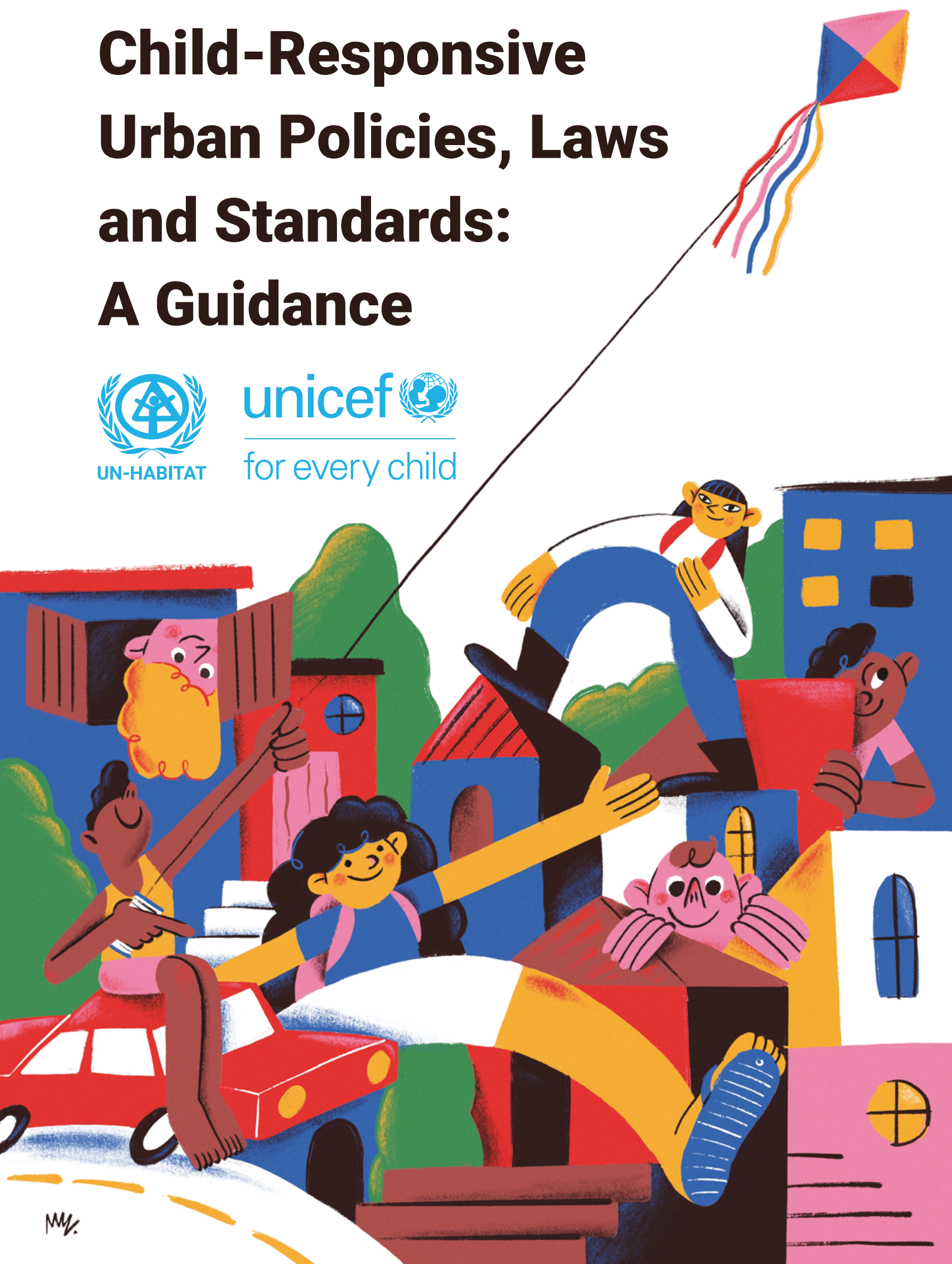# Child-Responsive Urban Policies, Laws and Standards: A Guidance

UN-HABITAT

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for every child

Child-Responsive Urban Policies, Laws and Standards: A Guidance

Disclaimer

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List Of Acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AU	African Union
DPT	Diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
EDC	Early development centre
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUP	National urban policy
NMT	Non-motorized transport
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNUP	Subnational urban policy
ToR	Terms of reference
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
USA	United States of America
USD	United States dollar
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

This guidance has been developed jointly by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It is a response to the challenge whereby legislative and policy instruments, as drivers of change in cities, do not adequately mainstream the rights of children in urban policies and legislation, which is a major hinderance in building sustainable and inclusive urban spaces. Out of the current two billion children in the world, more than half are between the ages of 10 and 18 years and can participate in decision-making processes. However, current urban laws, policies and practices do not empower children to make decisions about the primary issues that affect their lives (growing, learning and playing).

This guidance demonstrates that if children's issues are brought centre stage and if children are listened to, then the services designed to meet their needs will be more effective (and thus more efficient). It also provides key lessons learnt from the experiences of UN-Habitat and UNICEF, which, for instance, recommend that children should be legitimate participants in urban planning-related processes by being direct participants and not just observers of urban processes.

Regarding child-responsive standards, the guidance addresses different aspects. For example, in terms of housing, lawmakers need to consider housing security, quality and affordability as fundamental components for fulfilling children's right to a sustainable and dignified life. Regarding road safety, each country's legislation should make the safety of children a priority, with the implementation of such measures as low-speed zones, improved pedestrian crossings, safe bus stops and car-free neighbourhoods. Additionally, public spaces in cities should be easily accessible and free from physical hazards so that children can play safely. Moreover, the guidance contains examples of best practices from countries such as Australia, Nigeria and Serbia to show how national urban policies and legislative frameworks can be used to include and consider children and their needs.

As a way forward, stakeholders from national and local authorities should operationalize the recommendations provided in this document to achieve the implementation of child-oriented laws and policies.

Chapter I.

Introduction

350-500 million* of the Global slum population are children

estimated

A. Contextual background

There is global consensus that urbanization processes are inevitable, irreversible and inseparable from a country's growth and development. It is estimated that by 2030, almost 60 per cent of the world's children will live in urban areas,[1] many of them in slums. Of the global slum population, it is estimated that between 350-500 million slum dwellers are children,[2] who suffer directly and indirectly from multiple deprivations, experience more acute limitations to urban services, and have limited access to public infrastructure and amenities such as schools, health facilities, community centres and libraries. Children are also routinely exposed to urban violence which compromises their health, social and overall well-being, and affects their overall cognitive development. Some of these challenges are attributed to either the lack of or ineffective urban laws and policies to address the special needs and interests of children, including the right of every child to a standard of living that is adequate for their physical health and emotional well-being.[3] Thus, to shape urbanization for children, the interests and rights of children must be mainstreamed in legislation as well as in urban policies at national and subnational levels of governance.

Mainstreaming the rights of children in urban policies and legislation as well as in urban planning activities is the primary step to building more inclusive cities. A child-responsive approach to urban planning improves access to quality infrastructure, urban services and healthy living spaces for everyone. If planned and designed with children in mind, a city is more likely to have safer roads and improved air quality. Urban laws and policies that do not consider the needs of children can cause, or exacerbate, both structural and urban inequalities between regions and differentially urbanized geographic areas, and within countries and cities. Urban inequality is linked to inequality in outcomes, which compromises the realization of children's rights.

There is also a lack of disaggregated data on children (boys, girls and non-binary children), particularly those in urban areas, across income groups. This could be attributed to, among other things, the lack of opportunities for children to shape or influence policies and the lack of resources or investment in collecting child-focused data to advocate for their needs. Gaps in data collection make it difficult to track, monitor and evaluate budgets and policies, and to hold Governments accountable for their commitment to promote and protect children's rights.

There is a substantial recognition of children's rights, interests and welfare in normative instruments. For instance, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030),[4] through its Sustainable Development Goals, recognizes the vulnerability of children and emphasizes the need to invest in children's lives, survival and development. More specifically, Agenda 2030 demonstrates a commitment to provide children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities (Agenda 2030, para. 25).

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1 UNICEF (2018, November). "Advantage or Paradox? The challenge for children and young people of growing up urban". https://data.unicef.org/resources/urban-paradox-report/.

2 Urban policy. (n.d.). UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/urban#:~:text=More%20than%20half%20of%20the,health%20care%2C%20education%20and%20sanitation

3 United Nations (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf.

4 Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which culminated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 to end poverty, reduce inequality and build more peaceful, prosperous societies by 2030. The Goals are a call for action to create a world where no one and no place is left behind. See United Nations (2015). "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (A/RES/70/1). Available at: www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/2030_agenda_for_sustainable_development_web.pdf.

*Children playing in the street in a slum. Photo by Bennett Tobias.
Source: Unsplash*

It recognizes that children are critical agents of change and that the Sustainable Development Goals are a platform to channel children's infinite capacities for participatory activism into the creation of a better world for everyone (Agenda 2030, para. 51). Further, the Goals are a bold call for cities to consider the interests and welfare of groups that are in vulnerable situations, including children (Goal 11). For instance, Goal 11 recognizes that public and green spaces can foster intergenerational interactions and promote social cohesion by encouraging a sense of belonging and ownership among all inhabitants. Specifically, Goal 11, target 7 states that by 2030, Governments should be able to "provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities". In addition, the New Urban Agenda,[5] which complements the Sustainable Development Goals and has an exposition on the vision of Goal 11, calls on national and local governments to ensure age-responsive approaches at all stages of urban and territorial policy and planning process, to provide a safe and secure environment, effective and efficient systems and mechanisms for policy implementation, and basic services that are responsive to the needs and rights of children and young people. Also, paragraph 61 of the New Urban Agenda calls for age- and gender-responsive housing policies and approaches[6] and is a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future for everyone, including children. In terms of children's right to equal access to urban opportunities, the New Urban Agenda advocates for and promotes various initiatives for a safe, healthy, inclusive and secure environment in cities and human settlements, to improve road safety, and to include children in dialogues with local stakeholders, amongst others (New Urban Agenda,

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5 *The New Urban Agenda is a document encapsulating the shared vision for a better and more sustainable urban future. It was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016 and was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at the sixty-eighth plenary meeting of the seventy-first session on 23 December 2016. United Nations (2017). New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256). https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2019/05/nua-english.pdf.*

6 *New Urban Agenda, para. 61: "…girls and boys, young women and young men are key agents of change in creating a better future and, when empowered, they have great potential to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities. Ensuring more and better opportunities for their meaningful participation will be essential for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda".*

Child-Responsive Urban Policies, Laws and Standards: A Guidance

Mainstreaming the rights of children in urban policies and legislation as well as in urban planning activities is the primary step to building more inclusive cities.

paras. 34, 39, 42 and 113) (see paragraph B in Chapter II for more information). The New Urban Agenda is reinforced by the Habitat III Children's Charter, reflecting children's demand to be included in urban issues related to their well-being.[7]

The present document aims to fill a gap in urban development by equipping relevant actors (legislators, policymakers, national and local authorities, urban planners, academia, etc.) with the tools to ensure that urban policies, laws and standards are child-responsive, whereby their content, methodologies – including approaches to data collection, participatory engagement and public dissemination – prioritize the needs of children.

