EVIDENCE TO ACTION FRAMEWORK

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO ACTION RESEARCH AND LEARNING

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EDITION 2

About the Project

The Evidence to Action Project at the Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne was commissioned by Fondation Botnar, a Swiss Philanthropic organisation committed to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in urban environments. The project promotes the value of evidence building and learning for driving systemic change through programmatic and policy action at all levels of urban planning and governance.

The Evidence to Action Framework is presented as a meta-learning tool that applies an action research strategy for generating and mobilising evidence about 'what works' (or what does not work) across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio, to inform actions that contribute to young people's wellbeing in intermediary cities.

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This project is an ongoing collaboration between the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne and Fondation Botnar. It was managed and delivered at the Melbourne Centre for Cities and developed in collaboration with Fondation Botnar senior staff, involving interviews with third parties not affiliated to these institutions.

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Evidence to Action (E2A) project: The journey

The conceptual phase of the Evidence to Action (E2A) project commenced in 2019 at Fondation Botnar's head office in Basel, Switzerland with a conversation among a diverse group of professionals converging around the question of evidence building. The group agreed on the importance of systematically gathering evidence from grassroots action and highlighted the critical need for embedding learning in the project cycle to achieve this, including redefining determinants of success in complex urban environments. This led to the development of a discussion paper on evidence building and eventually the design of the E2A Framework as an approach to evidence building and learning in collaboration with the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne.

The opportunity of applying the E2A framework soon emerged through Fondation Botnar's first multi-city flagship program, the *Healthy Cities for Adolescents* program. Simultaneously, conversations on credible evidence gathering emerged at the World Urban Forum 2019 in Abu Dhabi, that have continued at World Urban Forum 2022 held at Katowice, Poland. Thought leaders from the philanthropic sector called for action for development of strategies to move away from traditional outcome/outcome-based measurement of success towards evaluative learning informed by the perspectives of the communities from their socio-cultural contexts on what counts as positive change, reflecting on their lived experience. The E2A Framework emphasises learning about context, power dynamics and cultural milieu, and documenting what worked and what did not work in a project intervention for shaping change.

These conversations from local to global among thought leaders and practitioners inspired the creation of the Evidence to Action Framework. The framework encourages the development sector to think outside the box and assist practitioners and researchers to seek alternatives to the traditional definitions and measurements of success and failure in projects.

The first edition of the E2A Conceptual Framework was released in 2020 and the framework was tested through Fondation Botnar's *Healthy Cities for Adolescents* and the *OurCity Initiative*. This work continued the pace of its progress in spite of the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic and eventually led to the creation of the second edition of the E2A Conceptual Framework and informed the Practitioner's Guide. It is now designed to capture the learnings and recommendations from the Fondation Botnar's project partners who apply this framework.

Staying true to their commitments, throughout the evolution of the framework, the authors have maintained a focus on learning from the rich narratives of diverse voices of the development sector through different forms of interactions. We thank everyone who has contributed to the journey being our critical friends, sharing ideas, solutions and feedback while highlighting the need for innovation. We hope that the E2A Framework project enables the continuation of these conversations, from local to global, inspiring transformative action across the development sector.

Joyati Das
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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fondation
BOTNAR

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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**Melbourne Centre
for Cities**

2019 to 2020
Development of conceptual framework: discussion paper, expert committee, E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 1

March to July 2021
Webinars: validation from experts and practitioners, Community of Practice

August 2021 to April 2022
Test and pilot phase: Senegal, India, Romania

July 2022 and February 2023
E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 2

July 2022 to February 2023
Practitioner's Guide to launch implementation in cities

Figure 1. E2A journey from concept to action

List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
E2A	Evidence to Action
GIS	Geographic Information System
MSC	Most Significant Change
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PAR-L	Participatory Action Research and Learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Contents

E2A FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework is a meta-learning tool that offers essential elements and methodologies that Fondation Botnar and its program partners can use to frame and operationalise a formal evidence-building and learning agenda at the organisational and program levels. The framework is designed to serve as an overlay to the existing monitoring and evaluation processes at the project level. It provides a systematised approach to capturing evidence of developmental changes at the local, national and global scale. It offers guidance on integrating this evidence-building process, including an action research and learning strategy across the project management cycle.

The E2A Framework:

- offers a set of five principles: fit for context, inclusion and equality, practical innovation, enabling environment, and shared learning. These value-driven aspirations should guide grounded activities and are seen as key sites of learning as they are fundamental to the kinds of transformative urban change Fondation Botnar hopes to affect.

- proposes six strategic actions that provide entry points that can catalyse processes of change and support the documentation of credible evidence-building processes towards youth wellbeing outcomes. These actions recommend: generating knowledge and documenting evidence through mobilising local level participation; engaging with diverse city stakeholders; reviewing city systems, analysing policy and planning processes; investing in digital transformation; and facilitating capacity-building initiatives.

- outlines five domains of change that help to map change and reflect on outcomes that support the wider aim of achieving 'cities fit for young people', thereby actioning Fondation Botnar's wider mission 'from being a grant maker to change maker'. These domains of change are: empowered youth and communities; equitable partnerships; effective city systems; technological innovation; and global in reach.

The uniqueness of the E2A Framework lies in its focus on bridging the often-seen knowledge disconnect between research and practice. The framework attempts this by institutionalising a process of collaborative learning and evidence building in Fondation Botnar's interventions across diverse cities. The aim is to create a common language around principles, actionable strategies and domains of change to track what works or what does not to enhance young people's wellbeing in select intermediary cities, and enable systemic and sustained change in urban environments.

The E2A Framework is anchored in Fondation Botnar's strategy and wider mission to move 'from being a grant maker to change maker', including its commitments to human rights and child rights principles, and alignment with the *UN Agenda 2030* principle of 'leaving no one behind', and the Decade of Action (2020–2030) for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, calling for global, local and people action.

The organisation's *Refined Strategy 2020–2022* particularly commits to promoting the voice and participation of communities, especially young people, building their capacity to drive change and promoting a social inclusion agenda. Further commitment to innovative development is demonstrated through the five strategic objectives and several implementation arenas of change. There are two enabling actions (strategic learning and evaluation, and shaping agendas) that will respectively put further emphasis on learning, and strengthen the focus on local to global action outcomes that can catalyse systemic change.

Through building grounded urban knowledge, Fondation Botnar is embracing the opportunity to be a part of this global movement of local-to-global action supporting youth leaders to harness the power of digital technologies, and to be at the forefront of shaping new urban futures. Within this context, the E2A Framework charts clear principles and strategic actions to build and mobilise evidence towards the goal of creating 'cities fit for young people'.

Embedding learning and knowledge building in the project cycle

The E2A Framework is grounded in the tradition of participatory action research (PAR), which is a process of research, education and action where participants seek to transform

their own skills and capacities, as well as challenge social inequalities. A PAR approach emphasises that the process that evidence is generated through is as critical as the evidence itself, in terms of enhancing young people's relational wellbeing. A PAR process requires meaningful and equitable collaboration across (global and local) researchers, practitioners, communities and decision-makers.

Engaging in PAR through 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 that can capture both objective and subjective realities and empower community members to systematically use evidence to improve their own wellbeing (see Figure 1). These steps are elaborated on further in Section 2.3 and they include:

- Co-design: This stage involves mobilising diverse urban stakeholders in a given city to identify key issues concerning young people's wellbeing about the five domains of change, shared goals, values, priorities, resources and solutions, as well as forming advisory committees and working groups.

- Co-produce: This stage involves devising a plan to program strategic actions, and to produce and appraise evidence about key issues in the city. Creating platforms and networks of engagement that allow partnerships to form and shared visioning to take place are critical to facilitating co-production.

- Co-act: This 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.

- Co-review: This stage involves a process of reflexivity and self-inquiry of community members and practitioners, facilitated by the learning partner, to support collective learning.

Identifying city
stakeholders, challenges,
trust-building, and planning
to build evidence

co-design

Reflexive self-
inquiry on barriers
and enablers for
future action

co-review

Evidence

co-produce

Collectively
producing and
appraising evidence
about key issues

co-act

Mobilising knowledge to
influence policy decisions
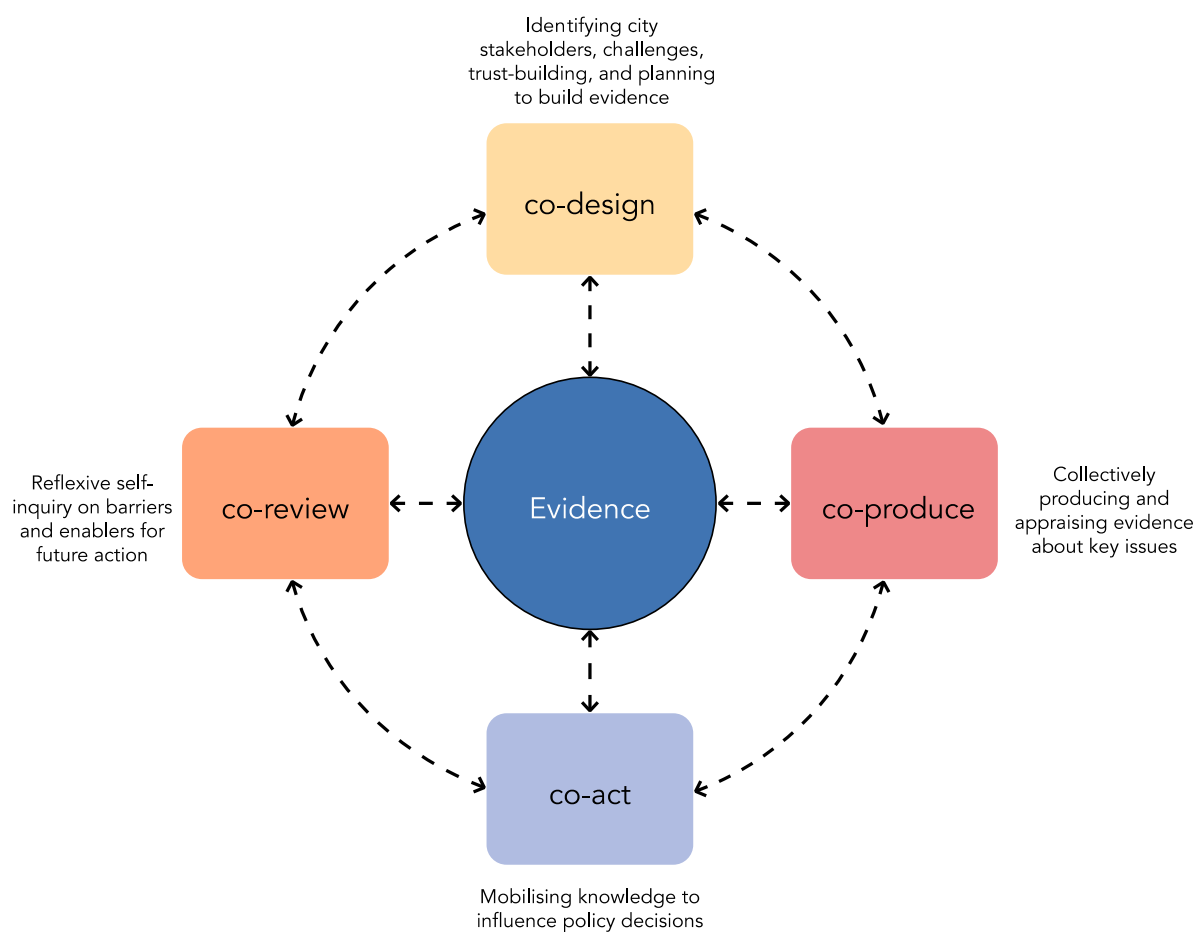
Figure 2. Evidence building and learning cycle

