local expertise, but also examining the role of innovations or technology as a disrupter.</p>
Encouraging of an Enabling Environment	<p>The ways in which evidence is produced, interpreted, and actioned are shaped by the <b>political system</b>, and formal and informal structures of decision-making.</p> <p>This calls for approaches that seek points of leverage within political and institutional contexts.</p>
Global in Reach	<p>Beyond the local and national context, the ways in which evidence is produced, interpreted, and actioned are also shaped by <b>global influence and processes</b>.</p> <p>This calls for reflexive and systematic sharing knowledge within and across communities, from the local to global scale.</p>

### Cultural Context

The ‘interactive model’ of knowledge translation proposed in this Framework is grounded in the idea that evidence is embedded in culture and lived experiences. This means that cultural values and beliefs play a key role in shaping the kinds of evidence and assumptions that are considered credible. Values and beliefs may shape how urban challenges are conceived, or the types of strategies that are proposed to address these problems. Understanding histories, context, and culture - and how these differs across cities - will shape how evidence is created and interventions are enacted. Mapping and understanding the cultural context and values in which evidence has been generated is key to understanding how changes in policy, planning, or programming happen.

## Actors

Grassroots organisations, NGOs and citizen science groups across a range of cities have demonstrated the value of including knowledge for citizen groups in policy and action, broadening the range of actors who can meaningfully contribute as knowledge producers. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the realities of unequal power relations in cities, which shape how knowledge is valued, produced and used. Knowledge partnerships may take different institutional set-ups, which requires asking key questions on the roles and responsibilities of different actors, and the processes which helped develop a shared vision and mutual trust. This involves exploring the range of actors involved in producing evidence, the type of evidence this draws from (e.g. research-based, practice-based, or lived), and the processes through which these different stakeholders and forms of evidence were integrated. Assessing if these knowledge processes are inclusive and framed around the aims of equality is crucial.

## Innovation

Digital technologies or other forms of innovation can play a powerful role in generating new forms of evidence and data: *“using technology as an enabler, to get different forms of data is important”* (CEO, Safetipin). Innovation can be a powerful ‘disrupter’, injecting new processes and ideas into city systems. Innovative digital technologies can facilitate data collection and information gathering about realities on the ground, link decision-makers and communities, and support incubation and entrepreneurship. However, for innovation to be transformative, it must move beyond discrete projects. This requires questioning how innovation has been scaled out and enabled through institutional changes in city systems.

## Political Environment

Political beliefs, systems, and structures are fundamental to shaping how evidence is mobilised into action. These systems may be ‘formal’ and embedded in policies and planning procedures, but also might be ‘informal’, relying on traditional, customary, or other forms of community level representation. Being able to map or recognise the ‘room for manoeuvre’ – or the institutional opportunities – within a certain context is crucial both in building evidence, as well as understanding the levers for ensuring evidence is translated into action.

## Global Processes

While the above four dynamics represent local and national conditions, global processes and agendas exert significant influence on local evidence and action processes. World Urban Forums, or agendas such as the SDGs, can be appropriated by local actors to progress different policy, planning, or programmatic approaches. Understanding how global processes manifest in different cities to support evidence and action is essential, as is documenting how local lessons can inform and shape global processes.

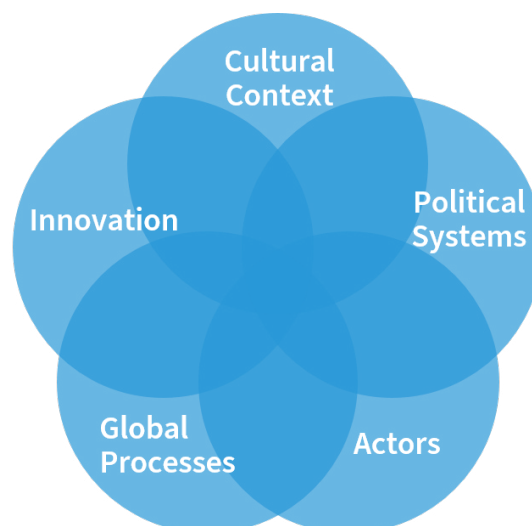


Figure 1: Interactive model of evidence to action

## HOW TO BUILD EVIDENCE: AN ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH

Research can be viewed as a fundamentally political process aimed at addressing revealing and challenging urban inequities and vulnerabilities, and at supporting the capacities of young people to act as thought leaders and experts. As such, the E2A is grounded within the tradition of participatory action research. Participatory action research (PAR) is known by many names, including collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, or knowledge co-production, but all are variations on a common theme. Simply put, action research is a process of research, education, and action through which participants seek to transform their own skills and capacities, as well as challenge social inequalities. It is rooted in the ideological approach of Paulo Freire's (1970) 'critical consciousness' (conscientização), or emancipation through education and social action, as well as the work of Robert Chambers (1997) on Participatory Learning and Action. Action research promotes research based on people's real world, lived-in experience, seeking collaborative action to address inequities. An action research approach allows researchers and practitioners together to define the research problems that are to be investigated, to design a research and evaluation methodology to investigate these issues, to collect and reflect on the findings, and to develop an action plan to address the issues identified.

Adopting a PAR approach, especially with youth groups of excluded communities, promotes several benefits. It can: generate more appropriate interventions, strengthen the link between research and practice, build collaborations between communities and decision-makers, strengthen democratic processes, support new skills development, and mobilise local action. For program participants and communities, a PAR approach can create a greater sense empowerment and dignity by enabling them to produce knowledge for social change and collectively act upon it. For program implementers and evaluators, it ensures effective intervention design and delivery of high quality and responsive services. Successful action research processes require collaboration across all stages of evidence generation and action from problem definition, data collection and analysis, formulation of strategies, through to evaluation. Crucial to this process is the development of a shared vision amongst stakeholders, and a commitment to building trust and respect in knowledge partnerships. Clear deadlines, shared outputs, or the development of mutual incentives and accountability are also key to deepening such knowledge co-production processes.