The document is structured as follows: Chapter I, the introduction, describes the contextual background, the purpose, value and scope of the tool, and it presents the child rights-based approach as a guiding conceptual framework. Chapter II has a discussion on the relevant normative standards and policies, laying the foundation for child-responsive participation in public affairs as a human rights entitlement. It features details of the legal obligations of national and local authorities in facilitating the participation of children in urban decision-making processes as envisaged by international and regional legal instruments, and in turn how children's participation should be implemented in urban contexts. Chapter III focuses on urban planning and social services and shows the interlinkages between them. Chapter IV has examples of child-responsive national and subnational urban policies and demonstrates how to mainstream children's rights and interests into legislation. There is also a discussion of best practices in child-responsive planning through a study of country-specific national urban policies. At the end, the document features a conclusion of the analysis and provides a way forward (operationalization) and recommendations for developing child-responsive urban policies, laws and standards.

B. Scope and methodology of the guidance

UN-Habitat and UNICEF recognize that child-oriented policies, laws and regulations must cater to the needs of children in urban areas as individuals and collectives. Social services, including social protection and its integration into urban laws and regulations for children, become important when children are looked at as an integral part of the household. In the contextual understanding, the guidance aims to be as holistic and inclusive as possible, and to be applicable to whole territories given that urban growth often extends into rural and hinterland areas. The Guidance emphasizes the possibility of involving those children who have the capacity to be engaged in urban decision-making processes to voice their opinions and for this aspect to be further mainstreamed into the legislative framework.

This guidance has been developed using a legal and policy desk review. That entailed a thorough literature review of existing country materials such as primary, secondary and subsidiary urban legislation, national and subnational urban policies, and secondary data (books, journals and online articles, among other sources). As a global guidance tool, the literature review was inclusive of cases from both the global North and South (e.g., Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas). The guidance benefited from inputs from experts and urban practitioners, including formal and informal peer-review processes. This guidance also underwent a validation process during the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum[8] (hosted in Katowice, Poland) in June 2022, when discussions and feedback centred on its content, focus groups, resource mobilization and practical piloting and implementation.

Student reading a book
© UNICEF/UN0613257/Dejongh

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8 *The World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization. It was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies.*

C. Linkages to other normative work

This guidance complements existing UN-Habitat and UNICEF tools, guidelines and frameworks that collectively aim to ensure the protection and participation of children in the urban context. Thus, for example, a thorough analysis of a series of UN-Habitat's normative tools developed between 2018 and 2020, and dedicated to the development and procedures for the enactment of national urban policies/subnational urban policies, was conducted. This included: the Feasibility Guide on National Urban Policy (2018); A Practical Guide on How to Formulate a National Urban Policy (2019); National Urban Policies Driving Public Space Led Urban Development: A Quick Thematic Guide for Mainstreaming Safe, Inclusive and Accessible Public Spaces into National Urban Policies (2020); A Guide on Subnational Urban Policy (2020), etc. In addition, this guidance leverages UN-Habitats' methodology in the development of public spaces under the Public Spaces for All (2015) publication as well as

analyses in Strategies and Guidance for Public Spaces for Children (unpublished). At the same time, laws can deliberately or inadvertently undermine the enjoyment of human rights by excluding and marginalizing certain groups. Therefore, this guidance draws insights from UN-Habitat's publication on Human Rights, the Rule of Law and the New Urban Agenda (2020), which identifies the elements of urban legal frameworks that undermine the enjoyment of human rights either through the substance of the law or through the overall manner in which the legal regime is structured. The guidance also leverages UNICEF's work in this area and special attention is given to: A Handbook on Child-Responsive Urban Planning – Shaping Urbanization for Children (2018), which defines 10 key urban planning principles on localizing children's rights. The above resources, and others cited in Chapter II, were central to the development of this guidance.

Children participating in a discussion.
Photo by Husniati Salma. Source: Unsplash

D. Child rights-based approach

This guidance is primarily informed by the human rights framework that focuses on the rights of children set forth in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other cross-cutting principles through the lens of a child rights-based approach. Such an approach is a conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed towards the respect, promotion and protection of the human rights of children in all settings, including urban contexts. It requires that duty-bearers respect, protect, promote and fulfil children's human rights and inform children, as rights-holders, of their rights and freedoms, while creating spaces for children to participate in decision-making actively and meaningfully in all matters affecting them.

All urban laws, policies, plans and strategies should be systematically anchored in fundamental rights and corresponding obligations of duty-bearers. This means that national, regional and local government officials (e.g., city managers), urban planners, policymakers, researchers, civil society and other relevant stakeholders must conceptualize, frame, implement and monitor their programmes, strategies and interventions from a child rights-based approach.

A longstanding debate on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in urban contexts revolves around how to grant children equal value and guarantee them the necessary protection and meaningful participation. The answer lies in the implementation of the six general principles which are explained below. **Together they form a new attitude towards children and, once operationalized, they provide ethical and ideological dimensions to the Convention:**

1. The best interests of the child:

This means that in all policy and planning processes the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration. This principle should be at the centre of the decision-making processes, obliging city authorities to consider how their policies, strategies, decisions, programmes and interventions promote the rights and interests of children. For example, in designing urban laws and policies relating to transport and road safety, the principle of best interest of the child requires that authorities consider how the rules will affect and impact children (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 3).

2. Children's participation:

This requires that the views of children are heard in all matters concerning them, which is key to inclusive and responsible planning that has intergenerational benefits. Planning processes that broadly and meaningfully engage children and young people are substantively more effective than planning processes that do not. This is because the outcomes attained through child-responsive planning gain legitimacy and buy-in, improving their implementation and success. As is clearly elaborated below, the participation of children is essential to capture their needs and views, thereby enabling the development of child-friendly cities (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 12).

3. Gender equity and equality:

This focuses on incorporating specific interests of boys and girls. For instance, under this principle, governance processes need to recognize and acknowledge the vulnerability of girls – an excluded group in many planning and decision-making processes. It also calls for the integration and mainstreaming of a gendered lens in all stages of policy design, project planning and programme implementation. A gender-sensitive lens enables urban policies and laws to consider the specific needs of girls by, for instance, always securing and enhancing their safety in public spaces, especially at night (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 2).

4. Disability inclusion:

This is a rights-based approach which requires the inclusion of vulnerable children such as those with disabilities, both in planning and in decision-making processes. The inclusion of the rights and needs of children with disabilities in the built environment and other spatial spaces is central to building cities for all (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 2).

5. Survival and development of the child:

This ensures that policies and planning processes and outcomes consider the developmental needs of children. Central to this principle is the need to ensure that urban policies and laws are responsive to emerging issues such as climate change, air pollution, environmental degradation, unsafe water and inadequate sanitation, housing, schools and learning centres, and other developmental features that could affect the lifespan, health and overall well-being of children (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 6).

6. Child-centred approach to urban social services provision:

Mainstreaming child-responsive social services in urban planning is fundamental to achieving inclusiveness. A cross-sectoral approach of basic service provision through good urban planning and design will help to tackle the diverse needs of children in the most effective way.

Chapter II.

Normative legal and policy guidance on child participation

International legal instruments serve as binding normative standards, thus creating obligations for United Nations Member States. Global policies are soft laws that provide benchmarks and minimum standards to actualize legal norms, facilitating and accelerating the implementation of human rights, sustainable development and environmental principles. This part outlines the legally binding normative framework for United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child signatory States.

A. Child participation: international and regional perspectives

The right of children to express their views, to be heard and for their views and needs to be taken into consideration – often referred to as child participation – is a fundamental right, not a privilege.[9] At the same time, the right to child participation qualifies as a core principle alongside others such as non-discrimination, the right to survival and development, and the best interests of the child as specified under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.[10] Pursuant to article 12 of the Convention, children and young people have the right to freely express their views in all matters affecting them and to have those views taken seriously in accordance with their age and maturity. By interpretation, article 12 enshrines two pivotal rights: the right to express a view and the right to have the view given due weight. While the former means that children have the right to express relevant perspectives and experiences to influence decision-making,[11] the latter affirms that, despite being children, their views should still influence policy and decision-making. "Age and maturity" should not restrict children's ability to express their views,[12] rather it should guide the determination of the weight and influence to be attached to the views and opinions expressed. Children's meaningful engagement in local and national decision-making is one of the most radical achievements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[13]

With respect to the African region, the only regional child-specific legal instrument is the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child[14] which is applicable and binding on African Union Member States that have ratified it. The Charter complements the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the African context. For instance, articles 4(2) and 7 of the Charter complement article 12 of the Convention in that they are explicit on the right of children to express their views, directly or through an impartial representative.[15] When contrasted with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Charter is generic with regards to freedom of expression, which can only be derived by way of interpretation, but it still advocates for children to have opportunities to communicate their viewpoints.[16] In addition, the African Union Agenda 2040 for Children emphasizes that "the views of African children matter" (aspiration 10) – advocating for the mainstreaming of child participation on the continent. Also, the East African Community Child Policy 2016 specifically supports the child participation principle (para. 3.6.4) by recognizing children's potential to contribute to decision-making processes and to associations in accordance with the child's age, disability and maturity. They have a right to be given the opportunity to seek, receive and share information in an age- and disability-appropriate manner and relative to their evolving capacities, as well as to express their opinions and be listened to, particularly in matters concerning them.[17]

9   Queensland Family and Child Commission (n.d.). "Model of Participation". www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Model%20of%20Particpation.pdf.

10   United Nations (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf.

11   United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009). "General Comment No. 12. The right of the child to be heard". www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/advanceversions/crc-c-gc-12.pdf.

12   Lundy, L. (2013). "Voice is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child". British Educational Research Journal, 33(6), pp. 927–942. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033.

13   European Union Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights (2006). "Commentary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union". https://sites.uclouvain.be/cridho/documents/Download.Rep/Network-CommentaryFinal.pdf.

14   Sheahan, F. (2010). "Advancing children's rights. A guide for civil society organisations on how to engage with the African Committee of Experts on the rights and welfare of the child" (second edition). Plan International, Save the Children Sweden. Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/4520.pdf/.

15   Organisation of African Unity (1990). African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36804-treaty-african_charter_on_rights_welfare_of_the_child.pdf.

16   Gose, M. (2002). "African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child". Community Law Centre. https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/childrens-rights/Publications/Other%20publications/The%20African%20Charter%20on%20the%20Rights%20and%20Welfare%20of%20the%20Child.pdf.

17   East African Community Child Policy (2016). https://ovcsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/FinalEACChildRightsPolicy2016.pdf.

Children protesting
© UNICEF/UN0547123/Elwyn-Jones

Article 12 of the UNCRC enshrines two pivotal rights: the right to express a view and the right to have the view given due weight.

Through a European regional lens, article 24(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (European Union Charter), which is binding on European Member States, provides for the right of children to express their views freely. Article 12 is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly articles 3, 9, 12 and 13,[18] and stresses that children "may express their views freely" implying that this should be done without constraint, pressure, influence or coercion.[19] In contrast, Latin America's regional instrument, the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San Jose), which is binding for most countries in that region, addresses the rights of the child (article 19). However, it simply states that children, as minors, are entitled to the necessary protective measures by their family, society and the government.[20] Thus, the document neither explicitly nor by means of interpretation outlines the right of children to express their views.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the European Union Charter, as well as Africa's Agenda for Children 2040 and East African Community Child Policy individually and collectively, albeit to varying degrees, impose an obligation on Governments and adults to listen to children and young people and to facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the family, schools, local communities, public services, institutions, government policy and judicial procedures. These instruments give Governments the discretion to seek out how to realize the participation of children and will be broadly covered in Chapter II paragraph C of this document.

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18 European Union (2007). European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 24. Fra.Europa.Eu. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/24-rights-child.

19 European Union Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights (2006). Commentary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Available at: https://sites.uclouvain.be/cridho/documents/Download.Rep/NetworkCommentaryFinal.pdf.