The accompanying Practitioner's Guide provides detailed guidance on applying the E2A in diverse urban environments, and it includes a suite of evidence-building instruments to document observed change on an annual basis and during critical phases of a project cycle.

The E2A Framework:

1. is a meta-learning tool that:

    o generates knowledge and learning based on the lived experiences of
      practitioners and young people

    o captures observed change from diverse city stakeholders about a city's context
      and identifies people's aspirations of change

    o maps systems change in diverse urban environments over time focusing on
      people, policies and programs

2. centres participatory practices that ensure inclusion of the voices of diverse city
   stakeholders including young people and other marginalised communities

3. is flexible and can be tailored to fit the requirements of diverse projects and
   contexts

4. can be overlayed on any project cycle to establish processes of evidence building to
   inform action for sustained change

5. is a guideline only that allows room for customisation, being exploratory, and testing
   new tools and processes that enable efficient evidence building.

PREFACE

Key changes from Edition 1 to Edition 2 reflect refinements following a 'test and pilot' phase undertaken in 2020. These changes include:

- The principle *mundane innovation* is reframed as *practical innovation* to capture local level transformative initiatives using both everyday accessible digital tools and sophisticated technology such as AI (a priority for Fondation Botnar), when possible, to promote scale.

- The principle of *global in reach* has been reframed as *shared learning* to further emphasise Fondation Botnar's commitment to promote learning with local partners and globally.

- The strategic action *generating knowledge and documenting evidence* has replaced *capacity building* as a crosscutting theme that underpins all strategic actions.

- Within Strategic Action 5, *Influence* is replaced by *Review* to ensure an action-oriented entry point for city engagement.

- The last domain of change has been reframed as *global in reach* to reflect the priority that evidence of change at the local level is shared to inform and shape global agendas.

Evidence to Action Conceptual Framework
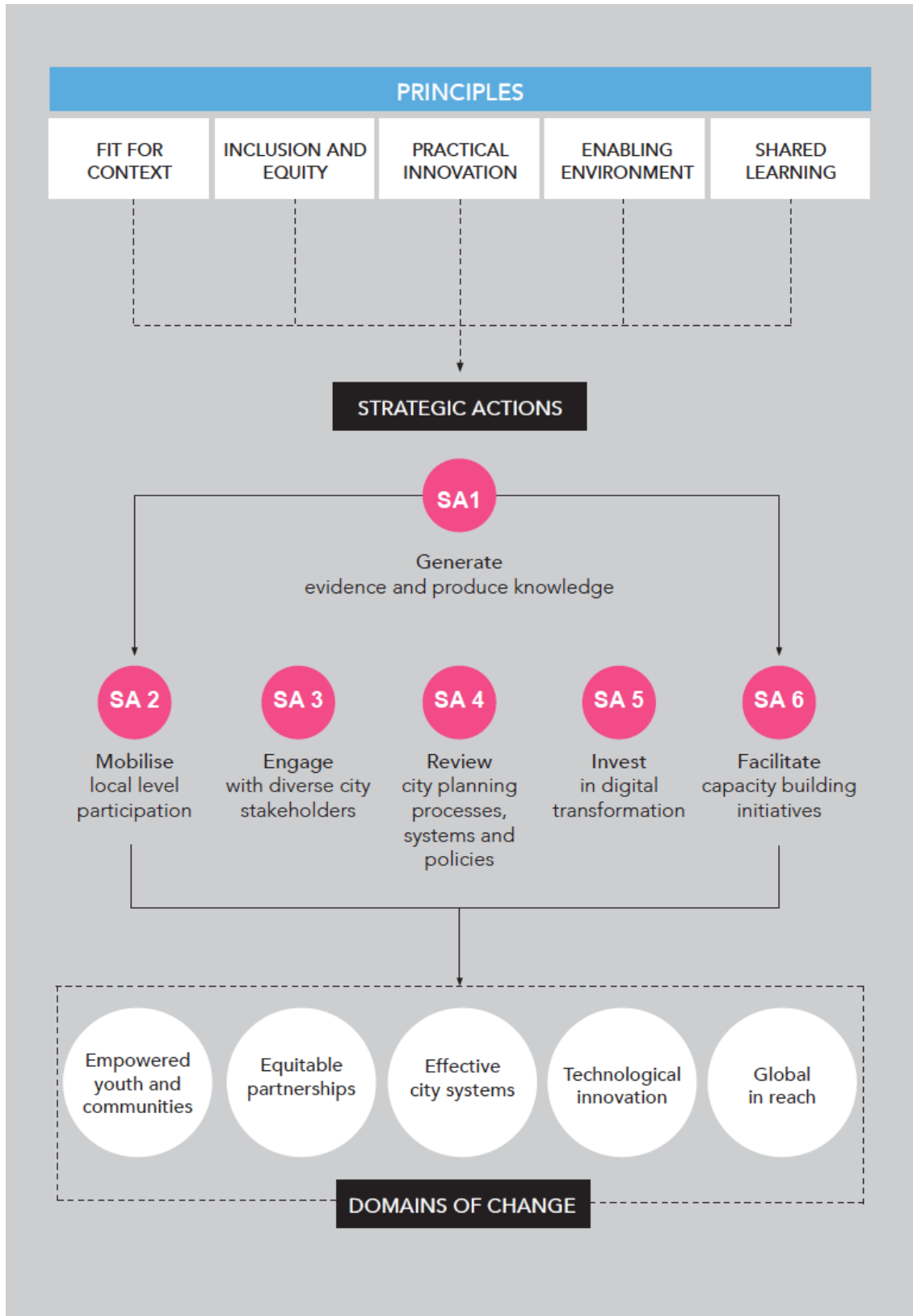
Figure 3. Evidence to Action Conceptual Framework Visual

INTRODUCTION

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss philanthropic foundation committed to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in urban environments. In 2019, the foundation launched discussions to develop an evidence-building and learning approach. These discussions reflected the commitment to progress the organisation's aspirational journey to move 'from a grant maker to a change maker', and to promote a learning organisation. Central to their program and policy interventions is the commitment to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) for achieving Fondation Botnar's strategic objectives and arenas of implementation.

To launch a formal dialogue on evidence building, a discussion paper was commissioned, led by the University of Melbourne's Melbourne Centre for Cities (MC4C) (then the Connected Cities Lab, CCL). The discussion paper, 'Evidence to action' (CCL, 2019), proposed key elements of an evidence-building and learning framework. After an expert committee review, the concept of evidence to action (E2A) was approved and recommended to be progressed to a full design document, to guide the foundation's aspiration to launch a learning agenda with their local to global partners facilitating strategies for evidence building that would inform action.

The ongoing collaboration between the University of Melbourne's Centre for Cities, Fondation Botnar and its field-based partners led to a comprehensive strategy for mobilising evidence to action about 'what works' or 'what does not work' to support youth wellbeing in intermediary cities, captured in the first edition of the E2A Framework, published in 2020 (CCL, 2020). This document is Edition 2, and it reflects two years of strategy refinement and operationalisation through a test and pilot phase.

Fondation Botnar's strategic priorities at a glance

Through building grounded urban knowledge, Fondation Botnar is embracing the opportunity to be a part of this global movement of local to global action driving innovation – supporting youth leaders to harness the power of digital technologies, and to be at the forefront of shaping new urban futures. The Evidence to Action Framework is anchored in

Fondation Botnar's strategy and wider mission that commits to a journey 'from being a grant maker to change maker':

> 'Our strategic journey "from grant maker to change maker" will continue and the aim is to become a trusted convener, catalyst and critical voice in the domain of children and young people's wellbeing in urban areas.'

In its aspiration to be a change maker, the foundation aims to:

> 'Contribute to the transformation of urban ecosystems to promote the sustainable development and wellbeing of young people and express their desire to contribute to a world in which children and young people's dignity and rights are respected and they are able to experience wellbeing and contribute to the sustainable development of society.'

The strategy includes commitments to human rights and child rights principles, especially voice and participation, as well as investment in promoting a social inclusion agenda. This is aligned with the *UN Agenda 2030* and the principle of 'leaving no one behind'. It commits to a vision for 'a world in which young people's dignity and rights are respected and they are able to experience wellbeing and contribute to the sustainable development of society.' This approach is rationalised in their strategy, reflecting on priorities to enable change in complex urban environments, leveraging technologies to enable youth wellbeing from local action that influences national and global policy dialogue and impact, and is reflected in the aim to: 'be inclusive of the most vulnerable people in society and strive toward enhancing their wellbeing.'

This strategy also articulates two enabling actions, including: *strategic learning and evaluation,* further emphasising the need to institutionalise learning; and *shaping agendas,* strengthening their focus on contributing to policy outcomes for sustained impact.