Action research can be co-produced using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative evidence might come from methods such as interviews, micro-narratives gathered by youth, stories, mapping, photography, dance or even graffiti. This can be complemented with quantitative evidence generated through methods such as surveys or census data. While quantitative indicators can often be a powerful tool to communicate with policy-makers, it is critical to acknowledge that what is measured affects what is done. Working with young people or marginalised communities to define what and how to measure is as important as producing the indicators themselves. This means not seeing data as a neutral, but asking questions such as:

**“What do we do with what we count? How do we count? When do we count? And who is counting? Those are questions that are not just social, but they are political. And they really are also about justice.” (Research Fellow, Manseuto Institute)**

An approach to relational wellbeing also requires evidence which speaks to both *objective* material and observable experiences, as well as the *subjective* experiences of participants. City experts particularly identified participatory methods as a powerful way to engage communities and young people in articulating their own subjective realities, and promote learning:

**“We were getting very good at collecting qualitative data, but what the communities increasingly found was that we were not telling their stories. They literally said, ‘... this is really good, but we do not feel that our data expresses our pain”. (Director, Cities Alliance)**

This will ensure evidence is generation about ‘what is’ and ‘what works’ (as well as ‘what does not work’) both in the form of numbers and statistics, and of participant accounts of daily lived experiences of interventions or other social phenomena. A key role within any PAR process is therefore identifying the opportunities and methods for capturing subjective experiences of young people, and exploring the knowledge products and processes which can ensure these experiences are translated into actionable evidence for policy-makers and practitioners.

The understanding of evidence as embedded in context and culture, and emergent from various sources, suggests the need for adopting a rigorous but flexible approach to evidence building. Whether produced through quantitative, qualitative, or participatory methods, it is crucial that evidence is evaluated for its rigour and credibility. This can be supported by tools such as the Bond Evidence Principles Checklist. This tool, designed specifically for use by NGOs and international development practitioners, supports critical review and reflection on evidence-based work. Processes of evidence generation can be scored across five categories: voice and inclusion, appropriateness, triangulation, contribution, and transparency (see Case Study 5).

## CASE STUDY 5: BOND EVIDENCE PRINCIPLES

In 2013, Bond (a British network of development NGOs) convened a series of workshops with major international development organisations to discuss approaches to gather and assess evidence to demonstrate impact. The aim was to draw lessons and establish a set of common standards which could guide NGOs or other development actors in producing high quality evidence in evaluation, reflection, and learning.

The Bond Evidence Principles and checklist represents a practical and principle based approach to ensuring evidence generation is robust and inclusive. These principles are:

**Voice and Inclusion:** Ensuring broad representation from participant communities in evidence generation and evaluation

**Appropriateness:** Adopting methods that are fit for the context and purpose of assessment

**Triangulation:** Using a broad spectrum of methods, sources, and perspectives

**Contribution:** Able to demonstrate how change happened, and explain how the intervention contributed

**Transparency:** Openness about data sources, methods, results and limitations

Principles can be rated according to a series of questions to determine whether the evidence can be assessed as weak, minimum standard, good practice or gold standard.

For full checklist see: [bond.org.uk/groups/evidence-principles](https://bond.org.uk/groups/evidence-principles)

## SECTION 2: E2A GUIDELINES

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### E2A FRAMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT STAFF

This section offers guidelines to consider when building evidence gathering and learning in the design, monitoring and evaluation city projects. As outlined in the previous sections, evidence is viewed as:

- Social and collective knowledge.
- Always highly contextual.
- Understanding that singular forms of knowledge/knowing (e.g. empirical or experiential) are insufficient for informing complex and multi-dimensional practices.
- Knowledge that is made, not discovered (White, 2007).

Thus, knowledge can be “*expressed through intentional, reflective, meaningful activity situated within dynamic historical and cultural contexts that shape and set limits on that activity*” (Glass, 2001, p. 16). As such, this Framework is grounded within a PAR approach, as a methodology that can more deeply capture socially produced realities.

## EMBEDDING LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

The E2A Framework proposes an evidence building process which can promote learning across Fondation Botnar's project portfolio. The five domains of change are focus areas of investigation, learning, and documentation across all projects - feeding into a global meta-learning and research strategy. This meta-learning and research strategy aims to analyse individual project monitoring and evaluation outputs pertaining to E2A domains of change, and synthesise lessons that are common to all projects, and unique to some.

Establishing a learning process includes agreeing on an ongoing research and evaluation action plan, and embedding learning activities in the project development cycle. Key aspects for effective knowledge exchange are proximity and feedback (Best et al., 2009). It is important to create opportunities for diverse stakeholders to work closely together and to communicate regularly. Providing opportunities to build mutually beneficial relationships through smaller projects can be an important strategy in building trust and establishing longer term working relationships. Open communication and candid conversations about the pros and cons of various relationships is critical and should occur in the early stages of partnership formation to ensure that issues are identified and quickly resolved, and strengths can be leveraged for ongoing improvements.

Expectations and deliverables should be negotiated and formally documented and monitored. For knowledge and evidence to be integrated into practice, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers need to work together (Best et al., 2009) to select and integrate evidence that is fit for context. Contextual factors that can affect uptake, implementation and maintenance should be identified and addressed. Engaging systems thinking experts is helpful for complex, highly dynamic contexts and will help to illuminate a range of considerations relating to economic, political and environmental factors that may need to be addressed to achieve sustained program benefits.

Evidence can and should be collected from many people, groups and sources and in many forms – from desk based research, to lived experience. Evidence should then be checked, collated and presented in a useful form to feed back to stakeholders - with tools such as the Bond principles – which are a valuable mechanism for ensuring rigour. It will also be important to include a local knowledge partner as part of the team in the city initiatives to facilitate learning and communication.

It is helpful to bring local researchers and practitioners together from the beginning of the project cycle to define the research problem to be investigated and how outcomes will be evaluated. This will then inform the research design and methodologies that will be employed, as well as what data will need to be collected to support evaluation and learning in across the five domains of change. These local level learnings can then be shared and analysed with the Botnar global knowledge team on an ongoing basis to support broader learning.