20 Organization of American States (1969). American Convention on Human Rights, "Pact of San Jose", Costa Rica. www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36510.html.

Girls jumping on a skipping rope
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B. Child participation in the urban context

In the urban planning sphere, paragraph 42 of the New Urban Agenda promotes opportunities for dialogue, including age- and gender-responsive approaches with the potential for contributions from, among others, children. This encourages the consideration of children's views and opinions[21] which, in turn, fosters the implementation of child-responsive urban planning initiatives. This position is reinforced by regional instruments such as the 2015 Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (European Participation Charter)[22] produced by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe forming a part of the Council of

Europe. The revised European Participation Charter declares that children and young people have the right to participate and influence urban policies through public consultations when outcomes may affect them. Local and regional authorities are required to involve and consult children and young people, by pursuing mutual dialogue and real solidarity between the generations. The European Participation Charter, among other things, highlights the different ways of involving young people, the importance of structured participation, the need to support young people through training and access to information using different outlets such as the media.[23]

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21 New Urban Agenda, para. 42.

22 Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (2015). Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. Council of Europe. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/168071b4d6.

23 Ibid.

Boy leading a task in a working group.
Photo by Zainul Yasni. Source: Unsplash

C. Implementing child participation in practice

The international instruments discussed above define the scope of children's participation to various degrees. Broadly speaking, children's participation is an "ongoing process, which includes information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults, based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are considered and shape the outcome of such processes".[24] **In urban planning and development projects, the involvement and participation of children and adolescents should be seen as:**

1 *The voluntary involvement of young people and their direct participation in decision-making.*

2 *The sensitization of young people to increase their receptivity and ability to respond to urban development projects.*

3 *An active process by young people to initiate and assert their autonomy in urban planning-related activities.*

4 *The fostering of a dialogue between young people and the project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to obtain information on the local context and on social impacts.*

5 *The voluntary involvement of young people in self-determined change.*

6 *Involvement in young people's lives, in their development and environment.[25]*

24 *United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009). General Comment No. 12. The right of the child to be heard. www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/advanceversions/crc-c-gc-12.pdf.*

25 *Abebe, T. and Kjørholt, A. T. (2010). A literature review linking young people's participation and sustainable development in an urbanising world. Norwegian Centre for Child Research.*

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Nevertheless, for child participation to be qualitative, meaningful, effective and ethical (as promoted by UNICEF), **the Committee on the Rights of the Child developed nine principles that guide the most comprehensive approach:**

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1 *Children must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities (principle of transparency and informativity).*

2 *Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage (principle of voluntariness).*

3 *Adults should acknowledge, respect and support children's ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments (principle of respect).*

4 *Children should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives (principle of relevance).*

5 *Environments and working methods should consider and reflect children's evolving capacities and interests, thus promoting the child-friendliness principle.*

6 *Participation opportunities should include marginalized children of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds (principle of inclusiveness).*

7 *Children should be trained and mentored to facilitate participation, so they can serve as trainers and facilitators (principle of being supported by training).*

8 *As the expression of views may involve risks, children should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help (safe and sensitivity of risk principle).*

9 *The principle of accountability underscores that children should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and they should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.*

To give effect to child participation, the guidance outlines three broad forms of child participation: consultative, collaborative and child-led.[26] Consultative participation is defined as a process in which adults seek children's views to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experience. It is characterized as adult-initiated, adult-led and managed, with no avenues for children to control outcomes. Thus, it recognizes that children have expertise and perspectives, but decision-making processes are not transferred to them. Consultations enable children to express views and can take the following forms: online surveys, peer research, consultative processes through the school system, children focus groups, contributions to nationally organized events, meetings, conferences, and multi-level consultation involving groups of local children, etc.[27]

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26 *Lansdown, G. (2011). Every Child's Right to be Heard. A Resource Guide on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No.12. Save the Children United Kingdom. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/5259.pdf/.*

27 *Ibid.*

Children collaborating on a task
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In urban planning and governance, participatory activities can take the form of periodic consultations with children on pressing issues, the distribution of questionnaires to understand the opinions of children (various ages, interests, etc.), the creation of children's councils based on schools or foundations to hold meetings and consultation sessions where children can express ideas about activities and projects, etc. In this regard, at least three German cities (Cologne, Regensburg and Weil am Rhein) have created guidelines for children's participation rights in drafting municipal plans and laws. The Regensburg 2015 Resolution and Cologne 2018 Main Statute provide for the establishment of participatory forums for children. The Weil am Rhein Mission Statement of 2016 calls for the consideration of children in decision-making,[28] which is implemented through a consultation process called "Session in the City". Its aim is to resolve urban planning issues through the establishment of flexible and mobile meeting spaces and the use of information boxes in open areas such as parks to enable participatory engagement. In Auckland, New Zealand, in 2013, the "I am Auckland – The Children and Young People's Strategic Action Plan" was developed jointly by the Auckland Council and the Youth Advisory Panel and built on preliminary consultations with 6,000 children and young people. In Belize, under the Sustainable and Child-Friendly Municipalities initiative, each of the municipalities involved created a child advisory board which provided a consultative space for children to discuss municipal plans. In Nepal, the 2011 National Strategy on Child Friendly Local Governance was approved and *bak bhela* (child) consultations were introduced. During such consultations, children were divided into three groups (girls aged 12 to 18 years; boys aged 12 to 18 years; and a mixed group of children aged 8 to 11 years) and they participated in drawing activities, conducted risk mapping to identify places in their city where they felt safe or unsafe and applied a visioning tool to depict their vision of the future city.[29]

28 *Kinderfreundliche Kommunen (2019). Good Practice in Child Friendly Cities. Safer-print GbR. www.kinderfreundliche-kommunen.de/fileadmin/kfkfiles/DOKUMENTE/1._KFK_Verein/Bilanzbroschuere-2019-ENG_FINAL.pdf.*

29 *UNICEF (2017). Child Participation in Local Governance – UNICEF Country Office Case Study. www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/Child-Participation-in-Local-Governance-UNICEF-Country-Office-Case-Studies.pdf.*

The guidance outlines three broad forms of child participation: consultative, collaborative and child-led

Collaborative participation provides a greater degree of shared decision-making between adults and children and is characterized as adult-initiated, empowering children to influence or challenge both processes and outcomes and increasing levels of self-directed action by children over time. It can take such forms as: the identification of relevant questions by children, opportunities to participate in developing the basis (methodology) of any task, enabling, encouraging and supporting children to take leading roles (e.g., as researchers) and the direct involvement of children in discussions preceding or summarizing any task.

In participatory urban planning processes, children may be engaged as designers to support community development with further translation into professional and technical plans by designers and architects, and organization of drawing competitions to create prototypes of the designated open spaces, etc. For example, the 2016 Algermissen's (Germany) Mission Statement calls for the engagement of children through civic participation in the development of the communities via information sharing through booklets and the launching of participation projects.

Such efforts to involve children aim to enhance their psychosocial growth as contributing members of their community and the formation of an essential part of their identity. Based on such initiatives, children collaborate to discuss topics of concern and vote on them by using an e-participation tool as well as working jointly with the city administration to design a street workout park.[30] In Ghent, Belgium, the city mainstreams child-friendly issues into urban planning at the local level in its vision text and action plan "Ghent: A Child and Youth-Friendly City", which outlines the social engagement with city residents, including children. In Vienna, Austria, the Children and Youth Strategy 2020 – 2025 stresses the need for child participation during urban planning processes in the form of collaboration sessions (e.g., joint designing of educational and residential buildings, participation as jury members in competitions for developers, etc.) to ensure the child and youth-friendliness of the buildings and to consider child and young people's work as an integral part of the urban infrastructure, particularly in urban development areas.[31]

30 Kinderfreundliche Kommunen (2019). Good Practice in Child Friendly Cities. Safer-print GbR. www.kinderfreundliche-kommunen.de/fileadmin/kfkfiles/DOKUMENTE/1._KFK_Verein/Bilanzbroschuere-2019-ENG_FINAL.pdf.

31 Vienna City Administration (2020). The Vienna Children and Youth Strategy 2020 – 2025. https://werkstadt.junges.wien.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2020/09/The-Vienna-Children-and-Youth-Strategy.pdf.

Girl performing her academic activity in a class
© UNICEF/UNI246299/

The Peñalolén Municipality, Chile, in its 2022 Ordinance on Citizen Participation, Civility and Co-responsibility, also encourages the participation of children and young people by establishing a Municipal Advisory Council of Children and Youth composed of 25 children between the ages of 10 and 17. They are appointed by human rights advocacy groups, based on the representation of all districts of the municipality. The council, in collaboration with the Technical Committee for the Participation of Children and Youth and the Municipal Planning Secretariat, has the power to consider municipal policy on issues of children and young people in, for example, the design of public spaces.[32]

The third type of participation is child-led. This is characterized by children initiating and leading activities to defend their interests. Here, the issues of concern are identified by children themselves and they control the process while adults serve as facilitators, resource providers, technical assistants and child protection workers to enable children rather than leaders to pursue their own objectives. This kind of participation means putting children at the heart of urban planning, for example by organizing and moderating discussions, launching and managing school clubs, publishing newspapers, and leading awareness-raising sessions and after-school events on urban development issues, etc.

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32 *Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (2022). Decreto 31 de 2022, Agrega Título V a la Ordenanza de Participación ciudadana, civismo y corresponsabilidad de la comuna de Peñalolén: www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1181082.*

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Among the practical examples of child-led participation, the actions of young female ambassadors from Hanoi, Vietnam, stand out. Young activists created the "cities for girls = cities for all" initiative aimed at providing safety for girls in cities. With the support of Plan International, the child-initiated "Safer Cities for Girls" project was presented during the 2018 World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur.[33] UN-Habitat, in its Global Youth-led Development series, found through its analysis of urban projects that were supported by UN-Habitat from 2009 to 2012, that young people can, if supported properly, take leadership roles in their community's development and planning.[34]

In Kampala, Uganda, another child-led initiative was supported by Plan International as part of the Safer Cities for Girls project. Young advocates who run a local girl's club organized safety walks, enabling girls to identify unsafe areas in the slums that need development. After analysing the feedback, the activists initiated consultations with the local government, which resulted in the installation of streetlights and improved pavements in the communities.[35] The above initiatives were not only child-initiated but were also girl-led, which is an approach that shows how to reinforce gender equity. As the World Bank notes, issues such as access to basic services, health, sanitation and hygiene, climate resilience, security of tenure, gender inequity and mobility in cities, and safety and freedom from violence disproportionately affect girls.[36] In the built environment, the rights of girls should be promoted using an age-gender lens.

Despite the clear separation of the three different forms of child participation, some initiatives involve shifting between different levels of participation, which facilitates the exchange of roles and knowledge. Thus, the participation of children in urban projects through consultations or child-led initiatives brings out different perspectives and contributes to the exchange of child-specific experiences. It enhances civic capacity, allows adults to gain a better understanding of young people and increases their standing. Participating in planning processes provides children with educational, entertainment, and networking benefits and helps them feel more connected to their community and environment.[37] Local authorities gain a better understanding of children's rights and learn to involve them in decision-making and urban planning, while also creating opportunities for collaboration. Meaningful engagement of young people and marginalized communities in the development of the national urban policy for Bolivia was valuable not only to themselves but to the policy and urban design as a whole.[38] Since cities are usually adult-oriented, adults lack an understanding of young people's needs which coupled with other barriers, hinders youth participation in urban development. Thus, the reservations about young people's participation stem from societal biases and must be considered when engaging them in urban development.[39] The child participation mechanism should be institutionalised in the urban governance system to regularly involve children's views and needs in urban planning and decision-making. Therefore, the legal imperative is to allow and create the opportunity to be heard and to have an impact on issues that concern children. This will establish civic engagement mechanisms, leading to improved community well-being and opportunities for advocacy, leadership training, and active participation in local governance.[40]

33 Plan International (2018). Girls Hold the Solution for Safety in Cities. Plan-International.Org. Available at: https://plan-international.org/blog/2018/03/girls-hold-solutions-safety-cities.