The importance of building evidence

Evidence building and learning is a global priority outlined in Fondation Botnar's current strategy. The organisation is committed to cultivating and nurturing learning both within the organisation and through its partners to drive change at the local level and contribute to global human rights and child rights frameworks, the *UN Agenda 2030* and the UN call for a 'Decade of Action'.

Fondation Botnar considers learning to be essential to strengthen program design and implementation on an ongoing basis and to support transformative action in intermediary cities. At the project level, knowledge building is progressed through an investment in local capacity building. This is fundamental to enabling local voices to be at the forefront of development initiatives, as well as ensuring the sustainability of a project. At the organisational level, learning is considered fundamental to the ongoing refinement of the Fondation Botnar's strategic objectives to achieving the aspirational journey of moving *from grant maker to change maker*.

The E2A Framework aims to enhance learning processes to progress Botnar's journey of catalysing change at local, national and global levels. It is closely aligned with the principles and approaches outlined in its 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 framework will be applied as a meta-learning tool within an action research and learning approach to build and map evidence of change across several intermediary cities, and its impact across Fondation Botnar's '*Cities fit for young people*' portfolio.

Landscape, emerging trends and Fondation Botnar's response

This section outlines the current landscape and emerging trends that Fondation Botnar seeks to respond to, and the opportunities to shape and influence local practice and global agendas.

Living in an urban era

Humans are both a part and a product of their ecology and, for an ever-increasing proportion of society, the city has become the principal 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 (United Nations, 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' – that is, in reshaping the knowledge sources and localities that inform how we learn and act on policy, planning and practices. City interventions that support people to grow, live, work and play must be responsive to local institutions and histories, shaped by urban citizens, and foreground the rights and aspirations of its most vulnerable populations. Fondation Botnar recognises the trend of urbanisation in its strategy and aims for systemic transformation of cities into smart urban areas fit for young people.

Intermediary cities

The fastest growing urban environments with significant potential to shape the future of urban living are intermediary cities (Cities Alliance, 2019). Because intermediary 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 intermediary cities is often a lack of investment in infrastructure and services, which means that many are under-resourced and struggle with limited social systems and support. Despite their critical importance in enhancing the wellbeing of urban residents, intermediary cities are also frequently overlooked in international development programs. As captured in Fondation Botnar's strategy: 'to assist intermediary cities to prepare for further urbanization, there is a need to ensure they highlight the wellbeing of young people as a major pillar in their development strategies. To strive for sustainable change and enable a pathway from innovation to application of young people's wellbeing, there is a need to take a systems approach, understand the local context and catalyse cross-sector partnerships to address the local needs.'

Youth wellbeing

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. Major global institutions have recognised the importance of engaging young people within urban decision-making if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved, most evident through the UN's *Youth 2030* strategy (United Nations, 2018). Addressing the aspirations of young people is an intrinsic right in and of itself and is key to a flourishing future.

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. This is crucial to building futures that respond to the aspirations of future generations.

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. It is essential that no decisions affecting youth are made without their involvement, as captured by the phrase: '*nothing about us without us'*.

Youth participation through voice and action is central to success and is actioned through Fondation Botnar's commitment to create opportunities and platforms for young people to share knowledge and take responsibility in shaping strategies and plans contributing to their wellbeing: 'We uphold true participation of young people. Following the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we strive to support the autonomy of young people by extension of Article 12. We seek to include youth voices in the planning, design and implementation of global and local programs and policies.'

This priority is reflected in a major refinement in Fondation Botnar strategy through the adoption of a relational approach to young people's wellbeing, as reflected across the foundation's operations: A relational approach acknowledges that young people are embedded within social structures and networks of relationships which shape their ability to flourish (see the refined *Fondation Botnar Strategy 2020–2022*).

As explained in the *Refined Strategy*, the wellbeing of young people has been largely neglected in the global discourse and national policies and programming. This has resulted in minimal investments in programming, human resources and technical capacity compared with other age groups. As a consequence, there are major gaps in our understanding of young people's wellbeing in the evidence base for action, in civil society structures for advocacy and upholding rights, and the systems for intersectoral action. We see the age range of 10 – 24 as a group that can participate effectively and autonomously in the design and delivery of our programs, underpinning our principle of true participation of young people.

Age of digital revolution

The digitisation of our lives is a part of the fourth industrial revolution, and Fondation Botnar seeks to leverage this inevitability to ensure sustained change for youth wellbeing in its various programs. For this reason, Fondation Botnar's work embraces this ongoing paradigm shift to integrate digital technology in all levels of work and to encourage innovation from all walks of life.

However, the rapid evolution of digital technology within the last two decades has outpaced the ability of researchers and practitioners to study and effectively employ innovations

within development projects on the ground. While there are creative attempts to integrate digital technology in a variety of projects around the world, capacity gaps on the ground and resource scarcity consequently limit sustained, comprehensive and uniform integration of cutting-edge technology in the development sector. Addressing this gap in a meaningful manner is critical for achieving Fondation Botnar's goal of becoming a change maker. Through Strategic Objective 2, focusing on AI and digital transformation, Fondation Botnar recognises that there is: 'limited access to innovative digital technology and AI tools especially in some geographies of the world that may limit the impact of our investments.'

Fondation Botnar has a unique opportunity to support the UN Decade of Action (2020–2030) through its commitments to human rights, supporting youth leaders to harness the power of digital technologies, and to be at the forefront of articulating and shaping new urban futures. Fondation Botnar encourages and enables projects to use innovative new technologies and new methods for evidence building and learning by transforming the processes of research, knowledge production and learning through actions that would include and amplify voices of the most vulnerable groups, especially youth.

Through their work, Fondation Botnar seeks to pre-emptively recognise and address the new forms of rights violations in the hybrid context of physical and digital space that are likely to emerge in this rapidly changing landscape. Integrating the use of technology across the different projects, Fondation Botnar seeks to build capacities that extend beyond project cycles, transforming the lives of the individuals involved in a meaningful way.

Rights-based approaches

Several global frameworks have been developed to help respond to the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected and urbanised world. Chief amongst these are the Sustainable Development Goals (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 (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs are a 'blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all' (United Nations, 2016).

Likewise, the New Urban Agenda (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, incorporating a new recognition of the importance of quality urbanisation in sustainable development and contributing to improved and more equitable outcomes (United Nations, 2017). These frameworks, alongside others (e.g., UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative), have been critical for uniting countries toward a shared development agenda to ensure that no one is left behind. Widespread adoption of major global frameworks such as the SDGs and NUA indicate the vital necessity of planning for more inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, charting clear pathways for enhanced wellbeing.

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

- 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 (United Nations, 2020).

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 for youth and their communities.

> *'Human rights instruments such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child underpin our approach to achieving our objectives. The realisation of human rights, gender equality and inclusiveness are especially critical within the digital age. We will address gaps toward achieving equity, gender equality and equal opportunities in our spheres of influence and beyond.'(Fondation Botnar, 2020, p. 5)*

Commitment to the UN Agenda 2030, including the SDGs and the principle of 'leaving no one behind', is reflected in Fondation Botnar's priorities such as youth voice, participation and social inclusion.

PART 1: THEORISING THE E2A FRAMEWORK

The following section lays out the key definitions, methodologies and approaches that informed the conceptualisation of the E2A Framework. It outlines its approach to evidence and learning, grounded in the principles of participatory action research and built upon a commitment to centre the voices and experiences of young people to make sense of their own realities.

SECTION 1.1. A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO EVIDENCE

Defining evidence

Evidence is a type or form of knowledge or information that is generated from the reality on the ground to test a hypothesis (Findlay & Pollock, 2004). Knowledge is an inherently human concept: 'a person's lived life. It is total, whole, and inseparable' (Nake, 2002, p. 48). Ensuring inclusion of diverse stakeholders and their knowledge in evidence-building processes is vital for building more inclusive futures.

The traditional approach to evidence building, or knowledge translation, has been conceived as a unidirectional and linear process from research to change in practice or policy, for example, log-frames informed by theory of change. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the concept of 'evidence' is deeply contested and is affected by who is considered a legitimate producer of knowledge, and how issues of validity, reliability and relevance are determined.

Research and evidence are therefore understood as being produced by research institutions, think tanks or universities, and then applied by policymakers and practitioners. Here, while young people may be involved, this may represent a more limited or consultative role with the power of agenda setting, research design and interpretation remaining with 'experts' that can conform to particular definitions of research rigour.

More recently, however, this traditional approach has been critiqued for being 'apolitical', missing how political context, values, cultural biases 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, in the development sector, there may be a disconnect between evidence required for 'results' and that which supports 'local learning processes'.

The ability to shape action – particularly towards global aims of equality, 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 that knowledge is produced. That is, in addition to research or policy knowledge, valid knowledge sources can emerge from practice (such as learnings from practitioners), or from the lived experience of young people or marginalised communities, and should be equally valued.

> *'Evidence is from indigenous knowledge, it's from grassroots, it's 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)*

Value of evidence

For urban practitioners and policymakers, generating relevant evidence that captures the diverse realities on the ground is key to ongoing learning, to promote transformative action for community development. Evidence of what is working (or what is not), and for whom, can be used to influence the decision-making, design and delivery of actions that improve wellbeing, whether at the policy, planning or programmatic level.

Globally, there has been an acknowledgment of the need for new knowledge and evidence to achieve these transformative agendas, with the 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, as the future leaders of a more inclusive world, youth voices will be fundamental to seizing these new opportunities and supporting the gathering, interpretation and actioning of evidence.

Tracking evidence of change and its contextual pathways and drivers is fundamental to institutionalising good practices and future advocacy. It is vital for justifying the value and importance of an action, engaging communities, demonstrating the value of collaboration and partnership, justifying strategic actions and mobilising resources. Likewise, there is much to be learned from 'what did not work'. Good evidence from such interventions allows learning and building knowledge on what not to do, and the lessons learnt are applied in further action. Good quality evidence is thus a foundational tool for knowing what to do and how to do it for organisational and programmatic strategy, agenda setting and for scaling learnings globally about change and impact that can support youth wellbeing.

