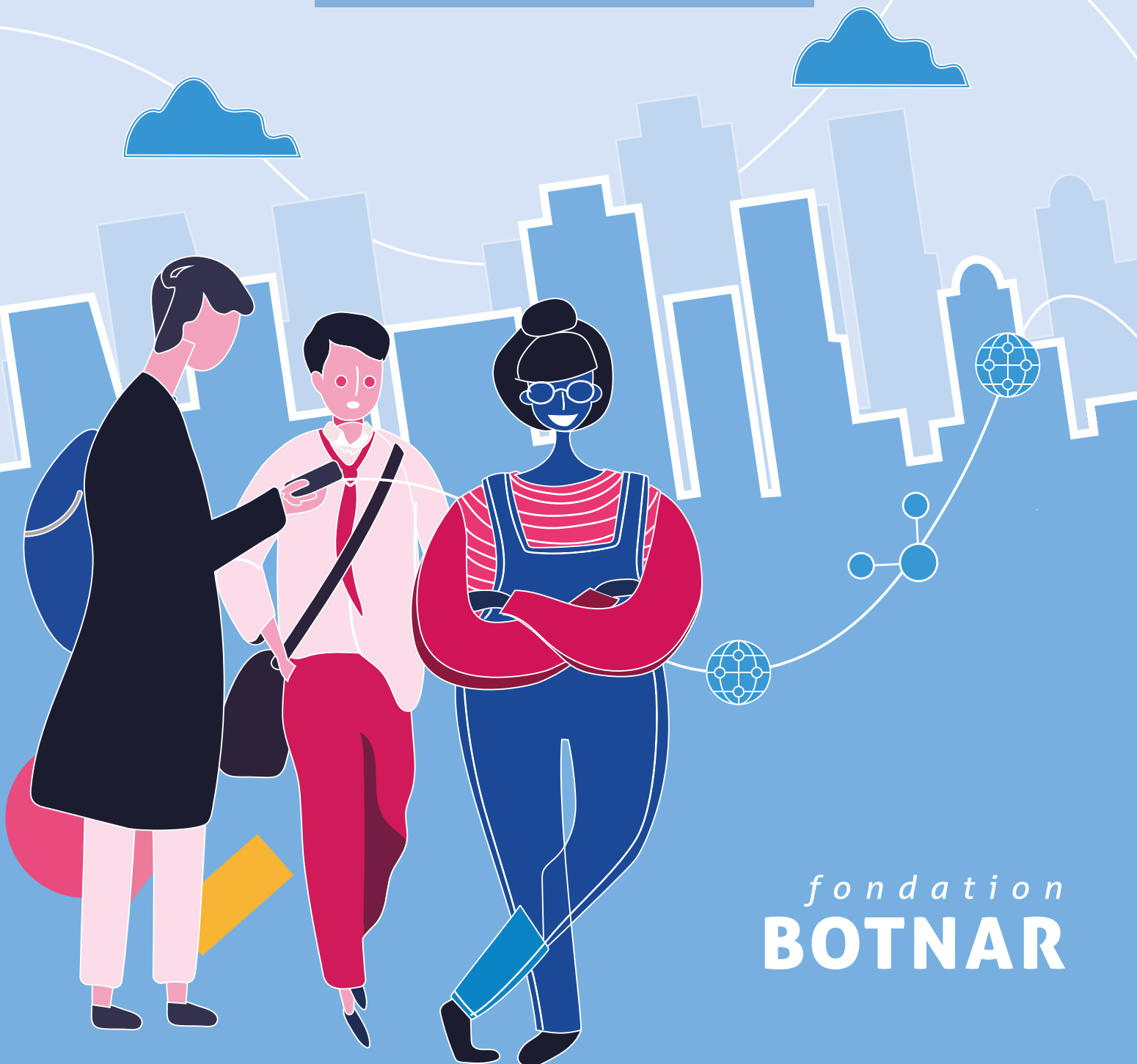




# TYPCities

TECHNOLOGY AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION  
IN GOVERNING INTERMEDIARY CITIES IN  
LOW-AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

## A Call For Research Proposals



*foundation*  
**BOTNAR**

# Call for research proposals

## Technology and youth participation in governing intermediary cities in low- and middle-income countries (TYPCities)

### Overview

At [Fondation Botnar](#), we are working to improve the wellbeing of young people (between the ages of 10 - 24 years old) living in cities around the world. Responding to the need to give young people a greater say in rapidly urbanising environments by harnessing the potential of digital and data-driven technologies, we are inviting applicants to submit research proposals as part of the interdisciplinary research program 'Technology and youth participation in governing intermediary cities in LMICs' (TYPCities).