## IMPLEMENTING A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH: THE EVIDENCE CYCLE

Engaging in PAR on a continuous and cyclical process means that collaboration, evaluation, and learning is integrated into every step of the program or project cycle. Each step in the evidence cycle should incorporate participatory methods which can capture both objective and subjective realities, and empower community members to systematically use evidence to improve their own wellbeing. In this sense, the evidence building cycle itself becomes a participatory and empowering process where key stakeholders, including young people, co-design processes, co-produce and appraise evidence, collectively act to mobilise the knowledge in the city system, and co-learn through collaborative evaluation and reflective practices (see Figure 2).

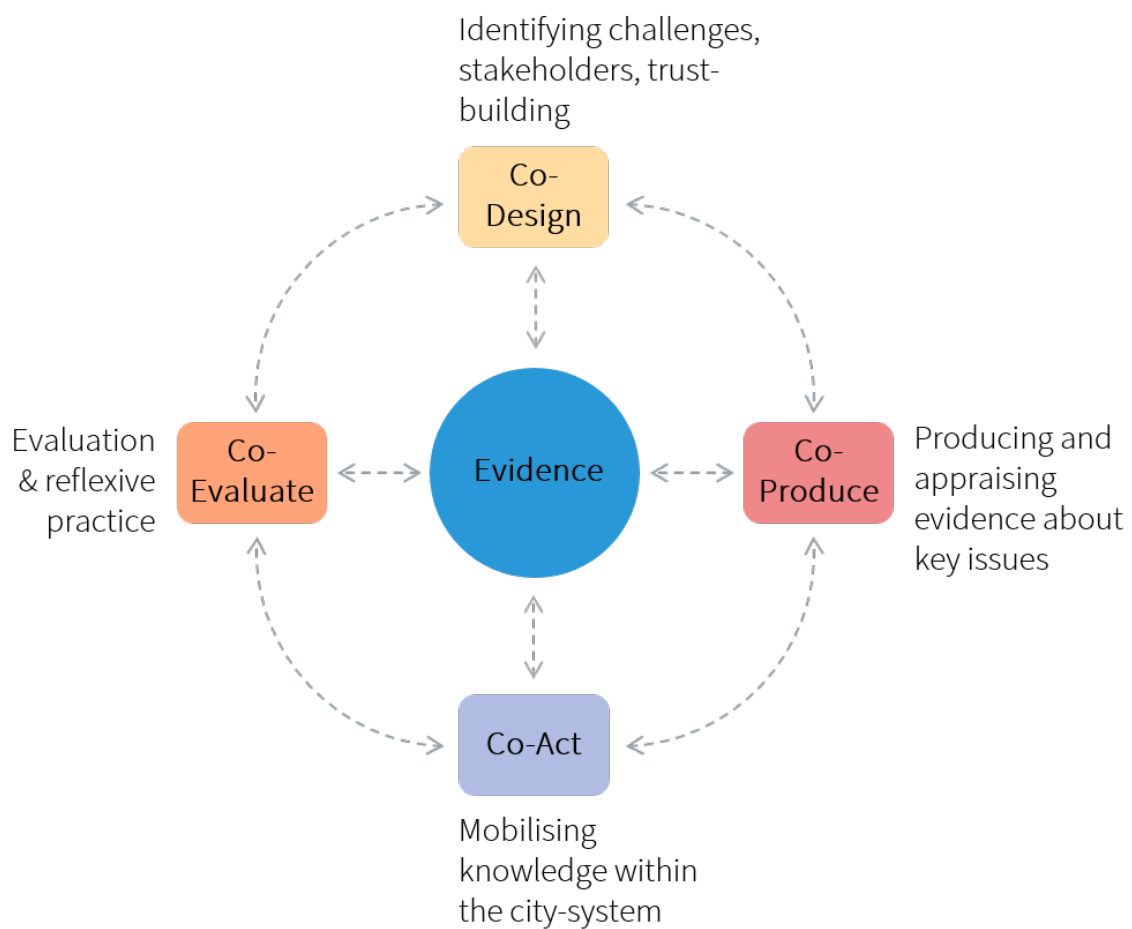


Figure 2: Participatory evidence building cycle

## Co-Design

The co-design stage involves the mobilisation of diverse urban stakeholders in a given city to prioritise key issues linked with the five domains of change, and establish ground rules and procedures to build trusting relationships. Participation can be leveraged through hosting inclusive community events to identify shared goals, values, needs, priorities and resources, as well as forming advisory committees and working groups. This could be: the most urgent problem or issue affecting young people and their communities that will allow some early successes; an infrastructure issue (e.g. lack of transport); a service problem (e.g. need for more schools); or a particular community issue (e.g. drug use or, lack of understanding of their rights). Those with a stake in the target problem in the city (e.g. residents, community, NGO, government, business, or research community) are consulted about the issue, their perspectives and priorities, and perceived solutions. It is important that connections and authentic dialogue from diverse and representative groups are enabled. The co-design phase should examine the key issues in relation to the five domains of change, and identify which changes it seeks to enact. This stage might involve activities such as:

- Identification of a local knowledge partner who can support research, action, and documentation.
- Mobilisation of key local partners and stakeholders involved, with attention to diversity and inclusion.
- Identification of 'key champions' inside government and industry.
- Prioritising study topics and issues, focussing on concerns of vulnerable groups.

## Co-Produce

The co-production stage involves establishing a shared vision and structures of engagement, to produce and appraise evidence about key issues in the city. A systemic approach to understanding evidence and determining best actions is recommended to identifying and defining the problems that are to be addressed. The co-production stage involves devising a plan to program the strategic actions. This might be a holistic set of activities across all strategic actions, or partners might select one strategic action as an entry point. Creating platforms and networks of engagement that allow partnerships to form and shared visioning to take place, are critical to facilitating the co-production phase. This stage might involve activities such as:

- Building shared vision, establishing clear deliverables, incentives for collaboration, and mechanisms for accountability.
- Undertaking collaborative inquiry into research questions and topics using participatory methods, and engaging youth.
- Establishing periodic forums or spaces for diverse stakeholders to respectfully exchange knowledge on key issues.
- Application of Bond principles to ensure rigour and quality of evidence.
- Collective analysis of research findings, with special attention to divergent ideas, gaps, and contradictions.