Relationally, beyond the value of generating evidence in order to promote more relevant and responsive policy, planning or programming, an important strand of work has highlighted that the *process* of knowledge generation itself can generate intrinsic good that contributes towards wellbeing. That is, involving young people or often-excluded groups in the process of building evidence around their realities, experiences and needs is an important dimension of deepening democratic process.

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 wellbeing (see Case Study 1)**.**

CASE STUDY 1: 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 (such as 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

SECTION 1.2. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

The Evidence to Action Framework was developed using 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 strategic priorities: urban development, city systems and wellbeing, development studies, and 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.

Defining key themes

The following section summarises the key themes that emerged from the research outlined above, and develops the definitions used that shape the core elements of the E2A Framework. These thematic areas reflect 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. The themes that emerged from the research align well with the Fondation Botnar strategic vision and priorities, including principles, approaches and the strategic arenas.

Health and wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing is central to the mandate of Fondation Botnar. In defining this term, the E2A Framework draws from the World Health Organization (WHO) that states that, 'health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organization, 1946). This definition resonates with the social determinants of health model emergent from public health 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.

In particular, adopting 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 & Marmot, 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 dimensions* – such as the number of health or education facilities, quality and quantity of water and sanitation facilities – as well as *subjective dimensions*, including how people think and feel about themselves, their environment and their social relations.

Inclusion and equity

Attention to inclusion and equity entails understanding the specific needs and aspirations of diverse social groups – across, for instance, gender, age, ability, religion, ethnicity and caste, amongst others – and enacting interventions that can differently address these conditions.

A focus on inclusion and equity recognises that these social attributes may be valued differently within different contexts and can condition the ability of particular groups to live freely and experience wellbeing. Critically, this also requires an awareness of the *intersectionality* that occurs when different aspects of one's social and political identities combine to create unique patterns of privilege and disadvantage. That is, the conditions that 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, with certain groups experiencing interlocking experiences of marginalisation, which can be particularly challenging.

Understanding the specific vulnerabilities that may emerge at the intersection of these social identities is key to 'leaving no one behind' and is an important emphasis of Agenda 2030. This radical agenda requires an approach that 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. Without active engagement of

the most vulnerable groups, without attention to intersectionality, 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 (United Nations Development Program, 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 creating an environment that can enhance their wellbeing. Involving young people in decision-making that impacts their lives and urban environments can, on the one hand, lead to more appropriate interventions. More deeply, creating spaces for participation by young people can enhance feelings of confidence and empowerment, and generate solidarity and collective action – fundamental to wellbeing:

> *'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 to 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 2). For many urban practitioners, creating the conditions for meaningful participation is ultimately a question of social inclusion:

> *'... 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 2: 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.

During 2018 and 2019 Fondation Botnar funded a multi-sectoral 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 Initiative.

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 project also demonstrates the importance of building on relational opportunities that exist with government and other decision-makers as a pathway to improving city systems for improved youth health and wellbeing.

Source: https://www.fondationbotnar.org/project/ourcity-initiative/

Digital technologies and innovation

Innovation can be understood as the adoption of 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 crowdsourced 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 technology 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 Slum/Shack Dwellers International.

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, and large-scale technologies such as in AI or 'big data' can help to leapfrog innovation.

However, while acknowledging the benefits of investing in technological solutions, urban practitioners also highlighted the value of '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)*

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, or are not used as intended because of insufficient

training or infrastructure, then it can undermine other key principles, such as the commitment to inclusion and equity.

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 using digital technologies to support the advocacy and engagement of adolescents about increased social threats, risks or potentially 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 (such as 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 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)*

Identifying the leverage points or room to manoeuvre for action requires a deep understanding of local governance and cultural and power systems in operation that shape policy, planning and programmatic decision-making. Interventions that seek to holistically address urban challenges must involve a range of actors in the city, from local government,

private sector, grassroots groups and youth representatives. These interventions rely upon institutionalised systems of collaboration to build trust and respect and negotiate differences. Establishing citywide forums, or other spaces of dialogue and exchange on urban priorities, has been trialled in a range of contexts to bring diverse stakeholders together (see Case Study 3).

CASE STUDY 3: CITYWIDE FORUMS

The process of developing Vision 2030 Jamaica, their national agenda, is a good example of how to facilitate citywide discussions involving diverse stakeholders. The process entailed a series of public sessions held in town halls and community centres, that were open to a broad range of actors, from policymakers 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 intermediary 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 Federation of Uganda to engage as equals in city decision-making.

Source: https://www.citiesalliance.org/uganda-country-programme

Partnerships

Urban environments are made up of a complex web of actors, networks and relationships. 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, and that effective urban development requires an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach. It is precisely for this reason that SDG 17, focused on partnerships, calls to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Though different partners may bring different skills, resources or perspectives on change, investing in processes that can facilitate collective learning and a shared vision for the future is crucial (see Case Study 4). 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)*

However, it is also clear that urban stakeholders occupy highly unequal positions in relation to decision-making authority, access to resources or social capital, requiring systems and processes to support meaningful collaboration to promote sustained change. Likewise, different stakeholders may value different kinds of evidence and knowledge when shaping priorities, and efforts must be made to support 'knowledge translation' across different forms and systems.

For instance, community generated data can be valuable at revealing realities and priorities of often-excluded groups, but may not exist in formats that are easily accessed or recognised by city decision-makers:

> *'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, Mansueto Institute)*

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 4: 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 city's strategy.

Global Development, in collaboration with SDG CoLab, Fondation Botnar and local partners, has 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 place-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; fondationbotnar.org/ourcity-initiative/

Capacity building

Capacity building is a broad, multi-level concept that spans individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional domains (Brennan et al., 2017). In the context of urban transformation and wellbeing, capacity building involves strengthening individual skills and organisational structures to collaborate with young people and collectively design actionable strategies that can address intergenerational inequalities. 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 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 1.3. THE E2A FRAMEWORK

The E2A Framework presents a comprehensive strategy for evidence building and learning and reflection about transformative action for desired change in intermediary cities to enhance youth wellbeing. The E2A Framework includes **five principles** as crosscutting values that inform approaches to urban interventions, **six strategic actions,** which serve as entry points to guide knowledge building and action, and **five domains of change,** that are instruments to map change over time to Fondation Botnar's aim of achieving the transition 'from a grant maker to a change maker'.

These pillars have been refined from the key themes outlined above and reflect Fondation Botnar priorities as outlined in the organisation's *Refined 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'. The E2A Framework represents focus areas of investigation, learning, mapping and documentation of change across all projects – feeding into a global meta-learning and research strategy to be implemented by Fondation Botnar and its partners.

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, using this framework to support the assessment of what works or what does not work in 'moving the needle' across different domains of change and document impact. It is closely aligned with the principles and approaches outlined in Fondation Botnar's *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.

Defining evidence for action

Based on the strategic priorities and diverse global perspectives discussed above, for Fondation Botnar, evidence is built collectively as well as interactively in context of the broader environment and overlapping dynamics (Weiss, 1979). These dynamics include the

actors involved in knowledge production, the values that underpin the focus, the cultural context and the methods used, amongst others.

The E2A is founded upon the belief that addressing urban and intergenerational inequalities requires deep engagement across scientifically derived information, practitioner experience and tacit knowledge from lived experiences, considering these different knowledge producers and forms of knowledge production each as having valid and important contributions to understanding a context.

As such, the E2A definition emphasises knowledge and evidence as situated in specific contexts and cultures, 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:

> *Data that is systematically gathered on 'what works' and 'what does not'. The production of evidence, and its transformation to knowledge, is shaped by values and priorities; emerges from diverse sources and actors; and is deeply embedded in culture and context.*

The value and purpose of the E2A Framework

The uniqueness of the E2A Framework lies in its focus on bridging the knowledge disconnect between research and practice, institutionalising a process of collaborative learning and evidence building that informs Fondation Botnar's interventions across diverse cities.

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 agendas. It outlines an approach that facilitates dialogue, builds connections across urban stakeholders, and establishes participatory processes of action research and learning. This aim of this approach is to empower young people with knowledge that enables action and create more equitable cities. It creates a common

language around principles and actionable strategies against the domains of change to enhance young people's wellbeing in select intermediary cities. In this context the E2A Framework encourages and enables the use of different types of innovative technologies for knowledge production and learning, to inform action and work towards inclusion of the most vulnerable members of the communities where Fondation Botnar's projects are implemented.

In doing so, the E2A Framework provides a comprehensive strategy for embedding learning and reflexivity throughout Fondation Botnar programs. This is intended to support the launch of an organisational learning agenda across all Fondation Botnar city projects and initiatives, to generate evidence of what works and what does not to promote sustainable and systemic change in urban environments.

This framework aims to:

- overlay a meta-learning strategy using an evidence-to-action cycle in parallel with the project cycle to map and document change across a range of Fondation Botnar-funded urban programs and projects

- contribute to local to global advocacy and policy agenda setting using evidence for action

- support the continued 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.

E2A Framework audience

The E2A Framework can be understood as a resource for:

- Fondation Botnar staff to make informed decisions on project funding allocations, monitoring and reassessing projects, and selecting a portfolio of cities based on contextual learning and ongoing evidence for potential scaling of interventions

- Botnar-supported local NGO partners and academic partner institutions, as a resource to support the co-production of evidence in order to strengthen their city, national and global project interventions, as well as policy dialogue on development issues and solutions

- development practitioners, knowledge builders and all stakeholders who are interested in driving change through an evidence-building agenda formally and informally in cities to promote systemic change

- think tanks, research institutions and civil society organisations on knowledge building and translation methodologies and processes, to embed learning into ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities of grassroots action projects and policy initiatives, and promote social inclusion

- stakeholders interested in learning by doing, experimenting and establishing iterative processes of knowledge development and translation to inform sustainable development outcomes in diverse urban settings.

Elements of the E2A Framework: principles, strategic actions and domains of change

Principles

Fondation Botnar's commitment to global principles provides a framing to guide strategic and programmatic action and decision-making across Fondation Botnar programs. These five principles echo global commitments to human rights and international development principles and can be understood as core values underpinning Fondation Botnar initiatives.

Evidence of urban change as experienced by practitioners and youth groups within their respective cities will periodically be captured against these principles. Learning across these principles is intended to help with guiding value-based action, but also in the reflexive examination of complexity, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of how to better orient efforts – even if only in part – towards these shared aspirations.

