

Urban and Youth Transformations in Envigado. Connection with Oneself, Others, and the Environment

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Abstract

The S²Cities programme implemented in Envigado, Colombia, promotes youth leadership and participation in transforming public space, strengthening social cohesion, and improving security. This case study applies a qualitative methodology to explore the programme's development and impact, structured across three interconnected levels: individual, relational, and structural.

At the individual level, the analysis focuses on enhancing youth leadership, critical thinking, and decision-making skills, fostering autonomy and self-confidence. The relational level emphasises trust-building among youth, the community, and local institutions, facilitating collaboration and strengthening networks to sustain collective action. The structural level examines how youth participation influences institutional practices and public policies, contributing to long-term social transformation.

Trust emerges as a pivotal factor throughout the analysis — both as an essential foundation for collaboration and as a key outcome, ensuring the sustainability and scalability of youth-led initiatives. The study underscores that empowering young people as active agents of change enables them to influence not only their immediate environment but also broader governance structures, promoting more inclusive and participatory urban spaces.

Keywords: youth leadership, public space, social cohesion, urban transformation

To cite this article:

Álvarez, M. D. M. (2025) "Urban and Youth Transformations in Envigado: Connection with Oneself, Others, and the Environment", *The Journal of Public Space*, 10(1), pp. 117–136. doi: 10.32891/jps.v10i1.1856.

This article has been peer reviewed and accepted for publication in *The Journal of Public Space*.



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1. Introduction

The strengthening of effective mechanisms for youth participation in the transformation of public space is an urgent need in multiple territories, and the municipality of Envigado, Colombia, is no exception. Despite having an active youth population, traditional participation structures have proven to be limited, often creating a disconnect between young people and local institutions. In this context, the implementation of the S²Cities project has represented an innovative response to this issue, emphasising conscious and networked leadership¹ as a strategy for capacity building and the sustainability of urban interventions. This model is rooted in a deep connection between young people, their environment, and social challenges, enabling the collective generation of solutions to issues related to security, social cohesion, and public space.

Since early 2022, the city has served as a site for the implementation of the Safe and Sound Cities (S²Cities) programme, a global initiative led by the Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation in partnership with ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, organised by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, and supported by Fondation Botnar. Locally, its execution has been carried out by Fundación Mi Sangre in collaboration with the Municipality of Envigado, aiming to strengthen collaborative leadership and the mobilisation capacity of young people by fostering their participation in learning and co-creation networks. These dynamics have amplified youth voices and enhanced their impact on security and social cohesion in the municipality.

The programme has sought to establish stronger ties between young people and local institutions responsible for security, social cohesion, protection, and youth policies. Beyond fostering youth participation in decision-making, it has created collaborative spaces where participants have designed solutions from a comprehensive and multidimensional perspective. S²Cities has focussed its efforts on reclaiming and fostering the appropriation of public spaces, affirming youth as agents of social transformation, and promoting social inclusion from diverse perspectives, including culture, art, sports, and environmental sustainability.

This case study aims to analyse the implementation of the programme in Envigado, identifying lessons learned and challenges at three levels of intervention: individual, relational, and structural². The objective is to examine changes in youth perception and participation in issues related to security, social cohesion, and the use and management of public space, as well as the factors that have facilitated or hindered this process.

As a transversal axis of both the programme and the present analysis, trust-building emerges as a pillar for collaboration among various social actors. The development of trust between youth and the community, youth and institutional actors, and among diverse sectors involved in urban transformation is crucial for the sustainability of initiatives and the consolidation of medium-term and long-term impacts.

¹A leadership style promoted by Fundación Mi Sangre, which creates "Conscious leaders who act from a deep connection with themselves, others, and their environment, upholding high ethical standards and managing situations with transparency; and networked leaders who weave ideas, sectors, and resources together, fostering collaboration among diverse individuals and teams, managing conflicts with empathy, and leveraging diversity as a source of innovation and systemic solutions" (Fundación Mi Sangre (2024) *Comunicación interna* [Internal communication]).

² Systemic impact measurement model of Fundación Mi Sangre.