34 Global Youth-led Development Series (seven reports, 2012-2015).

35 Hawkes, L. (2018, May 15). "Making cities safer for girls in Kenya and Uganda". Plan-Uk.Org. Available at: https://plan-uk.org/blogs/making-cities-safer-for-girls-in-kenya-and-uganda.

36 World Bank (2020). Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning Design. World Bank. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/363451579616767708/pdf/Handbook-for-Gender-Inclusive-Urban-Planning-and-Design.pdf.

37 Abebe, T. and Kjørholt, A. T. (2010). A literature review linking young people's participation and sustainable development in an urbanising world. Norwegian Centre for Child Research.

38 Increasing Social Inclusion Through National Urban Policy (La Paz, Bolivia) (2019).

39 Frank. (2006). The Potential of Youth Participation in Planning. Journal of Planning Literature, vol. 20, No. 4. www.petkovstudio.com/bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/0885412205286016.pdf.

40 UNICEF (2020). Engaged and Heard! UNICEF Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement. www.unicef.org/media/73296/file/ADAP-Guidelines-for-Participation.pdf.
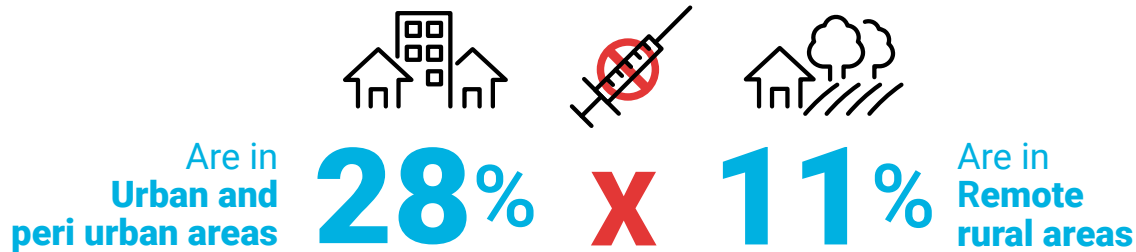
Chapter III.

Urban planning and social services delivery: a child-centered approach

Number of **zero dose children**

*(children who have had **no vaccination**):*

Are in
Urban and
peri urban areas **28**% **x** **11**% **Are in**
Remote
rural areas

For children to flourish in urban settings, they need access to basic services and a safe environment to pursue their daily activities.[41] This chapter focuses on the delivery of social services, an important component that has a significant effect on children since it promotes both their health and well-being and improves their living standards, their quality of life and education. Specifically, the chapter has an analysis of the social services component through the lens of both UNICEF and UN-Habitat's work and will show the interlinkages between social services and urban planning. The chapter also contains examples of policies, legislative acts and institutional frameworks that promote child-centred approaches in social services delivery and urban planning.

The wealth of cities – their infrastructure, and their greater availability of goods, services, resources and functioning commodity markets – should provide the opportunity to achieve results for children at scale. There is a general notion that higher incomes, better infrastructure and proximity to services grant urban dwellers better lives. However, not all children in urban areas benefit equally from the urban advantage. For instance, of the total number of zero dose children (children who have had no vaccination) 28% are in urban and peri urban areas as compared to 11 % in remote rural areas.

In poor urban areas, children are at times affected by inadequate access to health care, educational opportunities, child protection services, food, water supply, sanitation and waste management, housing, and transport. Basic infrastructure and public services often fail to keep pace with rapid population growth. In lower-income countries, or countries experiencing prolonged urban crises, mass exclusion from public services is the norm. Marginalization in cities is also prevalent in high-income countries, but to a lesser extent and typically for specific populations such as refugees, migrants and certain ethnic groups. In many countries, the slow response of the public sector to rapid urbanization has left the private and informal sectors to fill the gap, providing health, education, housing and water at high costs, sometimes with critical issues in adequacy and quality.

Further, populations in slums and informal settlements are left out while planning for delivery of services if they are not included in the official database. In some countries, governments actively discourage delivery of services in slums to prevent migration from rural areas into the cities. However, these populations use public services, where available or accessible, increasing the burden on existing services. In addition, the quality of urban services accessed by marginalized and disadvantaged people is often poor.

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41 *UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and Pacific (2013). "South-South Cooperation for Child Rights Working Paper 4. Urban settings as an opportunity for realizing all child rights". www.ids. ac.uk/download.php?file=files/dmfile/Unicef_urban.pdf.*

Kid drawing on the chalkboard
© UNICEF/UN061099/Knowles-Coursin

Social services being represented by, among others, health, nutrition, education, child protection, water, sanitation, hygiene, energy for social service infrastructure,[42] etc. are directly related to the availability of health and educational facilities, the location of markets in and around designated areas, the availability of facilities that can ensure the safety of children, including in the most vulnerable in urban areas, as well as the establishment of facilities through effective spatial planning that can ensure access to quality water, sanitation and hygiene services. A broader societal planning perspective to ensure coordinated public services (schools, social care, etc) is needed to take the needs and concerns of children into account).[43] This is where social services and urban planning connect as interrelated pillars.

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42 UNICEF (2022). Technical Strategic Note on UNICEF's Work for Children in Urban Settings (second edition).

43 Hanssen. G.S. (2019). The Social Sustainable City: How to Involve Children in Designing and Planning for Urban Childhoods? www.researchgate.net/publication/330827859_The_Social_Sustainable_City_How_to_Involve_Children_in_Designing_and_Planning_for_Urban_Childhoods.

Boy sitting on the floor and eating some food
© UNICEF/UN0517564/Pinto Amaral

To closer interlink social services and urban planning, in November 2022 UNICEF developed a Strategic Note on its Work for Children in Urban Settings, in which it specifies six priority areas, among them access to basic services (4) and urban planning (5), as the outcomes of UNICEF's work for children in urban settings. Under access to basic services, the components include health, public health emergencies, nutrition, early childhood development, education, child protection, water, sanitation, hygiene and social protection.

Another example of the integration of child-oriented social services with urban development is the 2016 Child-Centred Urban Resilience Framework developed with funding support from the Australian and Swedish Governments together with Plan International and

Arup. The document describes four strategic areas in which 12 interventions are defined, ranging from strengthening basic services for children to ensuring infrastructure is child sensitive.[44] The document directly encompasses the wide coverage of the social services concept and its direct intervention into and co-existence with urban planning perspectives. A practical example of this is the work done in the Bahamas by the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development. In Kenya, the responsibilities of the Department of Gender, Youth and Social Services of the Nyeri County government include, among others, all matters relating to gender, disability, children and other specific groups with a view to tackling social welfare, firefighting and disaster management as well as establishing libraries, county parks and recreation facilities.[45] Sweden

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44 Plan International, Arup, Government of Australia and Government of Sweden (2002). Child-Centred Urban Resilience Framework. www.preventionweb.net/files/50807_ccurfguidanceforweb.pdf.

45 Department of Gender, Youth and Social Services – County Government of Nyeri. (n.d.). www.nyeri.go.ke/department-of-gender-youth-and-social-services/

Children collecting water
© UNICEF/UN0208005/Dejongh

provides an example of how legislation can be used as a tool to promote child-centered approaches in social services and urban planning. The 2001 Social Service Act [46] stipulated that the social services administration should participate in the planning, which could ensure that the needs of specific groups are accounted for in the process.[47] Here the emphasis is on the need to consider housing capacities for different populations groups, including children.

Generally, the social services appear to have little influence in defining the planning agenda, and there is minimal focus on children as a vulnerable group which means there is room for further research and discussions. Steps taken by UNICEF and UN-Habitat, including this guidance, set the importance of considering child-responsive social services in urban policies and planning. In combination with the best practice examples provided from legal and institutional frameworks, it is evident how child-responsive urban development is linked to children's access to social services in the urban environment. While the development of tomorrow's sustainable city must be well planned, offer services, involve the community, and include well-linked whole systems,[48] development of a child-oriented city should include all of the above with a focus on specific children's needs and priorities such as healthcare, education, nutrition support, early childhood development and education, justice and family support[49] since neighbourhood environments can have significant

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46 *It was repealed by the Social Services Act (2011:328)*

47 *Berglund-Snodgrass, L. and others (2005). Organizing cross-sectoral housing provision planning: settings, problems and knowledge. https://doi.org/10.1 080/09654313.2020.1792416.*

48 *Chai-Lee Goi (2017). The impact of technological innovation on building a sustainable city, DOI 10.1186/s40887-017-0014-9.*

49 *UNICEF (16 March, 2020). CFCI Framework. Child Friendly Cities Initiative. https://childfriendlycities.org/cfci-framework/.*

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Boy swinging on a self-made swing
© UNICEF/UN0516629/Panjwani

and enduring impacts on children's physical, psychological and social health. They can promote or hinder physical activity, active travel and healthy eating; provide opportunities for social interaction, cognitive development, rest and relaxation, which all affect health.[50] An unsustainable built environment constrains children's physical access to urban services. This can be due to unequal distribution of the built environment, ineffective planning and a lack of quality in design and construction. Thus, this confirms the need for the synergy of social services and urban planning with a child-centred approach to tackle the existing challenges.

50 Egli, V. and others. Understanding children's perceptions of, and priorities for, healthy neighbourhoods in Aotearoa New Zealand: study protocol for a cross-sectional study. BMJ Open 2021;11:e047368. doi:10.1136/ bmjop-en-2020-04736.

Chapter IV.
Mainstreaming children into national and subnational urban policies through legislation

Group of children walking down the street
© UNICEF/UNI308944/Ijazah

Large-scale urbanization caused by rural-urban migration and natural growth (births minus deaths) in recent decades has increased the need for urbanization to be regulated so that haphazard and unregulated urban development does not damage natural systems or contribute to sprawling development. In this way, to regulate land use, transport and housing in cities and to choose the best solution based on specified goals, Governments in many countries have taken the initiative to develop policies and strategies to coordinate and manage the process of urbanization in their respective countries. Such initiatives merged into the concept of a national urban policy, which commonly refers to a coherent set of decisions through a deliberate, government-led process, rallying and coordinating diverse actors towards a common vision and goal to promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term[51] States name national urban policies differently; for example "national urban policy", "national urbanization policy", "national urban strategy", or "national urban development strategy", or the policy may be implicit by drawing on elements of a national urban policy. A more clearly formulated title could be expected to imply more coherence of different urban policies undertaken at the national level, while policies where the term national urban policy is omitted from the title indicate that countries do not have any evidence of such a policy in their urban policy landscape.[52]

A subnational urban policy, on the other hand, is a participatory instrument for territorial development, multilevel governance and decentralization, where collaboration between the Government and local society members in the subnational context takes place to implement the policies, strategies and actions proposed at the subnational level according to the urban realities and challenges of the territory. They are instruments for good urban governance and management in both a top-down and bottom-up approach.[53]

Although there are differences in the scale at which national urban policies and subnational urban policies are applied, both policy instruments are meant to be inclusive, implementable and participatory.[54] While the national scale policies are meant to be guided by five principles – participation, inclusion, affordability, sustainability and implementability[55] – a subnational urban policy is characterized by decentralization, subsidiarity, horizontal and vertical linkages, sustainability, territorial cohesion and orientation to action and being centred on people.[56]

51 OECD/UN-Habitat/United Nations Office for Project Services (2021), Global State of National Urban Policy 2021: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Delivering Climate Action, Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/global-state-of-national-urban-policy-2021.