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 that are informed by the 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 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.

Here, it is critical for communities or youth groups to be understood as partners and leaders, rather than simply as 'targets' or beneficiaries of projects. By applying this principle to projects, practitioners ensure they are learning about the critical issues of the local city context, including socio-economic aspects, cultural norms that shape behaviours, preferences of local citizens, and the political environment or economic opportunities.

Investment in community-grounded initiatives both supports local ownership and generates more relevant outcomes. It is essential for programs to constantly review and revise based on ongoing learning mechanisms to ensure communities, local organisations or youth voices are still driving interventions.

Being fit for context also ensures that actions and programs take into consideration possible adverse impacts, applying the development principles of 'do no harm' and 'duty of care', and reflecting on ethical practices. Documenting evidence of the way context shapes relationships, interventions and their outcomes will be important to address deeply held power dynamics, understand the local context and address local needs.

Inclusion and equity

Building more equitable and 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 SDG 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'

presents an opportunity for promoting the rights and inclusion of the voices of all citizens in planning and shaping their cities.

Fondation Botnar's refined strategy upholds the principle of social inclusion committing to: 'consciously adopt an inclusive and participatory approach to ensure the voices of partners and stakeholders are heard.' Building interventions 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 that especially aim to empower young urban dwellers that might be marginalised or excluded for overlapping reasons (such as across gender, caste, class or religion) within their unique context.

Practical innovation

Central to the principle of practical innovation is an appreciation for grassroots initiatives and efforts for change. The concept of innovation reflects Fondation Botnar's commitment to investments that can drive equity – encouraging everyday grassroots efforts to transform systems and behaviours. This principle recognises the bottom-up, community-owned, everyday ways in which local actors, businesses and communities are drivers of technological innovation and change within their own unique context.

However, it also engages with the catalytic potential of large-scale investments in sophisticated technologies such as AI, particularly in aspects such as processing data on a wider scale and assisting in the consolidation of knowledge and information for action at different levels – local, national and global. Innovation is also promoted through multi-level collaboration with established organisations that have tools and knowledge to capture innovation (simple initiatives) at the local level and have potential for scale across cities. Whether 'mundane' or technologically sophisticated, this principle represents the importance of encouraging community-led innovative ideas and solutions that are driven at the local level to facilitate change.

Enabling environment

This principle is key to the aim of achieving systemic change, and is reflective of the priority to move beyond discrete projects and programs, towards influencing the wider ecosystem of the city. 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 refers to the importance of establishing platforms or partnerships that 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 building city systems that enable youth wellbeing, and that can support the mobilisation of evidence to action.

Shared learning

This principle refers to the fundamental importance of establishing programs that 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 wider national, regional and international communities as a route to sharing evidence of change and 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 shaping global agendas 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,

promising practices and approaches can be shared and scaled out across the city and beyond through national and global platforms.

Strategic actions

The *six strategic actions* recommended for Fondation Botnar city initiatives represent sector-wide tested development practices that enable learning, co-creation and knowledge development for ongoing reflexive action within a project cycle.

These strategic actions can serve as entry points to learn about a given context, including mapping issues, opportunities, stakeholders, policy and city plans. Strategic actions could be integrated into the program assessment and design phase or serve as starting point of any sectoral intervention. Multiple strategic actions could be used to launch a project based on the readiness of the city against Fondation Botnar priorities. Strategic actions could also act as a catalyst to launch evidence-building and action process through a demonstrable or pilot project that could later support the scale of a co-designed and community-led program after proof of concept is established.

Each strategic action (SA) is outlined below.

SA 1. Generate evidence and produce knowledge for action to advocate for justice, equity and the rights of young people, towards shaping a global 'inclusion' agenda

This strategic action cuts across a project cycle. Engaging in an ongoing process of data gathering, documentation and dissemination is fundamental to ensure institutional and collective learning over time. This requires establishing systematic learning processes to assess how evidence (included from lived experience) has been generated and analysed. It also requires mapping the opportunities and barriers to act on this gathered evidence within specific institutional and political contexts.

While much of this research and learning will be focused on specific cities, building 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 that can link up and network with similar knowledge entities elsewhere, to share lessons and discuss barriers (see Case Study 5). 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 'shared learning'.

The systematic gathering of community-based information and promising solutions could enable the localisation of the SDGs with support from the municipal government. These locally led solutions that include diverse voices and groups could be shared through global networks to demonstrate commitment to the Agenda 2030 principle of *leaving no one behind*, promoting Fondation Botnar's commitment to social inclusion.

CASE STUDY 5: SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB

The Social Innovation Lab (SIL) is a knowledge and experimentation hub set up 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 change makers 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 health care, energy and transportation sectors.

Source: innovation.brac.net

SA 2. Mobilise local level participation, especially of young people, to ensure projects are co-led with empowered local communities for sustainability

This action refers to ensuring the 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 community-owned 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 locally generated knowledge and solutions that are fit for context inform the program design, including the vision for change local stakeholders want to see and promote through their actions (see Case Study 6).

The principle of inclusion and equity calls for the engagement of marginalised and disadvantaged groups specifically to be at the forefront of participatory actions. Representation in committees, working groups, education and training programs and advisory roles needs to be diverse and inclusive.

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, 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: https://sdinet.org/

SA 3. Engage with diverse city stakeholders to build equitable partnerships, generating shared knowledge and visions of desired sustained change

Cities are complex ecosystems 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 citywide development. This requires collaboration between diverse stakeholders, and the formation of citywide networks that can unite around development goals to enhance wellbeing.

Attention to inclusion and equity requires close attention to ensure 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 to help 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 ensures the sustainability of projects (see Case Study 7). Marginalised groups need to be included in a systematic way to ensure that collaborations are equitable, and to allow for trust to be built over time. Representation of a diverse range of young people is necessary in projects to ensure that the needs of all young people are being considered.

CASE STUDY 7: CITY LEARNING PLATFORM, 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 a City Learning Platform (CiLP) and a series of 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 (such as 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: https://www.slurc.org/

SA 4. Review city planning processes, systems and policies to generate evidence of local government plans to promote equity, social inclusion and strengthen accountability

Critical to the E2A process is a comprehensive citywide 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 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, an advocacy strategy can be framed by projects to influence city planning and policy change during the project design phase.

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 (see Case Study 8).

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, as well as outside of them. This strategic action allows the foundational work to identify planning and policy enablers and gaps required to inform design of an urban project or program.

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 citywide development actions. Building the capacity of young people to understand city planning and co-produce evidence about city plans will be important to promote social inclusion and equity.

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, 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 that 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 and the points of leverage most likely to motivate government leaders to strive for fairer planning outcomes.

Source: https://urckarachi.org/

SA 5. Invest in digital transformation to enable the democratisation of technology resulting in access, innovation and scale

This strategic action reflects the dual acknowledgment that technology can be both a powerful enabler and a profound generator of inequalities. As such, equality, inclusion and relevance within the local context are key values that are fundamental for technological interventions. This means investing in strategies that are built on the practical use of technologies, or processes that are usable in everyday life, and that address key social issues (see Case Study 9).

This also means exploring technologies that can bridge diverse forms of knowledge, such as GIS maps that 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 invested in processes that 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 at the local level to generate innovative solutions and to build scale.

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 My Safetipin 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 crowdsourced 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 citywide safety audits. Products that generate evidence for improvement are shared through public space improvement reports. In Delhi, Safetipin has been used to collect crowdsourced safety intelligence on more than 50,000 locations across different areas of the city, including metro stations and low-income neighbourhoods. 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 is also 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

SA 6. 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

A key requirement for long-term sustainability is to build the 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 ways that help them shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments (Department for Community Development, 2006).

Such an approach also fosters 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 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 ensure access to essential services such as transport, education and health (see Case Study 10).

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 the capacity of knowledge partners to analyse gathered data, generate knowledge, 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 policy initiatives and refine program design and implementation plans periodically.

CASE STUDY 10: 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 in decision-making about how to address these issues.

A recent initiative by PUKAR is their Research as Pedagogy, Advocacy and Transformation project that 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

Domains of change

The E2A Framework includes five domains of change that are core areas to be mapped periodically in order to progress Fondation Botnar's journey from a 'grant maker to a change maker'. The domains are aligned with Fondation Botnar's strategic objectives, principles and approaches, and are especially relevant to SO1: Cities fit for children and young people (Fondation Botnar, *Refined Strategy 2020–2022*). These interlinked domains represent contextual 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.'

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 the 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 New Urban Agenda and the SDGs (United Nations, 1989).

The domains of change present a common instrument to build evidence of change and report progress on the critical organisational priorities. It is proposed that change is mapped in each domain of change against three priority themes for Fondation Botnar to progress system change and ensure sustained impact: the capacities built, strategies deployed and urban processes towards each domain. It is expected that evidence building guided by these learning questions can generate a reflexive learning process for how Fondation Botnar can act as a catalyst for change across the range of intermediary cities in which it works, as well as globally.

The five domains are outlined below.

Empowered youth and communities

This domain refers to meaningful participation – especially of young people and vulnerable groups – in program design, citywide planning, agenda setting and decision-making. This domain seeks to capture the capacities, strategies and processes established and applied through which young people are empowered to act as agents of change and leaders and engage with city platforms to enhance voice and participation. 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 'building a thriving future for young people everywhere', empowering them to be change agents of their cities.

Equitable partnerships

Fondation Botnar aims to 'play a critical role as a bridge, a convenor and a facilitator', promoting connected ecosystems that foster cross-sector collaborations and catalyse interventions to address the wellbeing of young people. 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 capacities, strategies and processes for building strong relations and trust across urban stakeholders.

Creating an enabling environment to establish multi-sector and multi-stakeholder efforts from the local to global level is fundamental to bringing change. This domain seeks to track how collaborations and trust building between diverse stakeholders is fostered, 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 good governance systems have been established to promote equitable relationships where each voice is valued for their contribution, however big or small, influential or not.

Technological innovation

This domain refers to the delivery of evidence-based, scalable and locally grounded strategies built on innovation to address complex urban problems that shape wellbeing

outcomes. This domain seeks to capture the capacities, strategies and processes established to ensure inclusive access and use of innovative technology, ideas and networks for transformative change. This domain generates evidence about the availability of technology and the creation of networked smart communities, to ensure practical knowledge and reach of information is accessible to all, irrespective of citizen status and community.