In an evolving urban context, promoting youth participation in the management of public space, security, and social cohesion is essential for fostering more accessible and inclusive environments. This entails not only enabling youth participation but also strengthening trust between them, the community, and institutions. The creation of spaces for dialogue and collaboration ensures that initiatives are more sustainable and better aligned with shared realities and needs.



Figure 1. Agudelo, C (2022) *Placemaking and wellbeing*.

2. Methodology

Youth participation goes beyond the formal structures of traditional associations, also manifesting in everyday, cultural, and community practices that—although often rendered invisible by institutional frameworks—constitute meaningful forms of political action (Martín-Gómez, 2022, p. 70). In line with this perspective, the S²Cities programme adopts a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of youth participation and leadership in Envigado.

Its implementation is structured around the “Fellowship Programme”, a methodological strategy developed by Fundación Mi Sangre that strengthens socio-emotional capacities, fosters critical thinking, and promotes the practice of active citizenship rooted in local territories. This methodology:

is designed to empower young leaders by enhancing their capacity for social mobilisation and advocacy while understanding the realities they seek to transform. The

programme connects youth leaders with each other and with other stakeholders to promote learning and the co-creation of systemic solutions. Additionally, it supports the development of collaborative strategies for advocacy and mobilisation, contributing to the construction of a more peaceful, democratic, and regenerative society.

Fundación Mi Sangre (2022) *Comunicación interna* [Internal communication].



Figure 2. Agudelo, M (2022) *Closure S²Cities Envigado I*.

Throughout the project's implementation, three cohorts have been conducted, impacting over 90 young people and promoting the execution of 47 pilot initiatives, of which 12 have been scaled and strengthened. The training of participants was based on Otto Scharmer's U Theory and was carried out in 16 structured sessions across three key phases: observation, presence, and co-creation.

In order to analyse the programme's impact, three dimensions of analysis have been established to provide a better understanding of the outcomes of the S²Cities process:

1. **Individual Level:** Focuses on capacity-building and skill development among individuals engaged in a change process. In the context of youth participation, this involves strengthening competencies such as critical thinking, decision-making, assertive communication, and leadership. This level examines how individuals construct their identities as agents of transformation and how they develop autonomy to influence their environment. It also considers psychosocial factors that impact empowerment, such as self-confidence, motivation, and a sense of belonging.
2. **Relational Level:** Examines interaction dynamics among stakeholders involved in social processes, emphasising the formation of networks and the establishment of strategic alliances. At this level, collaboration among individuals, organisations, and communities facilitates access to resources and opportunities, enabling the consolidation of change initiatives.³
3. **Structural Level:** Explores changes in structures, regulations, and participation mechanisms that influence social transformation. This level not only considers the concrete initiatives implemented but also analyses their impact on public policies, projects, and institutional practices. It examines how innovations can be institutionalized and scaled to ensure long-term impact.

The criteria and indicators used to assess the project's impact include the number of change initiatives developed, the level of influence within communities, political advocacy actions, the activation of partnership ecosystems, and the transformation of exclusionary and violent narratives within the municipality.

3. Case Study Results Based on the Three Levels of Analysis

The programme has enabled an analysis of the transformations experienced by young people in their capacity development and consolidation as leaders in public space management and transformation. A key indicator at this level is the increase in youth participation in public decision-making spaces, such as Municipal Youth Councils (CMJ) and youth platforms, demonstrating greater involvement in governance and the formulation of proposals aimed at security and social cohesion.

3.1. Individual Level

As noted by Blejmar, Nirenberg, and Perrone (1998), “leadership is not a univocal concept and has undergone transformations over time, becoming linked to ideologies of various kinds and orientations” (p. 3). Historically, a range of leadership models have been identified—charismatic, managerial, servant, transformative, among others. In the current context, and closely aligned with the notion of transformative leadership, Fundación Mi Sangre has sought to develop and promote a form of leadership that is both *conscious* and *weaving* (*consciente y tejedor*)—a strategy designed to enhance key skills among young people, enabling them to play an active role in the transformation of

³ Change initiatives are understood as social projects created and implemented by young people within the framework of the project.

their territories. This approach has strengthened competencies for public advocacy, community participation, and the sustainability of urban interventions.