## Co-Act

The co-act stage involves collaborating to identify entry points or opportunities to act on issues that emerge from research generation and analysis. This can be facilitated by forming close partnerships across practice, research and policy, ensuring open and regular communication, and sharing of rich data, using all sources of evidence including rigorous research. In particular, building capacity of government officials and other urban stakeholders to engage with all forms of evidences and understand issues from a holistic perspective is critical for systems change. This stage might involve activities such as:

- Developing a lobbying and advocacy strategy, leveraging institutional opportunities and working through key champions.
- Production of knowledge products, staging of workshops, hosting of events to generate momentum.
- Staging of small scale demonstrator projects to test ideas, build collective capacity, or establish working relationships.
- Scaling out of activities through engagement with city-wide, regional, or global networks.

## Co-Evaluate

The co-evaluate stage involves a process of reflexivity and self-inquiry of researchers and practitioners, to support collective learning. This stage benefits from scheduled time and space for reflection on the barriers and enablers associated with the implementation of the strategic actions in a safe and open forum. Rigorous documentation during this stage is critical to ensure learnings can be shared across contexts. This stage might involve activities such as:

- Reflexive analysis of practitioners and researchers on how issues of power, privilege and representation shaped the production of knowledge.
- Analysis of the issues and or social groups that may have been left behind; exploration of how they might be included in future initiatives or other interventions.
- Facilitation of community evaluation against the five domains of change.
- Establishment of networks to share learnings and scale out, such as peer-to-peer training or exchanges.

## PROCESS ACTIONS

Local level process actions are examples of activities which can be undertaken through different phases of the evidence cycle, to support programming of the strategic actions. While process actions should ideally be devised through local level programming, several examples are given below to demonstrate the range of activities this might entail.

### **SA1 Mobilise local level participation especially young people, to ensure projects are co-led with local communities for sustainability**

- Identify a shared purpose and community needs with a city-wide lens.
- Engage local leaders and systems (formal and informal).
- Identify and act on local values and priorities.
- Promote and enable citizen voices and processes that support collective action.
- Develop community grounded interventions and activities.
- Link community structures of representation to formal city processes.
- Conduct, evaluate and learn from governance experiments.
- Leverage global-to-local engagements.

## CASE STUDY 6: SLUM DWELLERS INTERNATIONAL

Slum Dwellers International (SDI), is a global social movement of the urban poor that forms a network of community-based organisations across 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Slum Dwellers International was pioneered by Indian slum and pavement dwellers to make informal settlements visible to city authorities. It works through the understanding that slums and other informal settlements are not undifferentiated areas of poverty and misery, nor are they ‘problems’ to be fixed. Rather there is extensive diversity, culture and knowledge within poor communities everywhere, and innovation that can be tapped, provided residents can be involved in the design and implementation of solutions.

The SDI program Know Your City (KYC) brings together slum dwellers and local governments (more than 1,200 settlements in over 100 cities to date) to partner in community-led slum profiling; mapping that then empowers and informs actions for improved living conditions. KYC embodies inclusivity, empowering marginalised communities to participate in evidence building processes to build local knowledge and engage in decision making processes about their environment and living conditions. It does this via community organisation, participatory local governance, partnership building, and collective action that enhances city planning and management. KYC TV, for example, organises youth living in informal settlements to use new technologies to create media and films about life in slums, giving them space to engage in dialogue about city futures. KYC contributes to local, national and international policies and investments at scale, informing processes for managing the persistent social, economic, and political risks facing cities and nations.

Source: [knowyourcity.info](http://knowyourcity.info)

**SA2 Engage with diverse city stakeholders that result in equitable partnerships generating knowledge and shared vision of the desired sustained change**

- Identify relevant stakeholders ensuring representation of disadvantaged and minority groups.
- Convene communities and promote dialogue and trust.
- Identify shared values and goals and set up processes of developing shared vision.
- Promote regular and clear communication particularly around actions, roles and timelines.
- Organise regular meetings among stakeholders.
- Form collaborations that will transfer knowledge into action and experience into evidence.
- Formally identify expectations and specific contributions from partners including human capital, finances and other resources such as knowledge and networks.
- Initiate, evaluate and share tactical interventions.
- Establish and invest in data partnerships.
- Initiate, evaluate and learn from demonstrator projects.
- Conduct, evaluate and learn from governance experiments.

**CASE STUDY 7: SIERRA LEONE URBAN RESEARCH CENTRE**

The Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), based in Freetown, is a globally connected research centre created through a partnership between the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (University College London) and the Institute of Geography and Development Studies (Njala University). The centre aims to generate research and capacity building initiatives in cities across Sierra Leone that enhance the wellbeing of residents of informal settlements in a participatory and sustained manner.

A core aspect of SLURC's work lies in establishing durable, inclusive and equitable partnerships across urban stakeholders. In Freetown, this has been done through establishing 'City Learning Platforms' (CiLP) and 'Community Learning Platforms' (CoLP). These governance structures aim to create spaces for diverse stakeholders to share knowledge and expertise about urban challenges impacting the residents of informal settlements.

The CoLPs are made up of representatives from across different informal settlements, who meet periodically to undertake collective activities and identify priorities for their neighbourhoods. Critically, community representatives are carefully selected to represent diverse identities across tenure, gender, age, ability and other important dimensions.

The CiLP is an open consortium that meets periodically to discuss key themes (e.g. urban informal economy, health, etc) and includes representatives of the national and local government, civil society groups, the private sector, professional bodies, researchers and CoLP members. Establishing these two structures creates a dynamic feedback loop from the neighbourhood to the city and a democratic space where knowledge related to informal settlements is co-produced at different scales. And in doing so, generating a shared vision and common purpose through which knowledge about informal settlements is co-produced and actioned.