In addition to local level innovation, mapping change within this domain will also capture the use of sophisticated technology where possible to advance Fondation Botnar's aim that: 'human-centred solutions and systems for improved wellbeing are integrated with AI, digital data, tools and platforms……..ready for scale-up in our focus geographies.' (Fondation Botnar, 2020, p. 4)

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 capacities, strategies and processes that are effective in driving change and are linked with achieving sustainable and inclusive youth friendly cities.

Fondation Botnar's strategy calls for systems transformation, and this domain will provide evidence of the 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 policymakers informing urban decision-making.

Global in reach

This domain refers to establishing and strengthening learning and knowledge building processes, which can inform reflection and action at the local and global levels. This domain seeks to capture capacities, strategies and processes for building knowledge and reflection that can be shared to inform changes in policy, planning and practice.

This domain will investigate connections from local to global, including local level action on the SDGs, as well as if and how capable, empowered voices from the grassroots level are positioned and shared via global platforms, presenting evidence for policy, and advocating

for equity and inclusion from the local to global level. This domain contributes to Fondation

Botnar's objective of shaping national and global agendas.

PART 2: OPERATIONALISING THE E2A FRAMEWORK

SECTION 2.1. PROMOTING AN ACTION RESEARCH AND LEARNING AGENDA

The E2A Framework is about cultivating spaces and practices of evidence building and learning supported by research across Fondation Botnar's project portfolio. The framework sits outside the typically linear policy and program design and implementation that is informed by the requirements of government or funder's monitoring, evaluation and learning expectations (Whitzman, 2012). Such a linear approach limits the adaptability of any program to respond to the emerging knowledge about context and it diminishes successes that do not fit into prescriptive models. These traditional approaches assume the world as an ideal, straightforward place but it is riddled with complexities.

Cities are complex, adaptive systems in which change tends to be emergent, non-linear, adaptive and chaotic (Allen, 1997; Batty, 2009; Portugali, 2016). As a result, most urban issues are often explained as 'wicked' (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Their 'wickedness' indicates the difficulty of defining these issues, identifying their scope, and developing and implementing suitable interventions to address them. Addressing such problems requires centring a flexible and reflexive approach to learning that is sensitive to emergent changes typical to complex adaptive systems. Evidence and knowledge are crucial for facilitating learning.

The importance of acknowledging and embracing the complexity of the urban landscape, within which Fondation Botnar's programs are operationalised, is recommended in the work of thought leaders in international development such as Robert Chambers (1997, 2005), Alan Fowler (2000, 2013), Ben Ramalingam (2014) and others. They emphasise adaptability in development programs to account for the complexity and chaos of real-world circumstances. Building resilience is a means to addressing complexity.

Complex urban environments present unique challenges that require an ongoing learning approach integrated into project intervention cycle. Practitioners are required to be exploratory and adaptive in their approach. The E2A is developed to promote the programmatic flexibility and continuous adaptation based on contextual learning.

Establishing a strong relationship between the practice and research is fundamental to cultivating spaces and practices of learning. However, within the planning, policy and development sector, practice continues to outpace research (Gen & Wright, 2012) and a connection between the two is an ongoing challenge (Harpham et al., 2021; Hurley et al., 2016).

The E2A Framework begins assembling building blocks for a bridge between research and practice in its role as a meta-learning tool focused on observing change from practice to address the unknowns and complex issues emerging in complex urban environments. Practice informs research that can in turn support actions on the ground and inform national and global policies. Promoting such action research and learning centric agenda within development practice begins with unlearning the established assumptions and biases within and about knowledge production and evidence-building processes.

Evidence becomes knowledge through the act of knowing that can only be performed by people, or more specifically by stakeholders within the urban context, both individual and collective. People translate evidence into knowledge, informing policies and programs through their decision-making. This critical role of people can be leveraged to create positive change by promoting shared learning within complex urban landscapes.

Knowledge is an inherently human concept. Nake (2002, pg. 48) writes that 'knowledge is a person's lived life. It is total, whole and inseparable.' However, knowledge is distinct from evidence. Evidence is 'propositional' as it serves hypotheses about real-world phenomena, and it is demonstrable. Evidence is crucial to know how things are going, such as through program monitoring. Knowledge, on the other hand, is internalised learning – in this sense we only know something demonstrated by evidence if we have internalised it and believe it. Therefore, knowledge is situated with the *knower.*

Both evidence and knowledge support people in their actions (Braf, 2002). This is the underlying logic for the Evidence to Action Framework, which proposes a process where actions are informed by evidence. Implicit in this assumption is the transformation of the evidence into knowledge or internalised learning by communities living in the context. By ensuring the inclusion of people on the ground in evidence-building processes, the

framework centres their knowledge to inform action to ensure wellbeing of young people in cities.

Research is instrumental to systematically facilitate this process of knowledge production and learning. Several theories from diverse disciplines were considered to identify the conceptual underpinning of the evidence building approach for E2A. It is underpinned by a philosophy of *constructivism*[1] and a multi-method evaluation approach to embed a 'learning by doing' philosophy across diverse urban programs and projects funded by Fondation Botnar. Reflection and learning with the notion of evaluative practice will be promoted throughout the project cycles.

Action research and learning design

Action research approaches bring researchers and their clients together to define the research problems and themes 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.

The action research process involves an ongoing cycle of reflection, planning and action to deal with the emerging issues of a situation. To realise this process, the E2A Framework draws from the school of constructivism to define a unique criterion specific to the dynamic and complex environment of towns and cities. Constructivist approaches are based on the idea that social phenomena do not have fixed and stable meanings, but instead they are continually being negotiated and constructed through interaction between people (Bryman, 2004, p. 538). According to this perspective it is difficult to develop a comprehensive understanding of a situation prior to acting on it. Managing change becomes an ongoing 'reflective' process that involves all stakeholders in a system to learn their way forward. It is based on a notion of knowing-*in*-action, rather than as knowledge *prior* to action (Schön, 1991).

Therefore, central to constructivism is a focus on learning and reflection to continuously redefine goals and objectives of programs in relation to specific contexts. This philosophy proposes knowledge building as a dynamic reflexive process within a project cycle, building

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[1] The theory that says learners construct knowledge rather than just passively take in information.

evidence on what works and what does not work in urban environments and draws on learning from grassroots action as well as initiatives from experienced agencies and academic institutions engaged in urban issues.

Given the complexities of urban issues and a constructivist approach is adopted for this framework, along with an abductive approach informing the data analysis and evidence building process. An abductive approach begins with a partial theory about a phenomenon being examined. This partial theory informed by knowledge that already exists with the people involved in the analysis. As data is collected, this initial theory is refined through a combination of techniques that based on inductive and deductive techniques. This abductive approach will allow prioritisation of lived experiences from the field to generate explanations on phenomenon of change in urban contexts. This will help organisations like Fondation Botnar to remain adaptive in approach to supporting development sector projects.

This action research and learning strategy will build on the monitoring and evaluation activities within individual city initiatives and projects. The E2A will adopt a multi-method approach prioritising qualitative methods in the research design. Qualitative research methods make meaning out of the actions that lead to outcomes, building a story of change instead of attempting to measure something intangible using quantitative tools. Fondation Botnar's city project and program specific monitoring and evaluation activities explore the effectiveness and impact of their activities more broadly.

To apply the E2A Framework as a meta-learning tool, we have adopted the *Most Significant Change* methodology and realist evaluation to inform the data gathering and analysis processes. We view these two techniques as complementary tools to build a narrative around the changes observed and experienced by groups in focus and diverse city stakeholders.

The purpose of this combined use of realist evaluation and *Most Significant Change* is to build an understanding on how project activities are aligned with the E2A principles and how they create a positive shift in within each of the domains of change. This involves capturing data on the three aspects essential to the realist evaluation framework: context,

mechanisms and outcomes (change) for specific target groups. For Fondation Botnar, the focus will be on young people and practitioners. This also includes capturing data on the *Most Significant Change* from a wide range of city stakeholders' perspectives. The data collection and analysis based on these approaches recommends the use of innovative digital data management tools.

The action research and learning processes will build on the monitoring and evaluation activities within individual city initiatives and projects. Fondation Botnar's city project and program-specific monitoring and evaluation activities explore the effectiveness and impact of their activities more broadly. Meanwhile, the multi-method evidence building approach will focus on learning about the diverse city contexts, the patterns of social change and the actors that contribute to transformation in cities, seeking common themes and uniqueness in city systems change.

This approach inspired by realist evaluation and Most Significant Change technique is customised for Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio. For this reason, the framework will remain emergent and will be revised periodically based on its application across projects. The table below summarises the design of the action research and learning process that will be important for the learning partners to consider when they overlay the E2A Framework with their M&E plan. The table below summarises the design of the action research and learning strategy.

Table 1. Research design

Philosophy	Constructivism
Approach	Abductive
Methodology	Participatory action research and learning
Methods	Multi-method approach – strong qualitative lens

Action research and learning objectives

- Inform monitoring, evaluation and research activities across a range of Fondation Botnar-funded urban programs and projects.

- Collate and draw on learnings from past and existing Fondation Botnar city projects and programs and urban initiatives from experienced agencies and academic institutions engaged in urban issues.

- Develop and document knowledge of what works and what does not work in diverse, complex urban environments.

- Define a range of programming approaches and tools that facilitate sustained change in urban environments.

- Inform local level advocacy and contribute and shape global agendas leveraging grassroots evidence for policy change.

- Contribute to the capacity of Fondation Botnar and its partners to deliver effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable programs in urban environments.

- Inform strategies of Fondation Botnar and its partners based on evidence from grassroots actions.

SECTION 2.2. HOW TO BUILD EVIDENCE: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND LEARNING APPROACH

Adopting a PAR-L approach to E2A

E2A is grounded in the tradition of participatory action research and learning. 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.

PAR as an approach is based on the understanding that research is a fundamentally political process. To reveal and challenge urban inequities and vulnerabilities, it must include the voices of those who suffer as a consequence of those conditions. An action research approach allows researchers and practitioners together to define the research problems that are to be investigated. This democratising of research, evidence building and learning is centred upon people's real-world, lived experiences, seeking collaborative action to address inequities.