According to Fundación Mi Sangre's strategic planning processes:

We train conscious leaders to act from a deep connection with themselves, others, and their environment, with high ethical standards and transparency in decision-making. We also train networked leaders who weave together ideas, sectors, and resources, fostering collaboration among diverse individuals and teams, managing conflicts with empathy, and leveraging diversity as a source of innovation and systemic solutions.

Fundación Mi Sangre (2024) *Comunicación interna* [Internal communication].

During the implementation of the S²Cities programme, young participants demonstrated an 85.69% improvement in their leadership skills.⁴ Key competencies developed under this level and within the project's framework include:

- **Analytical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Participants strengthened their ability to analyse their surroundings, identify public space-related issues, and propose viable, context-specific solutions. As they developed their change initiatives, they conducted context analyses to identify challenges requiring attention within the municipality. Consequently, initiatives emerged that focussed on gender-based violence, stigmatisation and discrimination of young people, low youth participation in decision-making spaces, urban planning, appropriation, and use of public spaces, among others.
- **Communication and Mediation:** Participants developed individual and collective communication skills that improved their ability to interact with private, governmental, and community stakeholders, facilitating dialogue and consensus-building in participatory settings. According to the Adaptive Systems Model (2022)⁵, young people initially expressed distrust toward the local government and perceived institutional collaboration as distant. However, through the enhancement of their communication skills and active participation in advocacy spaces, they successfully established alliances with various municipal departments, such as the Secretariat of Environment, the Directorate of Childhood, Adolescence and Youth, and the Secretariat of Culture, among others.
- **Building Individual Confidence in Leadership:** A transversal aspect of youth training has been fostering confidence, both in their abilities and in their influence within participatory spaces. The process has demonstrated how participants have learned to recognise their potential as transformation agents, developing greater autonomy in decision-making and managing community initiatives.

Their testimonies reflect significant changes in leadership perception and their role within the community. The programme experience has enabled individuals who were

⁴ Source: Fundación Mi Sangre, 2024. "Comparative analysis of the Pre and Post survey among participants of the S²CITY project."

⁵ Understood as the project's guideline.

initially hesitant to engage in public participation or did not see themselves as transformative leaders to now take an active role in building safer and more inclusive environments. Numerous stories have emerged that have transformed and shaped the S²Cities programme in Envigado. We invite readers to learn more about the process at: <https://s2city.fundacionmisangre.org/>.

3.2. Relational Level

This level focussed on interaction dynamics, the consolidation of youth networks, the generation of strategic alliances, and the evolution of trust as a central element for collaboration among stakeholders. A key finding was the significant change in the relationship between young people and local institutions, evidenced by the shift from initial distrust to collaborative engagement with the Municipal Administration in the design and execution of initiatives.



Figure 3. González, S (2023) *Connecting with others*.

This process allowed participants not only to be recognised as legitimate actors in public space transformation but also to position themselves as strategic interlocutors in management, advocacy, and territorial transformation.

- **Strengthening and Expanding Collaboration Networks:** A crucial aspect of this process has been young people's ability to create and strengthen collaboration networks with strategic actors, including local government, the community, and the private sector. Through dialogue spaces and experience-sharing, alliances and co-construction processes were promoted, facilitating the implementation of change

initiatives. Two primary dynamics were identified: first, trust-building between young people and communities, collectives, and organizations involved in implementing initiatives; second, overcoming the barrier of distrust toward institutions or local government. These dynamics enabled initiatives, such as “More than Pikes,”⁶ created by a young leader in the municipality, to be integrated with local government agencies, such as the Secretariat of Mobility and the Institute of Sports and Recreation of Envigado (INDER). During the pilot phase, this initiative impacted 55 athletes and, in its strengthening phase, reached 120 athletes, benefiting a total of 12 sports teams directly and over 1,000 people indirectly.



Figure 4. Agudelo, M (2022) *Expanding Collaboration Networks*.