52 OECD (2017). National Urban Policy in OECD Countries. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264271906-en.

53 UN-Habitat (2020). Sub-national Urban Policy: A Guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/02/snup-guide_revised_230220211.pdf.

54 United Nations (2017). New Urban Agenda, para. 86. Available at: https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf.

55 UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.

56 UN-Habitat (2020). Sub-national Urban Policy: A guide. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/02/snup-guide_revised_230220211.pdf.

Table 1: Guiding principles

National urban policy	Subnational urban policy
Affordability	Decentralization
Sustainability	Subsidiarity
Implementability	Horizontal and vertical linkages
	Sustainability
Inclusion	Territorial cohesion
Participation	Orientation to action and being centred on people

Both subnational urban policy and national urban policy have cross-cutting themes on participation, capacity development and acupuncture[57] or/quick-win projects throughout the policy cycle, while multilevel governance is an additional theme in subnational urban policy.

Table 2: Cross-cutting pillars

National urban policy	Subnational urban policy
Participation	Participation
Capacity development	Capacity-building
Acupuncture projects[58]	Projects
	Multilevel governance

Both national and subnational urban policies are undertaken through a five-phase cycle of feasibility, diagnostic, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To realize child-responsive urban policies, children must be incorporated into the policy development cycles, which include all the national and subnational phases, entry points and cross-cutting pillars.
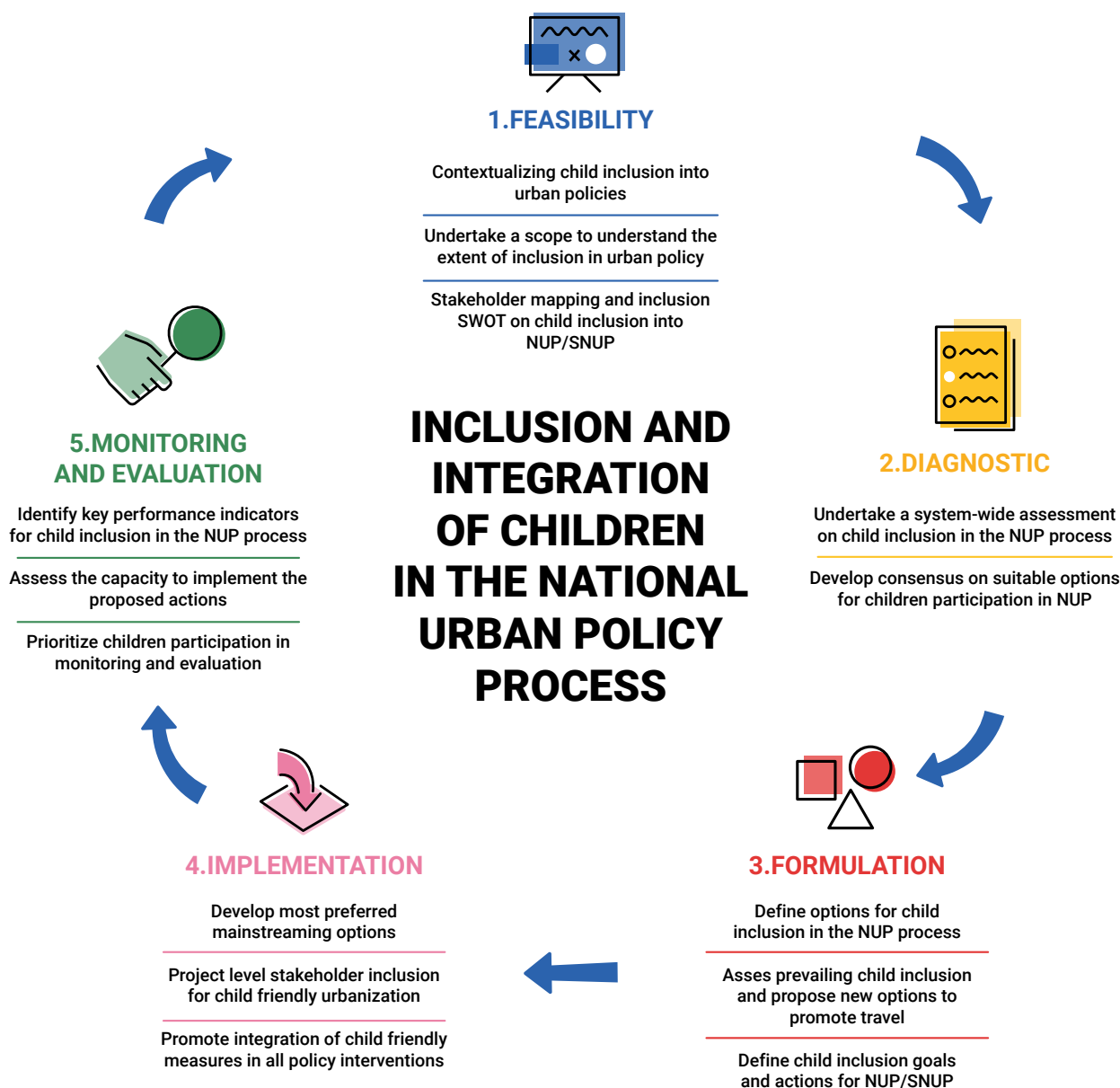
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57 Acupuncture projects are projects that utilize entry points that have a rippling impact upstream and downstream, throughout dynamic and interrelated economic, social or environmental systems.

58 UN-Habitat (2018). National Urban Policy − Feasibility Guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/nup-feasibility-note.pdf; UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.

Figure I

National urban policy process[59]
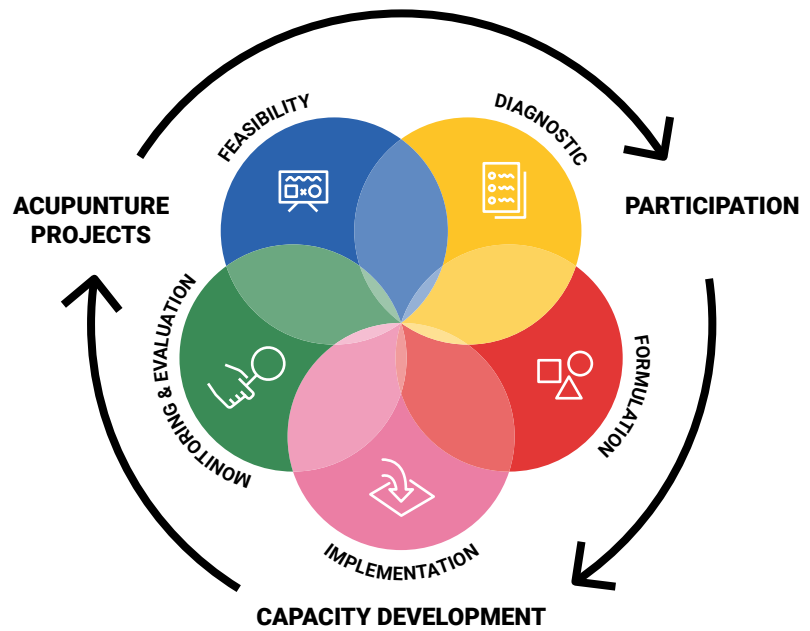
Figure II

Subnational urban policy *(SUP)* process[60]
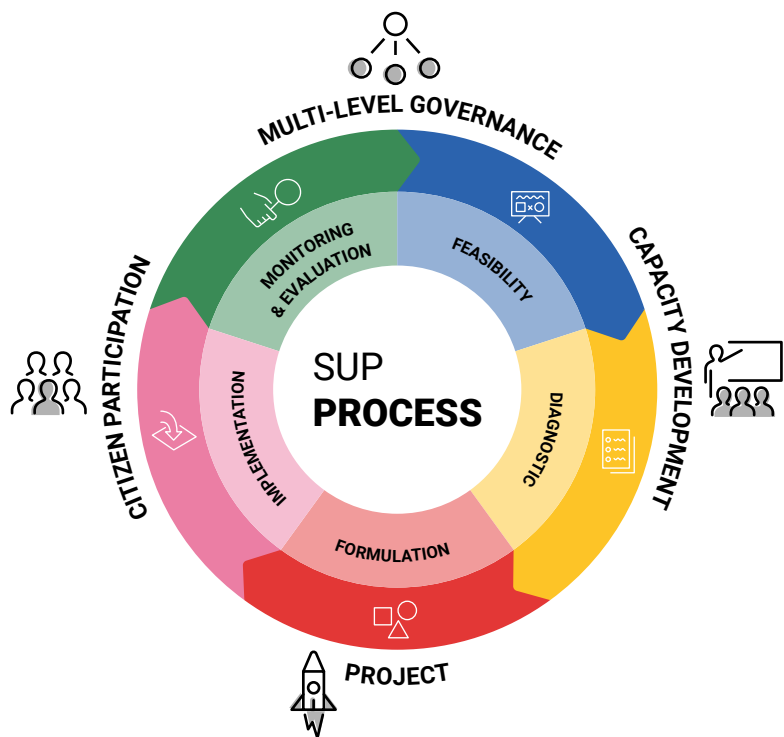
This guidance contains an analysis of how children can be integrated into these development processes or cycles as well as the operationalization process of national and subnational urban policy provisions by drawing from different countries' legislation.

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59 UN-Habitat (2016). National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/NUP%20 Guiding%20Framework.pdf.

60 UN-Habitat (2020). Sub-National Urban Policy: A Guide. Available at: https:// unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/02/snup-guide_revised_230220211.pdf.
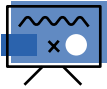
A. Mainstreaming children into the urban policy process

As outlined in the introduction, both national and subnational urban policy developments have five phases: feasibility, diagnosis, formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These phases are interlinked and involve a cyclical process. The process can be self-correcting if systematic reviews are undertaken at any phase to detect and correct any anomaly in current or previous phases. To mainstream children into both national and subnational urban policies, a set of actions has been outlined for each phase, and actors in the development process can select the most relevant considerations to check against each phase. Recommended actions can be adapted to fit each urban policy at any jurisdiction.

Figure III | Mainstreaming children into the national urban policy process

1.FEASIBILITY

Contextualizing child inclusion into urban policies

Undertake a scope to understand the extent of inclusion in urban policy

Stakeholder mapping and inclusion SWOT on child inclusion into NUP/SNUP

2.DIAGNOSTIC

Undertake a system-wide assessment on child inclusion in the NUP process

Develop consensus on suitable options for children participation in NUP

3.FORMULATION

Define options for child inclusion in the NUP process

Asses prevailing child inclusion and propose new options to promote travel

Define child inclusion goals and actions for NUP/SNUP

4.IMPLEMENTATION

Develop most preferred mainstreaming options

Project level stakeholder inclusion for child friendly urbanization

Promote integration of child friendly measures in all policy interventions

5.MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Identify key performance indicators for child inclusion in the NUP process

Assess the capacity to implement the proposed actions

Prioritize children participation in monitoring and evaluation

INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN IN THE NATIONAL URBAN POLICY PROCESS

1. Feasibility phase

The feasibility phase creates a case for a policy by assessing the existing legal, policy and institutional frameworks as well as stakeholder capacity and interactions in policy formulation and implementation. In the case of children, a feasibility assessment will help to coalesce political will as well as the mapping of stakeholders who are involved in all aspects of realizing child-friendly urban areas and their respective roles in the national urban policy process. This sets a basis for participation throughout the process.