### Purpose

TYPCities will generate original research analysing how technology can be used to enable youth participation in the daily governance of intermediary cities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The program will produce empirical insights and analytical findings about the role of various digital technologies in urban governance based on multi-sited research within and across cities and countries.

### TYPCities' objectives are:

- \* Produce comparative insights into diverse experiences of youth participation in urban governance in intermediary cities in LMICs, paying particular attention to how data-driven interventions and digital technologies enhance or inhibit youth inclusion in urban affairs.
- \* Scrutinise how political factors such as institutions and policies, social differences among youth based on class, gender and citizenship and particular technological features shape youth participation in intermediary cities.
- \* Critically examine and contrast past and current initiatives to bolster youth in governing urban environments through in-depth case study inquiries or systematic reviews of successful and failed interventions.
- \* Generate knowledge that informs programming by practitioners, including city officials, urban planners, international and non-governmental organisations working in and on youth participation, technologies for social change, and urban governance in the LMICs.
- \* Foster learning, exchange and networking among researchers and practitioners committed to promoting technology and youth participation in urban governance.
- \* Outline ways and technological means to promote and strengthen young people's influence and decision-making capabilities in urban environments.

## Knowledge gaps

A substantial interdisciplinary body of literature by urban planners, geographers and social scientists studies ways of making urban planning and governance more inclusive. Taking its point of departure in existing planning and decision-making procedures dominated by bureaucrats and experts, these analyses highlight how ordinary citizens, communities and end-users can increase their say in their cities' financing, design and governance. This literature sheds light on how participatory mechanisms – participatory budgeting and planning, mapping of urban problems and municipal services, establishing consultative youth councils and others – can improve urban governance. Although a rich and useful body of literature, many of these studies have limited applicability to intermediary cities in LMICs marked by political fragility and inadequate service delivery. Much of the literature on deliberative democracy, for instance, focuses on mature democracies. It assumes that basic democratic institutions such as free and fair elections or an independent judiciary are already in place. This is typically not the case in authoritarian or politically fragile contexts.

In recent years, a growing body of literature has concentrated on the potential of frontier and civic technology in empowering urban residents in their interactions with state institutions. Many of these studies propose that digitalisation – whether based on big data, crowd-mapping, blockchains, artificial intelligence or interactive platforms – increases citizens' decision-making and participation in urban affairs. Digital technologies, in particular, are suggested as a means for poor or marginalised communities to have a greater say in policy processes affecting their cities by leapfrogging infrastructural and institutional hurdles. This emerging field of study is global in scope – covering countries, cities and experiences in the global North and South. However, much of the applied literature on digital technology and youth empowerment is aspirational and techno-optimistic. It neglects power dynamics and deeply ingrained socio-spatial urban inequalities driven by class, ethnicity, gender and age. Moreover, the recent and evolving nature of digital experimentation in urban spaces makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about their longer-term impacts.

A considerable knowledge gap exists concerning the potential and real-life effects of technology-enabled youth participation in governing intermediary cities in LMICs. In-depth comparative studies scrutinising how different political regimes, economic contexts, and urban environments' impact on improved youth participation is particularly lacking. How social differences among young people affect their ability to capitalise on technology, the relation between 'old' and 'new' technologies of youth mobilisation and co-optation, and the specifics of particular technologies in enabling – or undermining – youth governance in intermediary cities remains under-explored. Finally, the possible repressive potential of technology, particularly digital forms of surveillance in cities, deserves greater attention.

## Research themes

TYPCities poses the overall research question: What is the scope for technology and youth participation in the governance of intermediary cities with a population between 50,000 and 1 million in LMICs? We are inviting research proposals that address one or several of the themes described below based on comparative, multi-city and multi-country research designs.

## Theme 1: Technology and youth participation – differentiating youth

ICTs and data-driven frontier technologies such as augmented reality, blockchain or artificial intelligence are lauded for their emancipatory potential. Urban youth aged 10 to 24 years, in particular middle class 'digital natives' around the world, have capitalised on social media and various platforms to push for social and political change. But digitalisation and datafication are double-edged swords: as urban youth are a heterogeneous demographic with unequal access to technology, these tools can empower some and disempower others. In spite of technological progress, substantive power asymmetries continue to undermine young people's ability to realise their 'right to the city'. Moreover, some states make increasing use of technology to control, rather than empower, their youth populations. Considering how various forms of low and high tech mediate youth participation in urban governance thus offers important insights into specific urban political economies and political settlements.