- **Resource Management for Sustainability:** Another significant aspect in strengthening youth networks has been the development of strategies to access funding and ensure the sustainability of initiatives. According to Fundación Mi Sangre’s capacity-strengthening measurement system, young people’s ability to “formulate, execute, monitor, and evaluate initiatives, along with structuring budgets and managing resources rationally and consciously,” was enhanced by 88% (Fundación Mi Sangre, 2025. Internal Communication) Various methods were identified that participants used to structure and formalize their projects, including:
 - *Establishing alliances with public and private entities to obtain resources.* An example of this is the “Galería a Pie” initiative, which has secured partnerships with private actors such as Sura and McDonald’s, as well as public sector

⁶ The following section will provide a detailed presentation of the initiatives.

entities, including the Secretariat of Culture and the Directorate of Childhood, Adolescence, and Youth of the municipality. These alliances have facilitated financial and in-kind resource management, ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the initiative. According to the internal measurement system, a total of 81 partnerships were established with actors from public, private, and social sectors during the project's execution.

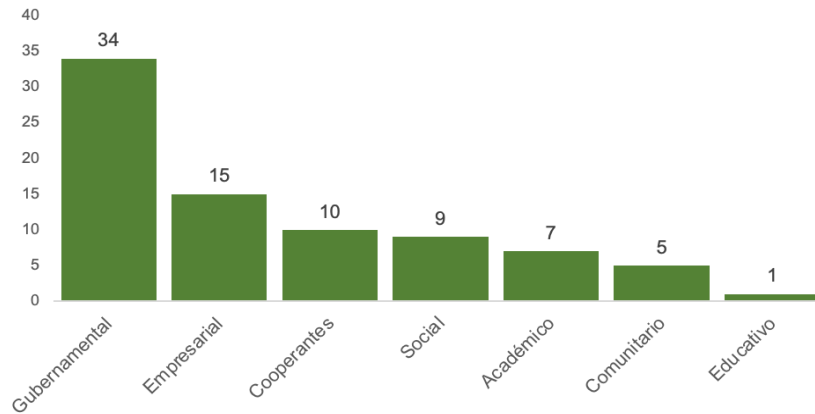


Figure 5. Source: own elaboration, 2024.
From left to right: Governmental, Business, Cooperators, Social, Academic, Communitarian, Educational.

- *Training in project formulation and strategic planning has strengthened various initiatives.* Notable cases include “Barrios Vivos” and “Sí Paz,” which developed strategies for forming associations and creating portfolios of products and services, enhancing both their social and commercial reach. These training sessions were conducted with the support of Comfama, a renowned entity in the business and social sectors in Colombia.
- *Participation in specific funding opportunities and grant programmes has driven the development of youth initiatives.* For example, “La Vida y el Ruido” received the IF Design 2023 Award, an international recognition highlighting its impact on education and the promotion of attentive listening. Similarly, the initiative “Veo Veo” won in the Creative Industries category of the Capital Semilla: Sustainable Enterprises competition, organised by the Metropolitan Area, emphasising and supporting the sustainability potential of this venture in the territory.

The findings and contributions made by young people regarding new ways of reclaiming, inhabiting, and transforming public spaces—as well as reconfiguring dynamics of safety and coexistence—resonate with the argument put forward by Ramírez-Varela (2019), who states that local and community spaces become arenas in which young people exercise their agency as subjects engaged in identity construction. This construction takes place through their own forms of participation, grounded in a situated reading of reality and in the life projects they choose to pursue collectively.

3.3. Structural Level

At this level of analysis, the transformations achieved through the programme are examined, highlighting innovations that have allowed youth participation to transcend the individual and become integrated into local governance dynamics. According to Fundación Mi Sangre's internal measurement system, youth capacity to "influence decision-making, position causes, and promote a culture of peace through awareness strategies, participation in public policies, and the generation of regulatory changes" increased by 84.46% (Fundación Mi Sangre, 2024. Internal Communication). Additionally, mechanisms were identified that facilitated their participation and promoted their involvement in public decision-making.

