

“We are the voice of young people in urban sustainability” Interview with Nick Ngatia on Nairobi Urban Creators

Mr Ngatia, what was your main motivation for founding Nairobi Urban Creators?

“Nairobi Urban Creators was founded to engage young people in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.”

Nairobi Urban Creators was founded after the Habitat III Conference which took place in Quito in October 2016, focussing on sustainable urban development. In the run-up to the conference we had done a lot of youth activities, engaging young people in the process of identifying what they want, or what they think is a sustainable city and their aspirations for their future. In the aftermath of the conference, Nairobi Urban Creators was founded with the intent to engage young people in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Kenya.

What were the first activities of Nairobi Urban Creators?

After the Habitat III Conference, the very first thing we did as Nairobi Urban Creators is that we named a youth representative for the National Habitat Committee which is an initiative by the State Department of Housing and Urban Development. Our youth representative contributed to drafting the popular version of the New Urban Agenda which is a shorter version of the Quito document. The popular version of the New Urban Agenda for Kenya highlights the priorities for Kenyan cities. So the main objective, back then, was to ensure that we were the voice of young people in the popular version and in the implementation framework. We even have a budgetary allocation for young people and activities that young people are supposed to carry out in the implementation.

What does it take to motivate young people for engaging in sustainable development initiatives?

We invest a lot of time in defining who our members are going to be as Nairobi Urban Creators. We actually source most of our members from existing networks and youth organisations, and you'll find that these are people who are already involved in community work and who appreciate the efforts that organisations do in terms of making life better in their communities. And so, just like companies invest in the recruitment process by having a functioning human resource department, as an organisation you also need to make sure that you look for the right membership. And then, after you have the right membership, you need to have a very clear goal and vision. After that, because we are talking about young people, you have to link them to opportunities. If you can present your organisation as something that can help in getting them to the next level in terms of what they are doing, then they will become really helpful members of your organisation.

“You need to have a very clear goal and vision.”

What role do social media play for your daily work?

Social media have been an integral part of what we do. Mostly it is about creating awareness of our events. We use social media to make sure that we reach diverse audiences, more than just the people in our mailing list. With social

“We use social media to make sure that we reach diverse audiences.”

media, we are able to reach government agencies, we are able to reach politicians; social media are an integral part of our campaign and have been really helpful in actually increasing the impact of what we do.

What would you respond to somebody who is sceptical about the political maturity of young activists?

“Time has shown that young people come up with solutions that affect communities.”

For anyone who is sceptical about involving young people in their processes, I would just like to say that that is wrong and time has shown that young people are creative, they are talented and they actually come up with solutions that affect communities. So it is really good to involve the young in making decisions that impact communities and societies.

Nick Ngatia

Nick Ngatia is the founder of Nairobi Urban Creators, which aims to facilitate meaningful engagement of young people in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda across the cities of Kenya. Ngatia has also served as the Regional Focal Point (Eastern and Southern Africa) for the UN Major Group on Youth and has been recognized as an ‘Emerging Community Champion’ by UN Habitat for his role in engagement of local youth in the Habitat III process.



Imprint

The Development and Peace Foundation (sef:) was founded in 1986 on the initiative of Willy Brandt. It is a cross-party and non-profitmaking organisation. sef: provides an international high-level forum for shared thinking on the complex challenges of globalisation..

sef: insight is an online publication to accompany key conferences hosted by sef:. It presents interviews with international experts as well as opinion pieces on pressing issues of local, regional and global governance.

Published by
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)
Dechenstr. 2 | 53115 Bonn | Germany
Phone +49 (0)228 959 25-0 | Fax -99
sef@sef-bonn.org | [@sefbonn](#)
www.sef-bonn.org

Editors
Dr Mischa Hansel
Dr Michèle Roth

Design Basic Concept
Pitch Black Graphic Design
Berlin/Rotterdam

Layout
Gerhard Suess-Jung

Contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

ISSN 2566-7262
© sef: 2018