### Key questions:

How do different types of technology shape youth participation at neighbourhood - and city - level in intermediary cities? Which digital innovations lend themselves to strengthening more youth inclusive urban governance and why? How do differences in gender, class and literacy impact youths' ability to adopt technology to address pressing urban challenges? What is the relationship between online and offline youth mobilisation in intermediary cities? Which technological solutions in urban planning are beneficial to youth and which ones are harmful?

## Theme 2: Youth and urban governance – distinguishing policy domains

The wellbeing and opportunities of urban youth are informed by existing urban policies that shape dynamic city-systems and state-society interactions. Housing, education, health, security, environmental safety and mobility are key dimensions of urban governance affecting youth. Their planning and implementation involves different technologies and forms of knowledge – some more, some less data driven – but also power relations and economic interests. Youth positions and agendas with regard to urban governance reflect and relate to these specific urban policies. There is thus a need to study youth participation in intermediary cities with regard to and across specific urban policies, paying particular attention to the role of technology and data.

### Key questions:

Which technology-enabled urban policies are particularly well suited to promote and institutionalise youth participation in intermediary cities? How can increased accountability by city planners and officials to their young urban residents be achieved through digital and data-driven technologies? Which technology-enabled youth initiatives or movements were successful in influencing specific urban policies – and which ones failed? Are there examples of technology-enabled youth strategies that have proven effective in disrupting or improving urban policies that are harmful to young city dwellers?

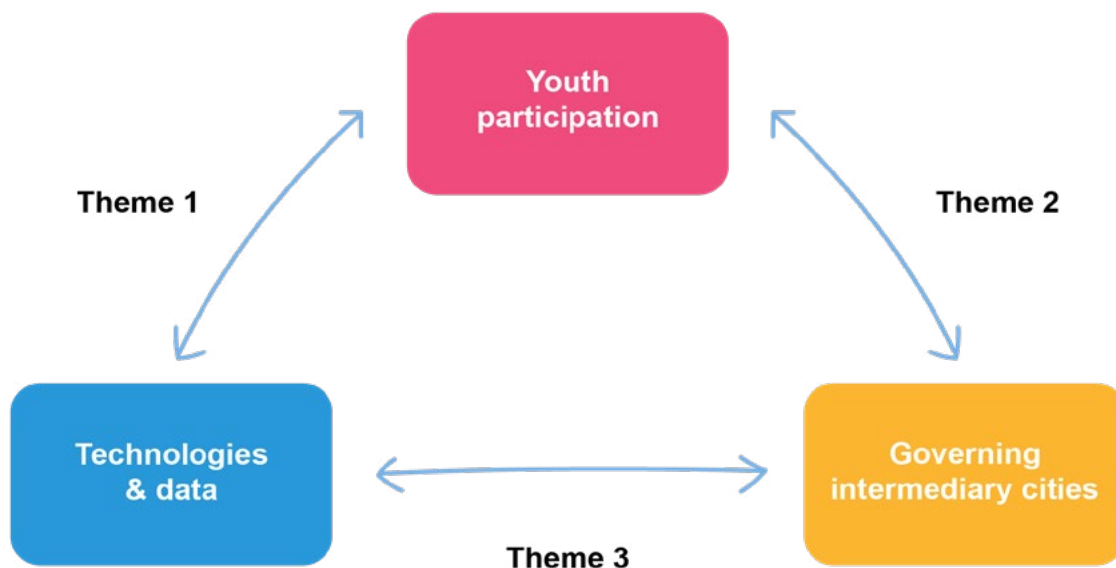
## Theme 3: Urban governance and technological innovation – understanding contexts

Digital innovations and data-driven interventions are changing urban governance across the globe. Smart cities, digitalisation, and more data-driven public policies have the potential to significantly improve public services and wellbeing in cities. At the same time, they pose a real issue to human rights. Despite this, their variegated real-life impacts on youth in intermediary cities in LMICs remain under-studied. Digitalised and datafied urban governance plays out differently in intermediary cities governed by authoritarian as opposed to democratic or politically stable regimes. Locally different social and cultural norms and competing types of knowledge interact with global technological trends in producing specific outcomes. There is thus a need to scrutinise technology-enabled urban governance and its interactions with youth by paying attention to dissimilar political, economic and cultural contexts.

### Key questions:

How does the digitalisation of urban governance vary across political contexts in intermediary cities in LMICs? How has urban youth across different socio-cultural and political contexts reacted to state-led technologies at city level? What are the impacts of the digital turn and datafication in urban governance on existing, non-technological forms of youth participation? Which potentials and challenges of technology-enabled urban governance are specific to intermediary cities in LMICs as opposed to high-income countries? How does technological knowledge and expertise interact with and reconfigure more popular forms of knowledge in intermediary cities?