Actions

1 *Embrace a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach while establishing partnerships with stakeholders, using a stakeholder mapping approach that identifies and recognizes the roles and synergistic contributions of stakeholders to realize child-responsive cities.*

2 *Identify a core team to drive the mainstreaming of inclusion of children and their concerns in all national urban policy phases. This team should be able to champion child-responsiveness throughout the policy cycle.*

3 *Map and analyse relevant parts of a country's or city's institutional and governance landscape (government and non-government actors) and identify potential mainstreaming champions.*

4 *Establish a framework to appraise the status of urban "child-responsiveness" in the planning jurisdiction under consideration.*

5 *Document the prevailing conditions of "child-responsiveness" in the local context with a summary of issues (SWOT analysis – strength, weakness, opportunity and threat – gaps and priority areas) using relevant national urban policy feasibility guiding documents.[61]*

6 *Ensure effective participation and give a voice to all interest groups, including children and their caregivers, by developing decentralized participatory platforms to ensure decision-making is informed by the views of residents, business owners and community organizations.*

7 *Design public spaces in a participatory manner, incorporating feedback from children, marginalized and disadvantaged groups.*

Outputs

+ *A comprehensive stakeholder map.*

+ *Terms of reference for the child-inclusion core team.*

+ *Core team and a list of stakeholders, their current role and potential roles they could play in championing the mainstreaming of children in the national urban policy process.*

+ *A feasibility report with practical toolboxes or frameworks to assess prevailing child-responsiveness conditions, legal and institutional frameworks.*

+ *Establishing agreed goals and objectives on mainstreaming children and child issues into national and subnational urban policy.*

+ *A participatory platform to ensure decision-making is informed by the views of residents, business owners and community organizations.*

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61 *UN-Habitat (2018). National Urban Policy – Feasibility Guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/nup-feasibility-note.pdf; UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.*
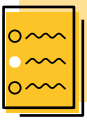
2. Diagnostic phase

In the diagnostic phase, relevant background data and information on urban policy decisions are gathered, organized and analysed for informed decision-making. For children, this phase requires that data on meaningful child inclusion is collected, collated and analysed to ensure decision-making is pragmatic and evidence-based. The information resulting from this phase facilitates the identification of options for making urban areas child-responsive at the national and subnational levels.

Actions

1 *Formulate a context-specific definition of child-responsive urban policy at the requisite planning level, with an indication of local considerations that are relevant to achieve child-responsiveness.*

2 *Develop a framework to undertake a detailed analysis of child inclusion in urban areas with stakeholder and institutional mapping.*

3 *Conduct research into parameters of realizing child-responsive urban areas using local research institutions and local authorities, and build updated databases to inform decision-making.*

4 *Carry out a citywide/regional/national analysis of infrastructure provision to ascertain the extent of child inclusion in its development and use, and to identify deficiencies.*

5 *Review relevant national, sectoral, subnational and local level, urban-related documents to assess the level of consideration given to child inclusion. This should include international, national, subnational and local policy, legal and regulatory documents, government reports, sectoral reports, project documents and other documented information on urbanization. The information will have to be adapted to the requisite planning level (national/subnational).*

6 *Promote the use of new technologies to capture and analyse information on child inclusion in urban policy processes.*

7 *Identify cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender) that could be mainstreamed in the urban policy process regarding child inclusion. Case studies could also be used to demonstrate mainstreaming of children in urban policy.*

Outputs

+ *A "children mainstreaming report" tailored to the diagnostic process, with consensus on the options that should be considered for adoption or abolition, to improve child inclusion into urban areas.*

+ *A stakeholder analysis framework for child inclusion in urban areas.*

+ *A report documenting parameters needed for child inclusion in the respective urban areas.*

+ *An infrastructure analysis report documenting the extent of child inclusion in provision of infrastructure for the respective jurisdiction.*

3. Formulation phase

Formulation of the national and subnational urban policy includes the actual policy development period. Policy statements are made based on the outputs of the feasibility and diagnostic phase. Mainstreaming children in the national urban policy requires a clear set of goals, objectives and actions that are practical, feasible, implementable and that correspond with performance indicators to inform monitoring and evaluation.

A clear understanding of the role and ability of every stakeholder is essential in order to consider all inputs and have an all-encompassing policy document. This will build consensus on contentious issues, address competing interests in policy and help develop priority areas for child-responsive interventions in urban areas. Resource allocations (financial, human, institutional and legislation) can be identified to ensure that transition to the implementation stage will be smooth.

Actions

1 *Support in formulating a child-responsive city vision for the planning jurisdiction, as is relevant to the local needs.*

2 *Define child-responsive urban areas in the national or subnational development agenda to gather traction for its inclusion in the respective urban policy.*

3 *Conduct capacity-building for the core team and other stakeholders to strengthen efforts to make urban areas in the respective jurisdiction child-responsive.*

4 *Develop technical assistance programmes that will help boost the capacity of national and subnational authorities to make their systems child-responsive.*

5 *Develop or propose frameworks that will guarantee coordination of local authorities or national agencies with all stakeholders to realize child-responsive urban areas, with roles, responsibilities and expected outputs defined.*

6 *Set a framework to support national and local authorities to identify the potential funding stakeholders and mobilize resources for the development of child-responsive infrastructure in urban areas.*

Output(s)

+ *A national and subnational urban policy document with the objectives, activities and recommendations for mainstreaming children into urban areas.*

4. Implementation phase

Policy implementation entails the translation of policy statements into actions. Projects and programmes are realized on the ground. Making urban areas child-responsive includes many hard interventions (infrastructure) and soft interventions (plans, strategies, laws and regulations). This stage of a national urban policy requires coordination and administrative and legal measures to ensure effective implementation of the policy within a specified timeframe.

Actions

1 *Develop a budget for implementing the children and child issues mainstreaming plan.*

2 *Allocate roles and responsibilities to relevant stakeholders, with clear timeframes and defined scopes of engagement. This should include coordination mechanisms through a framework of agreed standards and procedures to promote delegation and devolution, and reduce conflicts and duplication of effort.*

3 *Develop implementation plans at the national, subnational and local levels, and encourage cities to achieve them to promote integrated child-responsive interventions across the whole planning area.*

4 *Build the capacity of countries and cities to enhance the ability to child-responsive urban interventions.*

5 *Prioritize local authorities and national Governments adopting transformative projects mainstreaming children into urbanization, to subsequently aid in the achievement of child-responsive objectives.*

6 *Prioritize and oversee the shift in policy, organizational, legal and fiscal frameworks to mechanisms that will promote the implementation of proposed child-responsive projects and programmes in the newly mainstreamed policy. This ought to be done at the regional, national and local levels.*

Outputs

+ *A child-responsive implementation plan or strategy with clear projects and programmes, timelines, roles and responsibilities for relevant stakeholders, potential funding resource allocation and capacity development needs.*

+ *A national urban policy document that has mainstreamed children into its recommendations.*

+ *A capacity-building strategy to ensure national urban policy implementation is child-responsive.*

+ *Quick-win projects that mainstream children into urbanization.*

5. Monitoring and evaluation phase

Monitoring and evaluation entail a continuous assessment of an activity against a set of baseline targets (activities, principles and guidelines) to check for compliance or deviation from the intended objectives. In mainstreaming children into national urban policies, this process entails laying down a clear set of objectives and accompanying indicators that will be used to gauge the effectiveness of formulation and implementation outcomes of such policies.

Evaluation surveys and progressive assessments can be used to gather information to be benchmarked against indicators. This will help to assess the level of implementation and impact of activities on the target population and environment, using surveys and other spatial information, as relevant. This phase offers opportunities to learn from implemented activities and to aid or modify child-responsive interventions to achieve the desired goals.

This process could serve as an inspiration for stakeholders to promote given measures that have the greatest desired impact or to change measures with low or negative benefits to the inclusion of children.

Actions

1 *Develop a set of baseline targets and indicators to use as performance indicators in assessing the mainstreaming of children into national urban policy.*

2 *Establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation methodology that includes children as monitors/reporters by national and local governments, linking tracking frameworks, targets and indicators, where appropriate, to the Sustainable Development Goals.*

3 *Take regular (in some cases annual) stock of progress towards child-responsive city goals within national and subnational governments, and adjust policies and practices in response to the lessons learned with the objective of driving continuous improvement, focused on society's needs.*

4 *Build monitoring and evaluation capacity for children's inclusion in urban areas in governments at all levels, by sharing lessons learned, best practices, training and guidance of international and civil society organizations and businesses and by establishing a mechanism for child participation in monitoring.*

5 *Institutionalize and continuously monitor the mainstreaming of children in urban policy and the outcomes of project implementation through the assessment of indicators, analysis of project reports, surveys and regular meetings with core team members and key stakeholders.*

6 *Create a feedback mechanism to inform future policy cycles regarding children's inclusion in urban areas.*

7 *Allocate resources for the inclusion of children in monitoring processes on the results of implementing the child-sensitive urban policies and the level of their impact from the child perspective.*

8 *Allocate resources for data collection, analysis and reporting on mainstreaming children in national urban policy using mixed monitoring methods (qualitative and quantitative) to enhance procurement of relevant comparable data.*

Outputs

+ *A set of key performance indicators with a checklist of main issues to assess for child mainstreaming into national urban policy.*

+ *A monitoring and evaluation report on mainstreaming children into national and subnational urban policy, that includes the feedback from children.*

+ *Periodic assessment reports on child inclusion in urban areas of respective jurisdictions.*

+ *Capacity building sessions for stakeholders to sensitize them on how to assess child inclusion in urban areas.*

+ *Forming teams that will be charged with continuous monitoring of child inclusion in urban areas.*

+ *A framework for periodic reviews of urban policies and key issues to check for child inclusion.*

+ *A resource mobilization and allocation strategy to ensure proposals on child inclusion into national urban policies are realized.*

B. Operationalization of national and subnational urban policies through legislation

Direct steps on integrating children into the national and subnational urban policies development processes mentioned in the previous paragraph require a well-tuned operationalization process. Consequently, this will lead to direct implementation of the stated provisions into binding legislation. This section will analyse existing national urban policies of countries and will provide examples of how different countries implement child-responsive policy recommendations into planning laws and standards. National urban policies vary from country to country and sometimes the term "national urban policy" does not feature in a policy document's title. Nevertheless, the policies include important issues that are presented as six building blocks (urban governance, spatial sustainability, financial sustainability, economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability and resilience) common to all countries.[62] Some of these blocks can be split and merged. For the purposes of this guidance, some of these blocks were linked with comparable principles of UNICEF's "Shaping Urbanization for Children: A Handbook on Child-Responsive Urban Planning, 2018"[63] and are shown in table 3:

Table 3: Correlation of principles in national urban policy

UNICEF principles[64]	National urban policy building blocks
Principle 2 | Housing and land tenure	*Social sustainability*
Principle 3 | Public amenities *Principle 4 | Public spaces*	*Environmental sustainability*
Principle 5 | Transport system	*Economic sustainability*

Such a framework will help leverage the best practices of UN-Habitat and the principles identified by UNICEF to ensure that the urban policies contain well-tuned and functioning child-responsive perspectives that are consequently integrated into legislation.