- Direct Influence in the Public Sphere: One of the most significant results was the creation of the Municipal Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Board, established as a formal space for youth participation through Decree 0000679 of December 6, 2022. This decree states that the Board "aims to contribute and provide agile solutions to the city's problems, calling for concrete and effective actions in human rights matters." This initiative represents a step towards integrating youth voices into the development of solutions for municipal issues, recognising their capacity to influence public affairs.



Figure 6. González, S (2024) Campaign: "No se lo dé a cualquiera" (Don't give it to just anyone.)

- Innovations in Public Space Management: The programme also supported and promoted innovative strategies led by young people that redefined the use of public space and strengthened its role as a space for coexistence and citizenship-building. Some of these innovations included:
 - *Processes for the Recovery and Appropriation of Spaces:* Utilizing collective design methodologies ensured that interventions responded to local needs and dynamics. A notable case is the reopening of "Parque de las Ilusiones" in

Envigado, an action led by programme participants and the youth initiative “Hablalo.” This initiative mobilized the community to dialogue and organise, successfully capturing local government attention on closed public parks that had become insecurity hotspots. This demonstrated that through a collective civic effort, public spaces can be reclaimed for communal enjoyment. Furthermore, the initiative is currently involved in advocacy efforts within the municipality’s Territorial Planning Scheme (POT).



Figure 7. Pérez, J (2024) *Galería a pie* (Gallery on foot) initiative.

- *Using Art, Culture, and Sports as Tools for Transformation:* Several initiatives incorporated artistic, and sports expressions as means to foster a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and violence prevention. Notable examples include "Galería a Pie" and "Flow and Bars," which activated public spaces in the municipality through graffiti, artistic murals, parkour exhibitions, basketball

competitions, and urban art fairs. These efforts aimed to create healthier, safer, and more habitable spaces for young people in the community.

However, as Jara (1999, p. 5) argues, the regulation of public space by the State often fails to acknowledge the legitimacy of emerging youth practices. By determining what is considered public and prescribing its appropriate uses, institutional frameworks tend to marginalise or even criminalise non-traditional expressions—especially those rooted in youth subcultures. This tension highlights the structural challenges that young people face when attempting to transform their territories through alternative cultural, artistic, or athletic practices. In this context, initiatives such as *More than Pikes* illustrate how youth-led actions can subvert dominant narratives, gaining institutional recognition for forms of urban expression that were previously stigmatised as disruptive or unsafe.

The analysis of this dimension demonstrates that when youth participation is integrated with formal advocacy mechanisms and collaborative management strategies, it can transcend symbolic gestures and become an integral part of local governance structures. The inclusion of young people in institutional decision-making spaces, alongside the implementation of participatory methodologies in public space management, has facilitated the creation of intervention models that align with territorial dynamics.

These models not only ensure the sustainability of the initiatives developed but also promote the replicability of strategies in other contexts, contributing to the transformation of urban spaces into more participatory, democratic, and safe environments.

4. Summary of the levels of analysis

4.1. Innovations: Implemented Initiatives

Within the framework of the programme, various initiatives have been developed to address social, cultural, and environmental challenges identified in Envigado. Each project has been designed to promote active community participation, especially among young people, and to foster the transformation of public spaces and social dynamics. Below are some of the implemented projects:

I. VEO VEO LAB

The disconnection between urban dynamics and rural areas has obscured the importance of ecosystems, rural culture, and the vital relationship between nature and communities. VEO VEO LAB emerges as an initiative aimed at bridging this gap by strengthening and integrating proposals focussed on the care, conservation, and protection of rural land, natural resources, wildlife, and archaeological heritage. Through educational and participatory processes, the initiative fosters a deeper understanding of rural issues and promotes collective actions that reconnect citizens with their territory and natural environment.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

S2CITIES ENVIGADO

Level	Approach	Developed capacities
Individual level	Personal development and the strengthening of socio-emotional and political skills for conscious and place-based leadership.	- Conscious and networked leadership - Critical thinking and problem-solving - Assertive communication and mediation - Decision-making - Confidence, autonomy, and sense of belonging
Relational level	Building bonds of trust and collaboration among young people, the private sector, the community, and institutions for the development of sustainable collective initiatives.	- Formation and expansion of collaborative networks - Alliances with public, private, and social actors - Resource mobilisation - Intergenerational and multisectoral dialogue
Structural level	Structured youth participation has contributed to influencing institutional arrangements, public policy agendas, and territorial governance frameworks.	- Influence on local policies and regulations - Formal participation in decision-making spaces - Transformation of institutional narratives - Scaling up of youth-led innovations