Source: [slurc.org](http://slurc.org)

**SA3 Influence city systems, policy and planning processes to promote equity, social inclusion and strengthen accountability**

- Map city trends and plans.
- Develop cross-sector alliances and develop an engagement plan for action.
- Identify institutional levers and contextual realities.
- Identify key champions in local government.
- Set up processes of engagement to obtain ‘buy in’ from local government.
- Connect local priorities with global resources, agendas, or processes.
- Produce knowledge products which can be used by policy-makers.
- Establish evidence-driven train-the-trainer programs.
- Experiment with and learn from tech-based methods.
- Value, optimise and share learnings of ‘mundane’ innovation.
- Leverage global-to-local engagements.
- Develop and share advocacy soft skills.

**CASE STUDY 8: URBAN RESOURCE CENTRE**

The Urban Resource Centre (URC) is a Karachi-based NGO in Pakistan founded by teachers, professionals, students, activists and community organisations from low income settlements. It was set up in response to the recognition that planning processes in Karachi were inequitable, were not serving the interests of low- and lower-middle-income groups and creating adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts. The URC works to change this through the creation of an information base about Karachi’s development that is available to and empowers citizens, and which can influence city systems. It researches and analyses government plans, to model their implications for equitable distribution of important determinants of health. It then uses this information to mobilise communities, to advocate on their behalf, and to draw key government staff into discussions. The URC also uses this local knowledge and expertise to create a knowledge hub, from which anyone can access and draw information to learn more about and to engage with city systems and decision-making.

The URC is co-created and community-driven and includes both general community members and professionals. The URC thus demonstrates the power of gathering relevant information and synthesising knowledge, of identifying the appropriate stakeholders and of partnering with them to achieve more equitable outcomes. By doing so, it is able to identify the evidence, plus the points of leverage most likely to motivate government leaders to strive for fairer and more just planning outcomes.

Source: [urckarachi.org](http://urckarachi.org)

**SA4 Invest in digital transformation to enable democratisation of technology resulting in access, innovation and scale**

- Understand access and availability of technology in each context.
- Facilitate dialogue about community concerns and integrate local knowledge about the use of technology.
- Adopt technology purposefully using young people's expertise and existing technologies or processes.
- Provide fair access to innovative tools or services (e.g. technology).
- Build a meaningful case for a change in methods and tools adopted, and communicate the likely benefits to stakeholders.
- Provide practical support for change - communication, education, training.
- Provide structure for change – devices, software, analytical tools, physical networks, support services.
- Develop and regulate best practice and ethical standards when using technology (e.g. personal safety, cyber security, privacy).
- Establish and invest in data partnerships.
- Formalise governance coalitions.
- Leverage global-to-local engagements.

**CASE STUDY 9: SAFETIPIN**

Safetipin, is an Indian social organisation working with a wide range of stakeholders to make public spaces safer and more inclusive for women harnessing the power of digital transformation. The organisation has designed a map-based online and mobile application that works to help make communities and cities safer for vulnerable groups, especially women. It does this by providing safety-related information collected through web and phone apps. Using the MySafetipin and Safetipin Nite apps, users provide information via audits and photos about the perceived level of safety of different sites as they navigate the city. This crowd sourced data is aggregated, analysed with other map layers and made available to the community so members can make safer decisions in their lives.

Communities are trained to conduct city-wide safety audits. Products that generate evidence for improvement are shared through public space improvement reports. In Delhi, Safetipin has been used to collect crowd sourced safety intelligence on more than 50,000 locations across different areas of the city, including metro stations and low-income neighborhoods. Data included the safety level of different streets, as well as transport hubs, markets, public toilets, parks, and other public spaces. The data was then published through the media and shared with the city government which was brought in early as a stakeholder. Among the data, 7,483 'dark spots' - areas of insufficient street lighting - were identified. This data was then used by the government to fix existing lighting and install additional streetlights.

Safetipin is a great example of community driven knowledge building that uses technology to empower everyone, especially the most vulnerable, to make informed decisions about their safety and mobility. It also is a good example of how evidence can be sourced on a large scale to influence planning that informs more effective city systems.

Source: [safetipin.com](http://safetipin.com)



**SA 5 Generate knowledge and document evidence to advocate for justice, equity and rights of young people thereby shaping a global ‘inclusion’ agenda**

- Build knowledge and skills through education and training about city issues, and young people’s rights and entitlements.
- Safeguard spaces and time for reflection on both successful and ‘failed’ processes.
- Document operations to enable transparency and replication.
- Support research which includes pilot studies and longitudinal evaluations.
- Share findings, learnings and resources across cities and globally.
- Develop guidelines for enabling evidence-informed rights-based practices.
- Document education and training programs, providing varied modes of delivery to enable greater access to diverse groups, using a range of facilitators including peers and community volunteers.
- Develop multiple knowledge products to serve different purposes (e.g. advocacy materials for civil society groups/policy briefs for policy-makers).
- Conduct, evaluate and learn from governance experiments.

**CASE STUDY 10: SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB**

The Social Innovation Lab (SIL) is a knowledge and experimentation hub setup by the NGO BRAC in Dhaka, Bangladesh. SIL’s work focuses on developing innovative ideas and testing them on the ground to learn what works and what doesn’t in addressing complex social problems. By connecting development practitioners and social entrepreneurs through several local and global platforms it seeks to promote South-South learning sharing and partnerships. SIL organises the Frugal Innovation Forum in Dhaka – an annual gathering of development practitioners, funders, young changemakers, and innovators from across the globe. This forum serves as a space for exploring and showcasing mundane innovations taking place in the Global South and collaborating to “partner for scaling what works, and analyse lessons learned from what doesn’t.” Recently SIL also started publishing annual Failure Reports that critically analyse failed projects, identify what went wrong and share learning from the failure.