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62 *UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.*

63 *UNICEF (2018). Shaping Urbanization for Children. A handbook on child-responsive urban planning. https://www.unicef.org/media/47616/file/UNICEF_Shaping_urbanization_for_children_handbook_2018.pdf.*

64 *UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.*

1. Operationalization of UNICEF Principle 2/national urban policy social sustainability building block into legislation

Children helping constructing a building
© UNICEF/UN0199593/Noorani

As stated above, children are vulnerable while living in cities. This is exacerbated by the lack of appropriate public spaces as well as the consequences of climate change. Marginalized children in informal settlements are the most vulnerable to harm due to the lack of adequate housing conditions. UNICEF's Principle 2 promotes affordable and adequate housing and land tenure so children feel safe and secure to live, play and learn.[65] Combined with UN-Habitat's national urban policy social sustainability building block, together they promote social inclusion.[66]

Children, forming one of the most vulnerable clusters in society, need to be provided with adequate housing, which is also a prerequisite to access basic services. Housing conditions are a major concern, especially in developing countries where between 60 and 70 per cent of urban dwellers stay in informal settlements, and most of the affected populations comprise women and children. Housing quality, instability and unaffordability threaten the well-being of millions of children across the world.[67] Housing is one of the core elements of a sustainable life which provides dignity and assists in realizing other children's rights. UN-Habitat promotes "housing at the centre" as an approach to guide national and local urban agendas, to shift the focus from simply building houses to a holistic framework for housing development, orchestrated with urban planning practice, putting people and human rights at the forefront of sustainable urban development.[68]

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65 UNICEF (2018). Ibid.

66 UN-Habitat (2019). How to Formulate a National Urban Policy: A practical guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf.

67 Gaitán, V. (2019). How Housing Affects Children's Outcomes. Housing Matters. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-housing-affects-childrens-outcomes.

68 UN-Habitat (2015). Housing at the Centre of the New Urban Agenda. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/housing_at_the_centre_of_the_new_urban_agenda.pdf.

Housing is one of the core elements of a sustainable life which provides dignity and assists in realizing other children's rights.

Children are vulnerable to influences from their residential surroundings. The quality of the environment where children play, learn and grow has serious implications for their physical health, behavioural and emotional welfare, school achievement and economic opportunity. The environment affects children directly impacting on the dignity, and indirectly through its impact on parents or primary caregivers and the significant adults in their lives.[69]

In terms of children's development and well-being, some dimensions of housing such as quality (the physical condition and safety of the home), overcrowding, affordability, housing assistance, ownership and stability[70] are identified as core elements.

The physical conditions of housing are characterized by more than just a roof over one's head. A house should have adequate space, physical accessibility, adequate security, structural stability and durability, adequate lighting, heating and ventilation with adequate basic infrastructure[71] and should exclude problems such as plumbing and heating deficiencies, rodent and cockroach infestation, and structural issues such as cracks and holes in walls and ceilings, water leaks, broken windows and crumbling foundations.[72] Thus, the 2004 National Standards for Residential Services for Children developed by Better Care Network – an international network of organizations which enables worldwide sharing of information and cooperation regarding children – sets forth the criteria for the development of residential services for children in Montserrat in Spain, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the British Virgin Islands. The document establishes that the home should be situated in a location that has easy access to transport and health facilities, with rooms and furniture to ensure children's privacy and provide for children to study. Adequate storage for wheelchairs and other equipment should also be provided.[73] Moreover, the city of Michigan in the United States of America, in its Administrative Code, specifies that each room used by children must have adequate ventilation and be maintained at a safe and comfortable temperature, so children do not feel too hot or cold, and that all child-use areas must have adequate natural or artificial lighting.[74] Other conditions of physical housing include addressing the rights of children with disabilities. This requires, for example, the establishment of ramps, handrails and appropriate space on a staircase so that a child using a wheelchair could move easily. Thus, the 2019 Singapore Code on Accessibility specifies that the handrails should be fixed at a maximum height of 700 mm measured vertically from the ramp surface or pitch line of the stairs to the top of the handrails. Also, lift control panels for children with disabilities should be placed at a height of between 800 mm and 1,000 mm from the floor level.[75]

69 Office of Policy Development and Research (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.

70 Office of Policy Development and Research (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.

71 UN-Habitat. (2012). UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy Framework Document. https://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/11892_1_594746.pdf.

72 Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R). (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.

73 Maureen E. Headley-Gay (2004). National Standards for Residential Services for Children. https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/National%20Standards%20for%20%20Residential%20Services%20for%20Children.pdf.

74 Michigan Administrative Code. (1934). https://casetext.com/regulation/michigan-administrative-code/department-licensing-and-regulatory-affairs/bureau-of-community-and-health-systems/homes-for-the-aged-facilities/licensing-rules-for-family-and-group-child-care-homes/section-r-4001934-heating-ventilation-lighting-radon.

75 Singapore Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment (2019). www1.bca.gov.sg/docs/default-source/docs-corp-news-and-publications/publications/codes-acts-and-regulations/accessibilitycode2019.pdf?sfvrsn=ea84e8b7_0.

Two women with children cooking dinner
UNICEF/UNI102216/Sautereau

Overcrowding, in its turn, heightens stress, noise levels and lack of privacy[76] and endangers residents, including children. Among the options to tackle it is the relaxation of development standards by increasing the number of multi-family units for development, facilitating single-room occupancy through zoning code revisions and expanding affordability by working with non-profit organizations to assemble land and lowering costs.[77]

Housing expenditures are conventionally considered affordable if they do not exceed 30 per cent of family or household income.[78] In the United States, California, Jersey and Massachusetts, for example, introduced local housing deregulatory measures aimed at reducing housing expenditures; among these are density incentives which encourage affordable housing construction or fast-track permitting, which puts affordable housing development at the front of the development queue and expedites approvals and waivers for development impact and permit processing fees.[79]

Housing assistance or subsidized housing is one of the means to reduce rental expenses.[80] Housing cost burdens and the inability to afford adequate housing are often associated with housing instability for families with children.[81] To tackle this, the Alberta, Canada, Housing Act describes the benefits of subsidizing housing for families, the elderly and individuals with low income.[82] Consequently, home ownership leads to a better quality home environment for children. There are specific links between home ownership and education as well as behavioural outcomes for children.

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76 *Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R). (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.*

77 *Weinberg, N. (2016). How Can Cities be Preemptive and Effective in Preventing Overcrowding? Datasmart.Ash.Harvard.Edu. https://datasmart.ash.harvard.edu/news/article/how-can-cities-be-preemptive-and-effective-in-preventing-overcrowding-888.*

78 *Office of Policy Development and Research (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.*

79 *Pendall, R. (2007). From Hurdles to Bridges: Local Land-Use Regulations and the Pursuit of Affordable Rental Housing. Joint Centre for Housing Studies. Harvard University. www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/media/imp/rr07-11_pendall.pdf.*

80 *Illinois Department of DCFS. Children and Family Services. (2022). Subsidized Housing. Illinois.Gov. www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/brighterfutures/independence/Housing/Pages/Subsidized.aspx.*

81 *Office of Policy Development and Research (2014). Housing's and Neighbourhoods' Role in Shaping Children's Future. Huduser.Gov. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall14/highlight1.html.*

82 *Government of Alberta (Canada) (n.d.). Affordable housing programmes. Alberta.Ca. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.alberta.ca/affordable-housing-programs.aspx.*

Two teenagers driving a motorbike in a slum.
Photo by Alex Person. Source: Unsplash

This can be attributed to factors such as greater stability, reduced rates of student turnover in schools, better quality homes that owners keep properly repaired and upgraded, and better neighbourhoods containing other invested owners.[83] The establishment of low borrowing rates is one way to foster ownership of housing by dwellers. As a result of the 2020 housing policies in Rwanda, a detrimental trend emerged where mortgage interest rates reached approximately 15 per cent, one of the highest rates in East Africa. This meant that only about 5 per cent of households were able to qualify for a loan.[84]High rates lead to a low rate of home ownership and low rate of stability for families. In contrast, Canada's 1985 National Housing Act protects against the effects of fluctuating interest rates for housing loans.

83 Haurin, D. R. H., Parcel, T. L. and Haurin, R. J. (2001). *The Impact of Home-ownership on Child Outcomes.* Joint Centre for Housing Studies of Harvard University. www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/media/imp/liho01-14.pdf.

84 Buckley, R. and Bower, J. (2020). *Housing policies in Rwanda: Riding the urbanisation whirlwind.* https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Buckley-and-Bower-Policy-Paper-2019.pdf.

Based on these examples, the following are recommendations to consider in relation to child-responsiveness in urban policies and laws:

A | *Introduce guidelines to the housing sector, including integrated informal settlement upgrading provisions to enhance the construction of permanent and adequate structures in non-hazardous locations and shield occupants from inclement weather. This will ensure that children will not live in informal settlements.*

B | *Making housing accessible to all, prioritizing affordability and child-responsive infrastructure.*

Along with housing, land tenure is an issue that guarantees the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection from the State against forced evictions. The degree of "security" of a household's tenure determines its likelihood of facing a forced eviction, its access to basic services such as water and electricity, and its ability to improve housing and living conditions in general.[85] This is critical for urban dwellers, especially those from economically marginalized groups, including women and children, as it means protection from being forcibly evicted and other non-housing rights, namely the following: breaches of their rights to bodily integrity, freedom from exploitation, privacy and freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, reduced access to educational institutions and programmes, health services and social security benefits caused by homelessness as well as constantly living in fear of eviction.[86] Thus, for example, the Constitution of Kenya enshrines, inter alia, the basic rights of a child to adequate shelter.[87] Similarly, the Constitution of South Africa entrenches property rights and provides that no one may be deprived of property in terms of the law.[88]

Based on these examples of countries incorporating child-responsive land tenure perspectives into laws and policies, the following is a recommendation to consider in urban policies and the child-responsiveness:

Introduce guidelines that will ensure tenure security for all urban dwellers (including children) by allowing registration documents to act as proof of tenure which will protect against forced evictions, especially for those living in precarious situations. This will, in turn, lead to better service provision of and improved housing for the affected communities, including children.

Due to rapid urbanization in developing countries, slow infrastructure development and poor access to economic communities, about a third of the global urban population lives in informal settlements, with over 70 per cent of the urban population in developing countries living in informal settlements. With urban growth projections, the number of urban dwellers living in slum conditions is bound to rise.[89] Slum conditions expose children to hazardous situations due to inadequate housing, poor sanitation systems and lack of access to other basic social services and economic opportunities. Slum upgrading is widely recognized as the most proactive and effective way of improving the housing conditions and lives of the millions of low-income households[90] where children live. UN-Habitat defines the biggest deprivations for slum communities as the lack of adequate and safe housing conditions, clean water supply, sanitation and secure land tenure.[91] Housing, as mentioned before, is central to social and economic development and it impacts family life and opportunities. Insecure and deteriorating housing developments that lack services, green or public areas and opportunities for sports, cultural and recreational activities can be breeding grounds for health and social problems. People living in isolated, segregated, violent and run-down neighbourhoods are more likely to become marginalized.

85 UN-Habitat (2007). *Enhancing security of tenure: Policy directions. Global Report on Human Settlements 2007. Abridged edition (vol. 2)*. Earthscan.

86 Nolan, Aoife (2009). *Security of Tenure from a Children's Rights Perspective* (30 July). ESR Review, vol. 7, No. 3, p. 22, 2006, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1441313.

87 Constitution of Kenya, art. 53 (2010). www.klrc.go.ke/index.php/constitution-of-kenya/113-chapter-four-the-bill-of-rights/part-3-specific-application-of-rights/219-53-children.