The addition of 'learning' (L) emphasises the transformation of collaborative research and action into long-term and reflexive processes that can inform future cycles. In the context of the complex adaptive system of the city, a PAR-L approach also broadens the scope of what is considered as knowledge. This enables cultivation of a sophisticated response for addressing 'wicked' urban problems.

Adopting a PAR-L approach, especially with youth groups and other excluded communities, promotes several benefits. It can generate more appropriate interventions suited to cultural contexts, strengthening the link between research and practice, building collaboration between communities and decision-makers, strengthening democratic processes, supporting new skills development and mobilising local action.

For program participants and communities, a PAR-L approach can create a greater sense of 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 the delivery of high quality and responsive services. Perhaps most importantly, a PAR-L approach is an important mechanism towards ensuring inclusion, seeking to re-orient who is considered a valid expert in the city.

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 qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods. Qualitative evidence might come from methods such as interviews, micro-narratives gathered by youth, stories, mapping, photography, dance, street dramas or other art forms. 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 donors and policymakers, 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, Mansueto Institute)*

Urban 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 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. Therefore, a key role within any PAR process is identifying the opportunities and methods for capturing subjective experiences of young people, and exploring the knowledge products and processes that can ensure these experiences are translated into actionable evidence for policymakers and practitioners.

Understanding 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 and 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.

For the complete Bond Evidence Principles and checklist see
https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/evidence-principles/.

SECTION 2.3. IMPLEMENTING A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND LEARNING APPROACH

Engaging in PAR-L on a continuous and cyclical process in order to generate evidence in relation to the E2A domains of change and principles means that collaboration, review and learning is integrated as an overlay into every step of the program or project cycle: design, monitoring and evaluation (see Figure 4).

Each step in the evidence and learning cycle should incorporate methods that can empower community members to systematically gather and use evidence to improve their knowledge and act on their own wellbeing. In this sense, the evidence-building and learning 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 review processes and reflective practices (see Figure 3).

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, define what these terms mean in context, and establish ground rules and procedures to build trusting relationships and gain insights into city contextual issues. Project learning partners should be involved in this planning process. Participation can be leveraged through hosting inclusive community events to identify shared goals, values, needs, priorities and resources, as well as by forming advisory committees and working groups. Those with a stake in the target problem in the city (such as residents, community, NGO, government, business or the research community) are consulted about the issue, their perspectives, 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 a baseline in relation to the domains and which changes it seeks to enact. This information is evidence gathering on the state of the city against the E2A principles and domains in addition to the assessment completed by the project team on specific themes.

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 the best actions is recommended. The co-production stage involves devising a plan to program the strategic actions.
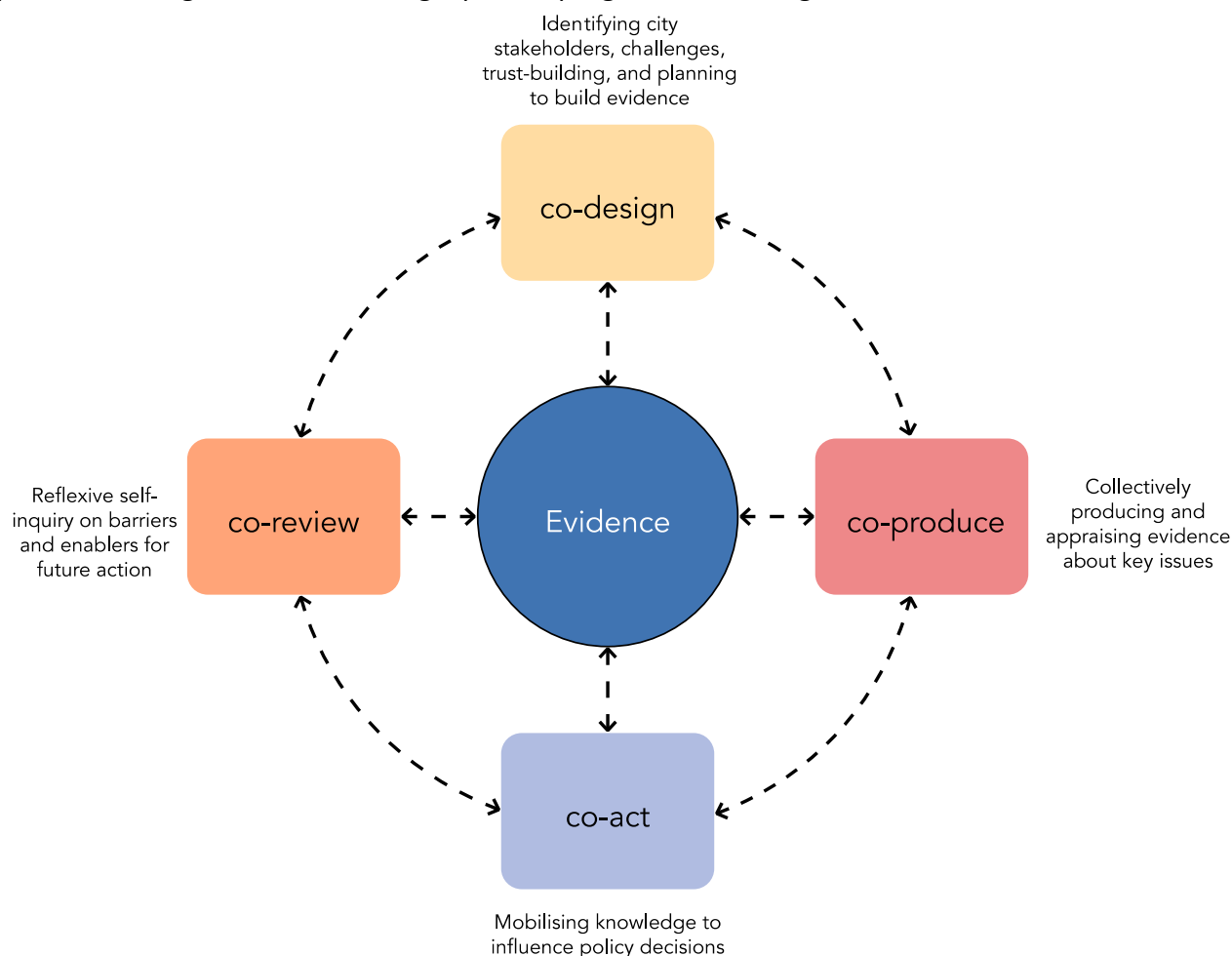

Figure 4. Evidence building and learning cycle

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, especially inclusive of youth groups and marginalised voices, is critical to the co-production phase.

Co-act

The co-act stage involves collaborating to identify entry points or opportunities to act on issues that emerge from evidence and analysis. This can be facilitated by forming close

partnerships across practice, research and policy, ensuring open and regular communication and sharing 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 evidence and understand issues from a holistic perspective is critical for systems change.

Co-review

The co-review stage involves a process of reflexivity and self-inquiry of community members and practitioners, facilitated by the learning partner 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.

Ongoing documentation by a project learning officer, with guidance from national-level learning partners, during this stage is critical to ensure learnings can be shared across contexts. Learnings will be focused on the key questions of 'capacities built, strategies deployed and processes influenced' across the domains of change, as well as the reflexive examination of the principles.

SECTION 2.4. E2A IN PRACTICE

The E2A domains of change and principles collectively establish boundaries within the vast complex adaptive system of the city and determining the space where Fondation Botnar's resources are being directed to enable change. The evidence-building and learning efforts are also to be operationalised within the same space.

The core pillars of E2A are *five principles* that serve as crosscutting values for all local projects to consider in their design and core activities because these are aligned with Fondation Botnar's principles, approaches and enabling action, *six strategic actions*, through which principles can be operationalised, and *five domains of change* that are informed by strategic priorities of Fondation Botnar.

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. The domains of change are core focus areas where Fondation Botnar would like to see change take place over a period of time at the city level and the principles provide the themes that will be embedded in activities to enable change to achieve youth wellbeing.

We first explain the purpose of the core elements of the framework to apply the E2A framework on a project cycle.

The purpose of principles

Principles are core values for projects to consider as we attempt to document evidence about an area and learn about what change is taking place and the nature of this change driven by the implementation of value-driven project activities. They provide a filter through which diverse urban contexts are understood and assessed to document evidence of the current state of the city explored from subjective reflections of stakeholders and citizens.

The principles reflect Fondation Botnar's commitment to global human rights principles and international development principles. Evidence of urban change as experienced by practitioners and youth groups within their respective cities will periodically be captured against these principles. These principles are aspirational, and it is expected that in practice

their achievement will be messy, complex and partial. Learning across these principles is therefore intended to help guide value-based action, but also in the reflexive examination of this complexity, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of what is required in practice to live up to these principles.

The purpose of strategic actions

The strategic actions are entry points to learning about the local context and launching the evidence-building cycle starting with gathering evidence about the state of the city. The actions will facilitate the creation of a baseline of the city from the lens of the E2A principles and domains of change. The entry projects then become a launch pad for the landscape assessment capturing the 'status' of a city against certain priorities aligned to Fondation Botnar's strategic goals, including human rights. The strategic actions allow the project team to connect with city stakeholders and enable action, setting up communication processes to mobilise evidence building and catalyse action.

Any of the six strategic actions can be used as the starting point for the evidence-building process and mapping the context in relation to issues, opportunities, stakeholders, policies and city plans from a youth wellbeing perspective. Strategic actions can be used to learn about the city context as well as what change is required in each city to make them fit for young people. These questions aimed at mapping context should be guided by the five principles of the E2A. The accompanying Practitioner's Guide will provide a practical tool for mapping the city context using the lens of E2A principles.

The purpose of domains of change

The domains of change are aligned to Fondation Botnar's strategic priorities and enable a reflection process of Fondation Botnar's aspirational journey from 'a grant maker to change maker'. They provide a set of core areas of focus for projects to map change at the city level. It is proposed that change is mapped in each domain of change against three themes that are priorities for Fondation Botnar to progress system change in a city and ensure sustained impact. The themes selected are the capacities built, strategies deployed and processes established that aid practitioners and partners involved in project implementation to document change in that particular domain during the project cycle.