A key initiative of SIL is the urban innovation challenge. Implemented in partnership with BRAC’s Urban Development program, this initiative seeks to engage and support the urban youth in developing solutions to pressing problems faced by the city. It provides incubation support to young innovators and entrepreneurs in the form of co-working space, field exposure, seed funding for prototyping and piloting, and mentoring for developing sustainable social business models across various sectors. It then helps them pitch those solutions to investors for scaling up at the city or country level. Launched in 2016 the urban innovation challenge has become a launch pad for several youth-led and impact-driven enterprises that aim to bring low cost, tech-based solutions to urban healthcare, energy and transportation sectors.

The Social Innovation Lab exemplifies the importance of investing in building platforms that enable connecting and partnering for catalysing mundane innovation, learning from failures, and scaling up. It also highlights the importance of engaging the urban youth in developing innovative solutions to many of the challenges faced in urban communities.

Source: [innovation.brac.net](http://innovation.brac.net)

**SA6 Facilitate capacity building initiatives to support young people, decision-makers, and knowledge partners to act collaboratively as catalysts for change, and to share learning locally and globally**

- Support skills development in gathering qualitative and quantitative data.
- Train and employ locals to engage in program design, development and implementation.
- Develop capacity building initiatives targeting communities, social organisations, local institutions and governments to ensure evidence is shared and stakeholders are sensitised to community issues and rights.
- Identify and support leaders and entrepreneurs who can facilitate capacity building in their communities.
- Provide opportunities for participation in mentoring sessions.
- Establish train-the-trainer sessions to enable community sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences.
- Establish and invest in data partnerships.
- Experiment with and learn from tech-based methods.
- Develop and share advocacy soft skills.

**CASE STUDY 11: PARTNERS FOR URBAN KNOWLEDGE, ACTION AND RESEARCH**

Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research (PUKAR) is an independent research collective and urban knowledge producing institution, based in Mumbai. PUKAR conducts multi-sectoral, cross-disciplinary, community based, participatory action research on issues related to urbanisation and globalisation. Challenging traditional paradigms of knowledge production and ownership, PUKAR champions the ideas of “Right to Research” and “documentation as intervention”, recognising the value of different types of knowledge, and the important contribution of locally derived “organic knowledge” in sustainable development. PUKAR partners with local and international organisations to democratise research and empower youth and communities to contribute to inclusive and sustainable development through participatory research processes.

Across PUKAR’s projects, an overarching goal is to equip community members, particularly young people, as “Barefoot Researchers”. For example, through their “Healthy Cities Wealthy Cities” program, PUKAR have trained over 10,000 Barefoot Researchers across a range of projects such as “Exploring Social and Physical Determinants of Urban Health” and “Community Assessment at Vikroli”. In all of their programs, PUKAR use skill-based training to equip young people to be tomorrow’s critical thinkers, community researchers, leaders and advocates for change. Youth are engaged in a range of community-driven, action-oriented knowledge gathering through surveys and mapping to contribute to a deeper understanding of social issues, as well as engaging decision making about how to address these issues.

A recent initiative by PUKAR is their “Research as Pedagogy, Advocacy and Transformation” project which involves a collaboration with a local college to teach students about Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR). As well as the fundamentals of CBPAR, students are taught about research methodologies and ethics alongside critical thinking skills and different perspectives on social issues. While this project is still in progress, it is already helping to build local research capacity as well as contributing to building new knowledge that seeks to shape a more inclusive view of what counts as research, and who counts as researchers, in local and global contexts.

Source: [pukar.org.in](http://pukar.org.in)

## A PRACTICAL AND PHASED APPROACH TO PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING

In order to operationalise an organisational learning agenda via the implementation of the E2A Framework, it is suggested that a global E2A team is formed to frame the overall meta-learning strategy and support documentation and learning processes. Strong engagement is needed between global and local teams, who are accountable for gathering, analysing and sharing evidence from city projects to inform global learning questions.

The role of the E2A global PAR team is to:

- Facilitate action research processes across Botnar funded programming activities.
- Coordinate meta-learning activities across participating projects.
- Provide training and capacity building activities to support research and evaluation activities.
- Collate, analyse and synthesise evaluation and research data and produce reports on meta-learning and research findings.

During the course of a three-year project cycle, PAR teams are also formed at a project level to interact with the global team on a regular basis. Practitioners and researchers analyse evidence through reflection on the domains of change and strategic learning questions. Lessons are documented on a regular basis by both local and global teams - with the global team playing a key role in producing knowledge products to be shared across academia and practice, and with global and local policy partners. It is recommended that local and global PAR teams should be convened at a minimum of three times at key points of the project cycle: design, interim review and end of project evaluation. The three workshops allow participating projects to go through the action learning cycle twice, to adapt their approach according to emerging findings, and strengthen evidence building approaches through reflection on E2A learning priorities and questions. Fondation Botnar's overarching *Strategic Learning Questions* will need to be considered at each workshop, and discussions documented.

**Workshop 1: Design**

The first workshop takes places during the design phase of the project. Stakeholders participate in discussions regarding consideration of the domains of change, identification of meta-research and evaluation questions that relate to the project, and in the selection of methods to collect and analyse data. It is anticipated that most data can be collected as part of the ‘normal’ project design and monitoring and evaluation activities aligned with specific projects and programs. This workshop will also include training sessions to ensure that all involved stakeholders have the required skills and knowledge to implement E2A informed research and learning strategies.

**Workshop 2: Interim Review**

A second workshop is conducted following the first phase of data collection (i.e. during the mid-term review). At this workshop, stakeholders reflect on the implications of their findings and develop action plans to address any issues that have arisen from the data. This may result in further research questions. Participants also identify further monitoring and evaluation activities that are conducted during the remainder of their projects. Learnings are documented and shared through the global E2A team. Strategic learning questions are discussed and lessons documented.

**Workshop 3: End of project evaluation**

At a third concluding workshop, stakeholders again reflect on findings and the implications for their approach to city programming across the domains of change. Learnings are also documented and shared with Fondation Botnars Global Learning Team in relation to evaluation questions for their SO1 cities fit for young people.

## CONCLUSION

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As we look towards 2030, the Decade of Action for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals highlights the need for Fondation Botnar's work on health and wellbeing. To achieve the SDGs, action on three levels is needed: global action to secure greater leadership, new resources and smarter solutions; local action to embed transitions in policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks; and people action, including youth, and across all sectors, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing toward these transformations (UN, 2020).