### TYPCities: Key issues and themes for empirical enquiry



## Eligibility

We are inviting proposals from research consortia with a track record of academic excellence in technology, urban and youth studies, geography, anthropology, sociology, political science, and development studies.

Applicants should have proven experience in collaborative research partnerships, conducting, and supervising data collection in LMICs, publishing in high ranking academic outlets, grant management as well as research uptake to policy-makers and practitioners. Universities, think tanks, and research institutions fulfilling these criteria may partner with private sector entities including NGOs and social enterprises as part of their application.

We particularly welcome applications from researchers and organisations based in LMICs. All applications should include several leading roles based in LMICs with regard to research design, data collection, analysis and authorship. Applications from research institutions outside of LMICs must make proof of long-standing research experience in and established partnerships with researchers and organisations in LMICs. All applicants have to adhere to principles and best practices developed by the [Research Fairness Initiative](#) (RFI) in view of realising fair and transparent collaborative research and innovation. All applications should state how international partnerships are expected to work, with evidence of earlier collaborations, if possible.

## Key considerations

**Research design:** TYPCities seeks to cover a broad range of world regions. The program funds comparative analysis within the same city, across cities, as well as countries and continents. Research proposals that scrutinise the nexus between technology and youth participation in urban governance across different scales, political contexts and research sites are particularly encouraged. Our priority countries are Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, India (Rajasthan and Odisha), Indonesia, Morocco, Romania, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam. Applications considering intermediary cities in these countries are especially welcomed.

**Methods:** TYPCities invites research applications making use of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods, including spatial analysis and big data.

**Non-research activities:** Applicants have the possibility of including non-research activities in their proposals. These may include – but are not limited to – research uptake and dissemination to share evidence-based research findings among practitioners, activists and policymakers or pilot innovative interventions that promote technology-enabled youth participation in intermediary cities. They may also include participatory research involving urban youth and other stakeholders. Applied activities must be directly related to the proposed research and may not exceed 10 percent of the proposed budget.

Total funding available for this program is CHF 5 million (Swiss Francs). Applications for projects funded by this research call should be minimum CHF 400,000 and may not exceed CHF 1 million, including a max of 10 percent overhead.

## Program timetable

The TYPCities program will run from 2023 to 2026. Successful applicants will participate in several TYPCities program-wide activities, fostering mutual exchange, learning, and networking between funded research projects. We will convene a kick-off event at the beginning of the program (2023) and joint learning events in each subsequent program year (2024 to 2026). A scientific advisory and review panel will accompany the TYPCities program.

# Application process

Applications to the TYPCities program will undergo two phases.

## Phase 1: Submission of pre-proposals

Pre-proposals must be submitted to Fondation Botnar via the email address [typcities@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:typcities@fondationbotnar.org).

The deadline for submission of pre-proposals is 31 August 2022, 23:59 CET. Pre-proposals consist of a max. 8 page research plan (excluding references) consisting of:

- \* project summary (500 words)
- \* research objectives and questions
- \* contribution to the literature
- \* research design, methods and proposed research sites
- \* expected outputs and outcomes
- \* research partnerships and consortia information
- \* non-research activities (if applicable)
- \* names of main researchers involved
- \* total budget figure (without breakdown)

Pre-proposals must be annexed by short (max. 3 pages) CVs of main applicants and named researchers.

## Phase 2: Submission of full proposals

Full proposals must be submitted via our application portal. A link will be sent to shortlisted applications on 21 September 2022.

The deadline for submission of full proposals is 25 November 2022, 23:59 CET.

Full proposals consist of a max. 20 page research plan (excluding references) consisting of:

- \* project title with acronym
- \* project summary (500 words)
- \* research objective and questions
- \* literature review
- \* conceptual framework or hypotheses
- \* methodology and data collection strategy
- \* case study selection and research sites
- \* research ethics, adherence to RFI and feasibility concerns
- \* research uptake and applied activities (if applicable)
- \* communication and social media strategy
- \* research team, management and partnership
- \* project timeplan, milestones and GANTT chart
- \* project outputs and outcomes (publications, events etc.)
- \* detailed budget

Full proposals must be annexed by short (max. 3 pages) CVs of main applicants and named researchers as well as a short publication list of main researchers involved.