Figure 7. Source: own elaboration, 2025

2. FLOW & BARS

In Envigado, traditional sports facilities do not accommodate emerging urban sports expressions linked to youth culture. Flow & Bars was created to promote disciplines such as parkour, calisthenics, and other alternative sports, advocating for their recognition as tools that strengthen protective factors for young people. The initiative fosters the appropriation of sports spaces, diversifying their use and promoting active and healthy lifestyles where sports serve as a channel for social cohesion and transformation.

3. POR AHÍ DERECHO

Street sexual harassment has been normalized in Envigado, perpetuating a form of violence that primarily affects women and young people. Por Ahí Derecho seeks to challenge this normalization through community awareness processes that highlight harassment as a violation of rights and promote social rejection of these practices. The initiative works to foster a cultural shift that encourages reporting, empathy, and respect in public spaces, contributing to the creation of safer and more dignified environments for all.



Figure 8. Agudelo, C (2022) Veo Veo Lab initiative.

4. MUNICIPAL HUMAN RIGHTS BOARD

Floating populations—such as migrants, homeless individuals, and informal workers—face the invisibilization of their rights and a lack of knowledge about support pathways. The Municipal Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Board has been consolidated as a space for dialogue and coordination, aiming to acknowledge these issues by promoting the direct participation of these populations in identifying their needs and co-creating solutions. The initiative builds bridges between the community and institutions, fostering more inclusive and human rights-oriented responses.



Figure 9. Agudelo, C (2022) *Flow & Bars initiative*

5. SÍ PAZ

School violence, expressed through bullying and hate speech, threatens coexistence in educational institutions in Envigado. Sí Paz proposes a restorative approach that addresses these problems by understanding the root causes of conflict and repairing relationships among students. The initiative promotes dialogue, empathy, and mutual recognition, seeking to transform schools into safer spaces where differences become opportunities for collective growth rather than sources of violence.

6. MORE THAN PIKES

The practise of motorcycle acrobatics, when performed without safety measures, poses significant risks to both practitioners and pedestrians in public spaces. More Than Pikes reimagines this practise as an alternative sport, advocating for its development in controlled and legal conditions. The initiative promotes the creation of designated spaces for safe practise, fostering a culture of responsible and inclusive road use while increasing awareness of collective safety. Additionally, it seeks

institutional recognition of these youth expressions as part of the municipality's cultural diversity.



Figure 10. Agudelo, C (2022) *Municipal Human Rights Board initiative*

7. TEJIENDO HISTORIAS

The lack of public space appropriation has deepened the disconnect between generations in Envigado. Tejiendo Historias promotes the recovery of these spaces through tactical urbanism strategies that bring together young people and older adults in the co-creation of more habitable and safe environments. The initiative not only physically transforms spaces but also strengthens community bonds, encouraging intergenerational knowledge exchange and fostering a more connected and resilient social fabric.

8. LA VIDA Y EL RUIDO

Noise pollution, often normalized in urban areas, affects social coexistence and well-being. La Vida y el Ruido (Life and Noise) aims to raise youth awareness about the impact of noise on community quality of life. Through pedagogical and cultural activities, the initiative encourages reflection on sound coexistence and promotes practices that help reduce noise levels, fostering a more harmonious environment for community development.

9. BARRIOS VIVOS

In zones 03, 06, and 07 of Envigado, the lack of adequate public spaces limits opportunities for socialization and recreation for children, youth, and older adults. Barrios Vivos (Living Neighbourhoods) promotes the recovery of two public spaces

selected in collaboration with the community, transforming them into areas that foster social interaction and recreation. The initiative engages citizens in the design and management of these spaces, strengthening the sense of belonging and revitalising neighbourhood life.