Building capacity to generate and mobilise evidence towards transformative action will be critical to these ambitious aims in secondary cities. This E2A Framework outlines key concepts and lessons which underpin an approach to evidence building for organisational learning, which seeks to: activate 'mundane' and novel innovations, ensure the inclusion and equity of diverse social groups and stakeholders, and deliver solutions that are sensitive to their unique contexts.

This Framework is expected to guide an approach which can harness new technologies to generate deeper understandings of communities and their priorities, give the most vulnerable a voice, and arrive at innovative solutions to contemporary urban challenges. Most importantly, such 'evidence to action' processes can generate and share new knowledge on urban challenges, supporting more sustainable and equitable outcomes for generations of young people.

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## ANNEX 1: PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST FOR PROGRAMS

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PRINCIPLE	CHECKLIST FOR PROGRAMS
Fit for Context	<p>Youth voices have been integrated in diagnosis, building evidence, and strategy definition</p> <p>Local values and meanings were accounted for</p> <p>Findings and conclusions have been shared and validated by a range of stakeholders</p> <p>Various perspectives, findings, and divergent perspectives have been explored</p>
Inclusion & Equality	<p>Diverse social groups had equitable opportunities to participate and shape programs</p> <p>Opportunities to foster ongoing respectful dialogue and trusted collaborations have been created</p> <p>Interventions have focused on enhancing the capacities and confidence of the most vulnerable groups, and of wider stakeholders to more deeply engage with vulnerable groups</p> <p>Young people have been supported to know their rights, and engage as leaders</p> <p>Stakeholder mapping (with attention to intersectionality) has been used to identify 'hard to reach' groups beyond the usual suspects</p>
Mundane Innovation	<p>Mundane innovation has been identified and supported</p> <p>Technology can be accessed equitably, especially by vulnerable groups</p> <p>Issues of risk and privacy have been addressed</p> <p>Technological innovations are aimed at strengthening existing social relations and networks</p> <p>Technological innovations seek to enhance autonomy and competence of young people</p>
Enabling Environment	<p>Local-level or small-scale projects are aimed at enhancing capacities in influencing city systems</p> <p>Knowledge products and evidence have been co-produced to inform policy, planning, or programming</p> <p>Multi-stakeholder platforms have been created and institutionalised</p> <p>Capacity has been built with local officials to engage youth or community evidence in decision-making</p> <p>Platforms have been created to engage young people and link with local city champions and policy-makers</p>
Global in Reach	<p>Regional or international networks have been leveraged to showcase learning or advocate for local and global change</p> <p>Young people have been supported to engage as leaders in global processes to act as local leaders</p> <p>Case studies and lessons have been compiled and shared with other localities</p> <p>Peer-to-peer learning or knowledge exchange across cities has been facilitated</p>

## ANNEX 2: DOMAINS OF CHANGE ALIGNMENT

DOMAIN OF CHANGE	FONDATION BOTNAR STRATEGY ALIGNMENT	SDG ALIGNMENT	
		SDG	EXPLANATION
Empowered Youth & Communities	SO1: Cities SO2: Digital/AI SO3: Research SO4: System enabler SO5: Entrepreneurship	Goal 1: No poverty (target 1.4) Goal 3: Good health & wellbeing (target 3.8) Goal 4: Quality education (target 4.7) Goal 5: Gender equality (targets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) Goal 8: Decent work & economic growth (target 8.7) Goal 10: Reduced inequalities (target 10.2) Goal 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions (target 16.2)	The achievement of all aspects of wellbeing through equitable access to essential services and realisation of rights, social, economic and political inclusion, freedom from discrimination and violence, and opportunities to participate in and influence decision-making.
Equitable Partnerships	SO1: Cities SO2: Digital/AI SO3: Research SO4: System enabler SO5: Entrepreneurship	Goal 1: No poverty (target 1.a) Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals (targets 17.9, 17.16, 17.17)	Working together on equitable terms across diverse stakeholders for meaningful dialogue and collective action, mobilising technological and financial resources, sharing knowledge, ensuring sustainability and scaling up.
Effective City Systems	SO1: Cities SO2: Digital/AI SO4: System Enabler	Goal 8: Decent work & economic growth (target 8.3) Goal 10: Reduced inequalities (targets 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4) Goal 11: Sustainable cities & communities (targets 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.7, 11.b) Goal 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions (targets 16.6, 16.7, 16.10)	Inclusive, participatory and accountable city governance and strengthened infrastructure for improved access to quality education, healthcare, employment, and public space, and sustainable urban development in secondary cities.
Transformative Innovation	SO1: Cities SO2: Digital/AI SO3: Research SO4: System enabler SO5: Entrepreneurship	Goal 5: Gender equality (target 5.b) Goal 9: Industry, innovation & infrastructure (target 9.b)	Fostering innovation and enabling technologies that connect and enhance access to opportunities and services, and promote empowerment.
Global Learning	SO1: Cities SO3: Research EA2: Shaping Agendas	Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals (targets 17.6, 17.16)	Building and sharing knowledge and learning on sustainable development across city, country, regional and global levels.