Domains and relevant themes

For each domain, change is to be mapped against an overarching thematic question that reflects the learning priority for that domain. Sub-questions should focus on the issues of: how capacities were built, which strategies were deployed, and the urban processes that were influenced to transform the city systems towards the particular domain – making the city 'fit for young people'. The Practitioner's Guide provides practical tools to be used to document the observed change from these processes on an annual basis.

Testing the E2A Framework

Since the development of the E2A conceptual framework in 2020, a consultation process was launched through a series of webinars in 2021, hosted by the University of Melbourne team to seek further comments on the framework from youth, experts, practitioners, academics, thought leaders and city officials to inform and strengthen operational strategies for the E2A Framework. The webinars launched a global Community of Practice on E2A and particularly captured reflections of young people about the importance of local knowledge, gathering evidence and using it for action.

The following section outlines a set of high-level operational guidelines to apply the E2A Framework as a parallel cycle to a project cycle. The details of implementation will be provided in the Practitioner's Guide.

E2A as a meta-learning overlay on project cycle

The E2A Framework is designed to complement the ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at the project level. Every project will continue to design their monitoring and evaluation framework as part of the program design document. In addition to the M&E framework, the E2A evidence cycle will be used as an overlay at critical phases of the project cycle.

This is envisaged to be a team effort between national learning partners (which will be established where required) and the project team, as well as key stakeholders, particularly youth communities. This process will periodically be supported by an E2A global team. It is important that the E2A learning partner/officer is involved and co-leads the evidence-building process and finalising of the plan.

The teams should explore tools and methods that are culturally fit for purpose and context, and inclusive, to ensure the E2A Framework is applied as a learning tool with flexibility. Evidence building and learning begins with strategic actions. The strategic actions serve as the entry points to the evidence cycle, and young people and marginalised groups will need to be included in the evidence-building processes. Learning partners at national and global levels will be expected to train participating groups on the concept of evidence building and the tools that they can use to collect data on an ongoing basis as per the project plan.

Upon the implementation of the strategic actions, practitioners should first build evidence on:

- existing capacities, strategies and processes in the city to create change within the specific domain of change

- a reflection on what they learn from the evidence gathered

- the actions they took based on the learning resulting from the collected evidence

- summarise the changes they observed because of those actions.

Responses to these four prompts should be documented on a regular basis across the different domains of change in which the strategic action is expected to facilitate change.

E2A test and pilot initiative

In January 2022, an E2A pilot initiative was tested in select Fondation Botnar's Healthy Cities for Adolescents projects to apply the E2A Framework as an overlay meta-learning tool on already existing projects. The aim was to use standardised data collection tools, data analysis and discernment of local level data, as well as identify gaps in existing information using the E2A lens. The purpose was to collect further qualitative evidence, to learn and apply the collective knowledge of practice. The framework was tested in two countries, Senegal and India.

During the E2A pilot initiative, both **process-based** evaluation and **realist** evaluation theoretical traditions and methodologies were explored, and these informed the design of the tools of data capture from two target groups. An innovative new digital tool called SenseMaker was applied to test participatory evidence capture. This tool examined how a

mixed evaluation method could be applied to evidence building to ensure process-based lessons and rich reflections from those with lived experiences about the context of the city they live in. The issues and *what works* for them and *what does not* were captured from the target group (youth and practitioners in this instance) from diverse contexts.

The test and pilot phase demonstrated the value of the framework in facilitating learning through evidence building with and for diverse stakeholders in a specific context, and the richness of information in the lived experiences from practitioners and youth capturing stories of context and stories of change.

The pilots exposed few redundancies in the application of E2A, clarified the purpose of evidence building and refined the boundaries within which evidence could be collected and used for action. This journey has led to the revisions of the E2A conceptual framework and framing of this E2A Edition 2. The global team is committed to reviewing and revising this document on a regular basis to continue the journey of learning as identified by Fondation Botnar in their strategy.

Change from diverse perspectives of city stakeholders

The projects will continue to document change from the perspectives of practitioners, youth, and community members. The projects should share the evidence of stories of change with key stakeholders. The Practitioner's Guide will provide practical tools for this data collection.

Three levels of engagement – from local to global

The E2A as a meta-learning tool aims to operationalise Fondation Botnar's commitment to learning in the cities portfolio at three levels: from local, to meso, to meta. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following three levels of engagement are established and a global workplan with clearly defined roles and responsibilities is in place for implementation of the E2A in Fondation Botnar projects across cities.

Local/city level

At the local (city) level, evidence will be co-produced by and with practitioners and communities to document change and promote young people's wellbeing. At this level, evidence and learning will be used, firstly, for fine-tuning and any necessary course

correction of project strategies and activities, as well as for initiating new projects. And secondly, for initiating evidence-based advocacy campaigns at the city level. It will also contribute to building the capacity of the implementing organisations that form the consortium as implementation teams.

An evidence-building plan using the evidence cycle will need to be agreed on during the finalisation of the project M&E framework. Resources will need to be allocated to support projects with additional tasks related to operationalising the E2A Framework.
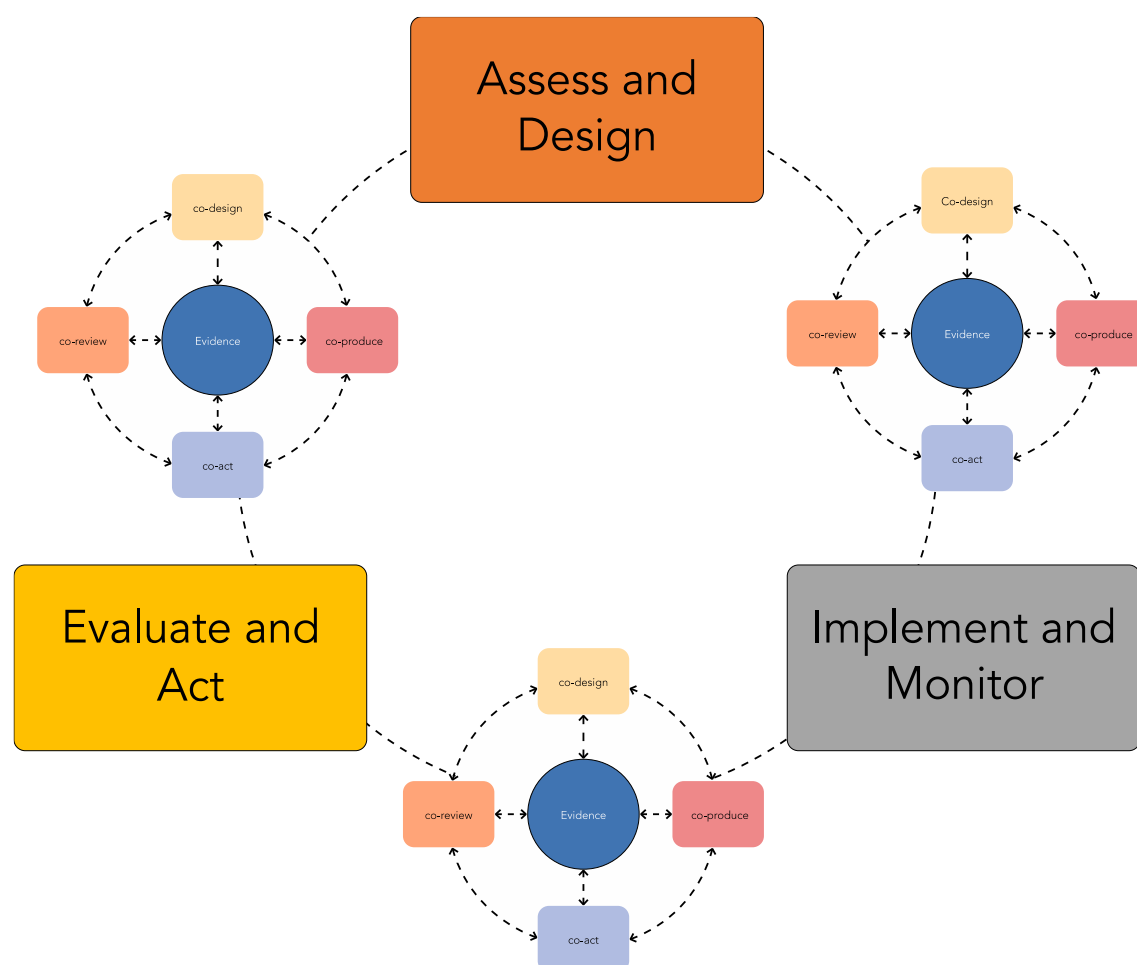

Figure 5. Project cycle and evidence building and learning overlay

Meso level (national level)

At the meso level, when multiple projects are being implemented in a country, a national learning partner will need to be identified and appointed to support the evidence-building process. They will analyse evidence with practitioners and communities through reflection on the E2A principles and domains of change. Learning partners will synthesise learning from local/city level to leverage evidence for national level policy and advocacy initiatives

promoting young people's wellbeing. They will also play a key role in training, building and enhancing the capacity of the local (city) level team for documenting evidence of change. The meso-level team could include universities and research organisations based in project countries as national level learning partners. If there is only one project in a country, the local learning partner will act as the meso learning partner.

Meta level (global)

At the meta level, a global E2A team will coordinate the analysis of collective evidence and learning across cities to generate themes to frame the overall meta-learning and research strategy.

The team will design a global knowledge management strategy and communication plan with annual plan to set up learning processes between the local, meso and meta partners. The team will coordinate the knowledge outputs based on collected evidence to leverage for policy change at the global level.

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 as identified in the global research framework and relevant global development frameworks for promoting human rights and young people's wellbeing. These reports will capture the contribution of city projects to the localisation of the SDGs.

The global E2A team will guide the production of knowledge products to ensure shared learning across academia and practice, and global and local policy partners. Applying a consortium approach, it will play a key role in knowledge exchange, establishing a global community of practice, and use meta-level evidence to design global advocacy programs with partners. The E2A global team will consist of a knowledge consortium involving academic researchers, international development experts, data scientists and technical partners.

The global E2A team will also liaise with the Fondation Botnar management team on an ongoing basis and share local level evidence on an annual basis. The global team will also analyse the collective evidence and prepare learning reports that can inform both Fondation Botnar's strategy and grant-giving priorities.

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