## Application timeline

Date	Stage
31 August 2022	Submission of pre-proposals
21 September 2022	Notification of shortlisted proposals
25 November 2022	Submission of full proposals
End-Dec to mid-Jan 2023	Feedback round with applicants
21 March 2023	Notification of selected research projects
Mid-2023	Program start

## Evaluation

We will host an international review panel for pre-proposal and full proposal applications. Applicants shortlisted for submission of a full proposal will be asked to consider feedback by review panel members in the elaboration of the full proposal. Pre- and full proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

Criteria	Pre-proposal	Full Proposal
Academic quality and originality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Role of LMICs researchers and institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Relevance for policy and practice and fit with our mission	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Feasibility and project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Budget and financial soundness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Contact and questions

All correspondence and questions related to this call should be addressed to Fondation Botnar at [typcities@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:typcities@fondationbotnar.org).

Two virtual information sessions will be held for researchers and consortia interested in applying for a TYPCities project. These sessions provide an opportunity to clarify questions and exchange with our program staff. The two events will be on:

Thursday, 11 August 2022

**Session 1:** 9.00 – 10.30 CET

**Session 2:** 16.00 – 17.30 CET

Please send an email to [typcities@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:typcities@fondationbotnar.org) to receive registration details.





**TYPCities**

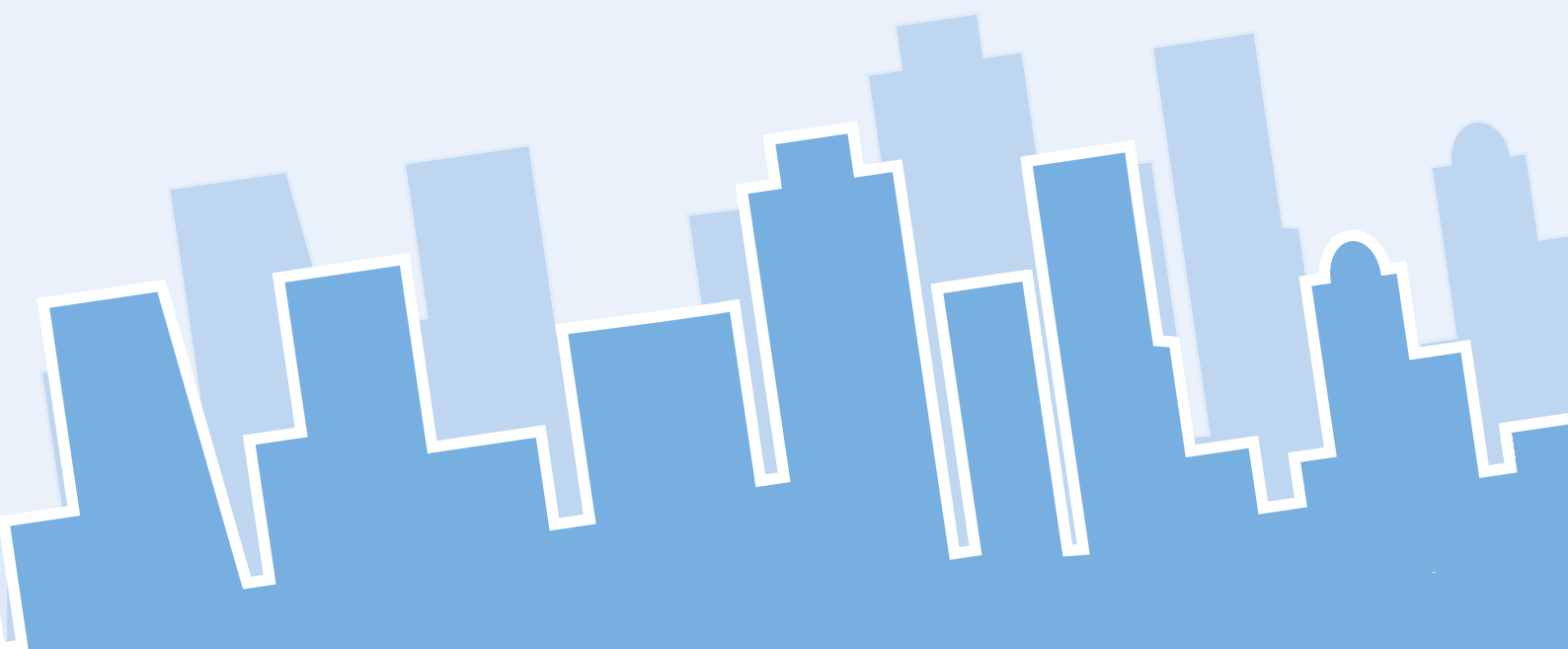


*f o n d a t i o n*  
**BOTNAR**

Fondation Botnar  
St. Alban-Vorstadt 56  
4052 Basel  
Switzerland

+41 61 201 04 74

info@fondationbotnar.org  
www.fondationbotnar.org



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