## ANNEX 3: STRATEGIC ACTIONS EXAMPLE INDICATORS

STRATEGIC ACTION	EXAMPLE INDICATORS	EXAMPLE DATA SOURCE
SA1 Mobilise local level participation	<p>Number of local community members actively involved in program design and delivery</p> <p>Extent of local community participation</p> <p>Participants satisfaction with success of programs</p>	<p>Project documents including activity reports, process documentation, meeting minutes and MIS reports</p> <p>Participant interviews, stories and videos</p> <p>Before and after self-report surveys assessing satisfaction with process and outcome</p> <p>Intersectional analysis to ensure engagement of hard-to-reach groups</p>
SA2 Engage with diverse city stakeholders	<p>Number and extent of partnerships created as exemplified (e.g. by network mapping)</p> <p>Extent to which partners were empowered to participate as equals</p> <p>Number of consortium-led activities</p> <p>Subjective experiences of trust and respect</p>	<p>Network and stakeholder mapping before and after projects have been initiated</p> <p>Before and after self-report surveys or narratives</p> <p>Project documents including activity reports, process documentation, meeting minutes and MIS reports</p> <p>Retention/attrition scores</p> <p>Participant interviews, stories and videos partnership</p> <p>Signed memorandum of understanding, partnership agreements</p>
SA3 Influence city systems, policy and planning processes	<p>Extent to which policy-level proposals were implemented by the jurisdiction</p> <p>Extent of change in city systems (e.g. open space, transport networks, waste management)</p> <p>Extent of participation by stakeholders in planning and decision-making</p> <p>Extent to which citizens (inc. young people) feel they can have a say in decision-making</p> <p>Number and reach of participatory platforms (digital or physical)</p>	<p>Participants' self-reported competence and autonomy to influence city decision-making</p> <p>Participants' self-reported satisfaction with programs intended to influence decision-making</p> <p>Change (improvements) in urban infrastructure, e.g. access to essential services, education, open space, waste management etc. with reference to established benchmarks</p> <p>Consultation reports (where they exist)</p> <p>Community surveys</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION	EXAMPLE INDICATORS	EXAMPLE DATA SOURCE
SA4 Invest in digital transformation	<p>Extent to which participants/ stakeholders have used appropriate new technologies in program design and delivery</p> <p>Extent of digital inclusion of target populations particularly of young people and marginalised groups</p> <p>Extent to which technology and programs have been adaptation within the public sector</p>	<p>Evaluations of programs that involve tech-based solutions</p> <p>Census data (where available) on internet, cell phone and other technology access</p> <p>Participant interviews, stories and videos</p> <p>Community surveys</p> <p>Before and after self-report surveys</p>
SA5 Generate knowledge and document evidence	<p>Quality and extent of data gathered during city assessment and program evaluation phases</p> <p>Extent of local community involvement in program evaluation through data collection and analysis</p> <p>Extent of local knowledge shared across global platforms</p> <p>Extent to which young people are involved in collecting, validating, and analysing data</p>	<p>City assessment/baseline reports</p> <p>Program evaluation reports</p> <p>Project documents including process documentation</p> <p>Participant interviews</p> <p>Knowledge products, reports shared across local and global platform</p> <p>Stories, videos, photography, art, animation or other narrative mediums</p>
SA6 Facilitate capacity building initiatives	<p>Number of training programs/ workshops/capacity building activities initiated which address specific identified gaps or needs</p> <p>Number of stakeholders that participated in capacity building initiatives</p> <p>Enhanced sense of autonomy or competence of young people</p>	<p>Project documents including activity reports, process documentation and MIS reports</p> <p>Training/workshop evaluation reports</p> <p>Participant interviews</p> <p>Before and after self-report surveys or narratives</p>

## ANNEX 4: STRATEGIC LEARNING QUESTIONS FOR DOMAINS OF CHANGE

DOMAIN	LEARNING PRIORITY	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Empowered Youth & Communities	What works (or does not) in creating spaces and platforms for empowering young people to act as change leaders and enhance their participation and voice in city-wide planning, agenda setting and decision making.	<p>In what ways were young people empowered to co-produce <b>evidence</b> in collaboration with diverse urban stakeholders?</p> <p>How were organisational and institutional <b>capacities</b> built for delivering participatory and inclusive processes that empower young people and marginalised communities?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in building autonomy, relatedness, and competence (ARC) of young people to act as change agents in their communities, and effectively engage with decision-makers to enhance <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>
Equitable Partnerships	What works (or does not) in building trust and strong relations across diverse urban stakeholders towards effective collaborations and collective actions.	<p>How were issues of power, equity, and knowledge biases negotiated through <b>evidence-based</b> partnerships, models and processes?</p> <p>How was institutional <b>capacity</b> built to promote multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships that foster sustainable collaborations and collective actions?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in creating shared vision and commitment among diverse stakeholders to enhance <b>relational wellbeing</b> of young people?</p>
Effective City Systems	What works (or does not) in transforming city systems to be healthy, open, prosperous, equal, safe, connected and sustainable (HOPE-CS).	<p>What processes were most/least effective in engaging city officials to share <b>evidence</b> and influence governance issues to strengthen inclusive policy and planning?</p> <p>What strategies were most/least effective in harnessing the <b>capacity</b> of diverse city governance sectors and service providers to address problems impacting young people?</p> <p>What barriers and facilitators were identified in bringing together formal and informal systems and structures to produce synergy towards enhancing young people's <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>
Transformative Innovation	What works (or does not) in creating inclusive access to and use of innovative technology and ideas that can lead to transformative changes in urban systems.	<p>What strategies were most/least effective in increasing young people's <b>capacity</b> to access and use technology to drive change in urban systems?</p> <p>What new technology focused methodologies were useful in generating <b>evidence</b> and data to influence city planning and policies?</p> <p>What processes were most/least effective in identifying and scaling of mundane innovations across city systems to enhance <b>wellbeing</b>?</p>

DOMAIN	LEARNING PRIORITY	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Global Learning	What works (or does not) in building knowledge and learning that can influence positive changes in policy, planning, and practice at city, region and global level.	<p>What strategies were most/least effective in scaling of <b>evidence</b> and knowledge from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• local level actions to influence city systems?</li><li>• city systems to influence global development and policy agendas?</li></ul> <p>What <b>capacities</b> were developed among key stakeholders that facilitated the exchange of knowledge and learning across diverse cities?</p> <p>What processes have been effective at applying, monitoring and measuring <b>relational wellbeing</b> in diverse urban settings?</p>



## ANNEX 5: STRATEGIC LEARNING QUESTIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

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### STRATEGIC LEARNING QUESTIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

How has the collective evidence from grassroots actions embedded in city projects informed:

- Botnar organisational strategy and investments on an ongoing basis?
- Collective learning across Botnar cities to inform programming approaches?
- Botnar's aim to shape global agendas and promote inclusive cities?

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