Figure 11. González, S (2023) *More than Pikes initiative*.

10. GALERÍA A PIE

Urban art, often stigmatized, finds a platform for public space transformation through Galería a Pie (Gallery on foot). This initiative promotes artistic interventions that redefine walls and streets, showcasing local talent and creating spaces where the community can connect with art and urban culture. By doing so, it challenges stigmas and fosters a deeper appreciation of street art as a legitimate and valuable expression of youth identity.

11. HABLALO

The low incidence of youth participation in public management, combined with apathy toward civic culture, has limited their ability to influence local decision-making. Hablalo (Talk About It) promotes the creation of intergenerational and intersectoral dialogue spaces, where young people not only express their perspectives but also develop leadership and civic engagement skills. The initiative encourages the exchange of viewpoints, strengthening their role as active agents in community transformation.



Figure 12. Agudelo, C (2022) *Hablalo initiative*.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The implementation of S²Cities in Envigado has demonstrated that youth-led urban transformation is dynamic, ongoing, and, above all, deeply relational. The sustainability and scalability of youth initiatives have emerged as central pillars, revealing that the continuity of these actions cannot depend solely on initial project resources. Training in conscious and collaborative leadership provided young participants with strategic tools to manage alliances and diversify funding sources, enabling the progressive autonomy of their initiatives.

One of the most revealing lessons lies in the transformation of relationships between young people and public and private institutions. While initial distrust posed a significant barrier, assertive communication and mediation strategies helped reverse this dynamic. The experience demonstrated that trust is not a prerequisite, but a process built through tangible results and continuous dialogue. The active participation of municipal agencies confirmed that effective collaboration is only possible when sustained spaces for dialogue and mutual accountability are created.

From a leadership perspective, the implementation of Theory U strengthened key competencies such as conflict management, network-building, and social innovation. This type of leadership, characterised by collaboration and community engagement, facilitated the collective appropriation of public spaces. The recovery of these environments went beyond physical infrastructure, becoming a symbol of young people's ability to redefine their territory and strengthen social cohesion.

Trust emerged as both a transversal theme and a result in itself. In Envigado, Colombia, where trust was successfully consolidated between young people and local institutions, significant progress was observed in the co-creation of public policies and in the

inclusion of youth as strategic actors. Conversely, in areas where distrust persisted, initiatives faced greater obstacles in becoming established, highlighting that trust is both a means and an end in social transformation processes.

The implemented advocacy strategies—characterised by their innovative approaches, ranging from artistic interventions to digital activism—proved to be effective mechanisms for amplifying youth demands and mobilising the community. These unconventional approaches successfully shifted narratives and opened dialogue spaces with decision-makers, demonstrating youth capacity to drive change not only in physical spaces but also in local symbolic and political dynamics.

The impact of conscious and networked leadership on Envigado's urban transformation is reflected in the diversification of youth initiatives and their growing influence in decision-making spaces. Participants trained under this approach not only integrated their voices into formal governance processes but also promoted tangible changes in the management and use of public spaces. The creation of the Municipal Human Rights Board and the activation of the Youth House as a strategic 'Hub' are emblematic examples of how youth leadership has reconfigured territorial dynamics.

The case of Envigado provides valuable insights for urban youth governance models. The consolidation of youth participation spaces, alongside influence in urban planning, serves as a replicable model for other urban contexts. However, replication requires adapting methodologies to specific territorial realities and prioritising, without compromise, the construction of trust among key stakeholders.

Ultimately, the S²Cities experience reaffirms that trust is not merely a facilitating condition for the process but its most powerful and transformative outcome. The ability to turn distrust into effective collaboration—among youth, the community, the private sector, and local government—is what enables the consolidation of sustainable, legitimate, and, most importantly, replicable change processes. Trust, therefore, emerges not only as the foundation of youth-led urban transformation but also as its greatest legacy.

Acknowledgement

The Safe and Sound Cities Programme (S²Cities) is an initiative proudly led by the Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation, hosted by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, with the support of Fondation Botnar.



Figure 13. Agudelo, C (2024) *Global Convening*.

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