88 South African Human Rights Commission (n.d.). *The Right to Adequate Housing. Factsheet*. www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20the%20right%20to%20adequate%20housing.pdf.

89 International Union for Conservation of Nature. (n.d.). *Conflict-Sensitive Adaption: Use Human Rights to Build Social and Ecological Resilience. Brief 3*. www.iucn.org/downloads/tecs_csa_3_tenure_alcorn.pdf.

90 Bah, E.-M., Faye, I. and Geh, Z. F. (2018). *Slum Upgrading and Housing Alternatives for the Poor*. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057/978-1-137-59792-2_6.pdf.

91 UN-Habitat (n.d.). *The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP)*. Unhabitat.Org. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://unhabitat.org/programme/the-participatory-slum-upgrading-programme-psup.

Children who grow up in such spaces are more exposed to social risks and have fewer chances to have an education that would afford them access to jobs.[92] Also, lack of family stability, the components of which were defined above, leads to deteriorated conditions for the care and socialization of children.[93] In view of this, in 2014, UN-Habitat developed a Practical Guide on Designing, Planning and Executing Citywide Slum Upgrading Practice, which contains the following five points according to which housing may or may not be considered to be part of a slum:

Durable housing – a permanent structure providing protection from extreme weather conditions.

Sufficient living area, where no more than three people share a room.

Access to improved water – water, which is sufficient, affordable and can be obtained without extreme effort.

Access to improved sanitation facilities – having a private or a public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people.

Secure tenure under de facto or de jure status and protection against forced eviction.[94]

Therefore, when improving housing amenities as part of slum redevelopment, it is crucial to not only steer clear of the limitations mentioned above but also implement interventions that cover all aspects, including but not limited to, establishing secure tenure; affordable, accessible, habitable housing options; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures; enabling locations; culturally adequate solutions. There should not be a "one-size fits all" approach,[95] rather the elaborated tailor-made solutions should be enforced. Considering this approach should be applied to children, in November 2022, UNICEF published a Strategic Note on its Work for Children in Urban Settings that outlines six key priority areas , with a particular focus on the unique needs of children, especially those living in slums, informal settlements and impoverished neighbourhoods.

Thus, to make slums responsive to children's needs, the following are required:

- *To assess the deprivations faced by children and measure children's access to basic services*

- *Put in place tools to plan for urban growth with respect to the needs of children in slums*

- *Make children's voices heard through community engagement*

- *Equalize their access to basic services*

- *Make children's voices heard during formal planning processes*

- *Enhance disaster risk reduction and preparedness capacity within urban areas with a focus on children living in slums*

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92 Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank Group, UN-Habitat and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (2016). Slum Upgrading and Housing in Latin America (F. Magalhães, ed.). https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Slum-Upgrading-and-Housing-in-Latin-America.pdf.

93 Imparato, I. and Ruster, J. (2003). Slum Upgrading and Participation: Lessons from Latin America. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/15133.

94 UN-Habitat (2014). Practical Guide on Designing, Planning and Executing Citywide Slum Upgrading Practice. www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Housing/InformalSettlements/UNHABITAT_A_PracticalGuidetoDesigningPlaningandExecutingCitywideSlum.pdf.

95 UN-Habitat, European Union, UNICEF, Slum Dwellers International, Cities Alliance, World Bank and Habitat for Humanity (2022). "Global Action Plan: Accelerating for Transforming Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030". https://sdinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/366213CF-9391-468B-BF56-9462ECFC472F.Global-Action-Plan_final-draft.pdf.

In Medellin, Colombia, there has been strong political will to implement programmes on slum upgrading, conduct workshops to involve all community members, including children, to discuss problems they were facing and generate solutions[96] Under the Cities for Children initiative led by World Vision International in partnership with UN-Habitat, children from urban slums in Surabaya (Indonesia), La Paz (Bolivia), Beirut (Lebanon), Kanpur and Siliguri (India) were actively engaged to participate in decision-making in developing their dream city. To create a positive peer environment, local-level advocacy methodologies to monitor policy and practice were used. Child well-being groups and youth clubs in informal schooling settings were established.[97] Thus, slum upgrading directly influenced the improvement of the livelihoods of children living there.

Based on these examples of countries incorporating slum upgrading with child perspectives into laws and policies, the following recommendations can be applied in urban policies to consider child-responsiveness in them:

A | *Allocating national and local authorities with mandates to provide affordable and adequate housing for all urban communities, including informal settlements, which will have sufficient basic facilities such as water and sanitation, and sufficient living space.*

B | *Defining a national and subnational urbanization vision and strategy that will ensure realization of sustainable urbanization and set up governance and institutional frameworks to include the interests of children in the slum-upgrading processes. This will lead to participatory slum-upgrading approaches in which children's interests are prioritized.*

Figure IV | Links and entry points for a national urban policy and national / city-wide slum upgrading strategies[98]

National Urban Policy

National Slum Upgrading Strategy

City-Wide Slum Upgrading Strategy

Local Participatory Slum Upgrading Projects
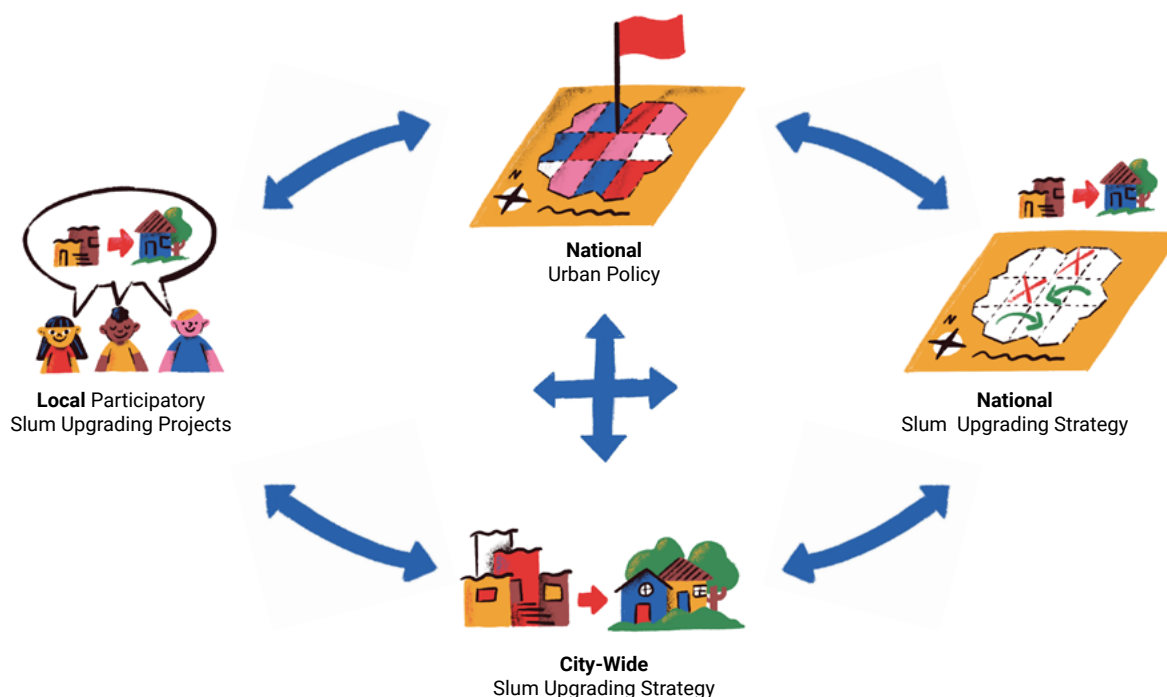
96 Arcila, C. A. C. (2008). Learning from Slum Upgrading and Participation. A case study of participatory slum upgrading in the emergence of new governance in the city of Medellín–Colombia. www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:126733/FULLTEXT01.pdf.

97 World Vision International (2014). Just Cities for Children: Voices from Urban Slums. www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Just%20Cities%20for%20Children-Voices%20from%20Urban%20Slums.FINAL_.pdf.

98 UN-Habitat (n.d.). Quick guide for participatory, city-wide slum upgrading. Participation for inclusive, city-wide slum upgrading. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/QG02_Participation.pdf

2. Operationalization of UNICEF Principles 3 and 4/national urban policy environmental sustainability building block into legislation

Group of children laughing and playing outside. Photo by Avel Chuklanov. Source: Unsplash

Notwithstanding the importance of each of the principles established by UNICEF, Principles 3 and 4 require all cities to provide safe and inclusive public and green spaces for children where they can gather and engage in outdoor activities as well as have other appropriate infrastructure facilities to thrive, develop life skills and meet.[99] This aligns with the national urban policy environmental sustainability building block to reduce environmental impacts and protect the population from the effects of climate change. While working towards the Sustainable Development Goals' principle to leave no one behind, the provision of public space comprises one of the key entry points to achieving the Goals and the New Urban Agenda, since public spaces are accessible to everyone.[100] To achieve child-responsive public spaces, the planning, design and use or regulation of public spaces must have universal access, be safe and inclusive for children. According to the general meaning set by the Charter of Public Spaces, public space includes all places publicly owned, for public use, accessible and enjoyable by all, for free and without profit motive.[101]

99 UNICEF (2018). Shaping urbanization for children. A handbook on child-responsive urban planning. https://www.unicef.org/media/47616/file/UNICEF_Shaping_urbanization_for_children_handbook_2018.pdf

100 Project for Public Spaces (2012). Placemaking and the Future of Cities. https://assets-global.website-files.com/581110f944272e4a11871c01/5f0f1f9e47f9663f207396ac_59f1fb530aad1d00010a6186_PPS-Placemaking-and-the-Future-of-Cities.pdf.

101 Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (2015). Charter of Public Space. https://inu.it/wp-content/uploads/Inglese_CHARTER_OF_PUBLIC_SPACE.pdf.

Two kids playing along the road.
Photo by Bennett Tobias. Source: Unsplash

In relation to the child-friendly public spaces, the UN-Habitat Guidelines for Child-Friendly Open Public Spaces (Sharjah, UAE)[102] define the following principles to be integrated into all open public spaces. These include, for instance:

- *Equal spatial distribution and quantity of open public spaces accessible from within 5 to 10 minutes by walking and cycling.*

- *Universal design and safe spaces to accommodate all children with no segregation nor discrimination by age, gender and disability whether mentally or physically.*

- *Application of a participatory approach between the government, local people, non-governmental, private entities, academia, public entities, and children for planning child-friendly open public spaces.*

- *Consideration of a micro-climatic urban design in the implementation of open public space projects.*

- *Planning and designing public spaces with/from a human scale and eye level.*

- *Creation of play areas for children in the public spaces.*

- *Provide for health gains while developing public spaces.*

- *Integration of culture, history, and heritage patterns into the public spaces, and*

- *Establishment of a well-functioning management and maintenance plan to achieve sustainable public space.*

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102 *UN-Habitat. (2020). Guidelines for Child-Friendly Open Public Spaces (Sharjah, UAE)*

The types of public spaces for children are influenced by culture and context, and UN-Habitat categorizes them as follows:

Streets

Pavements, woonerfs/home zones, shared streets, lanes, cul-de-sacs, alleyways, walkways, schools, residential and market streets, bikeways, pedestrian bridges, shopping streets, streets in front of cultural facilities, streets in front of public facilities for women and children, monument boulevards, etc.

Public open space

Shared courtyards between buildings, corridors and lobbies in high-rise apartments, sky parks and roof gardens, allotment gardens, community gardens and farms, school yards, after-school clubs, sports facilities, malls, parks, urban forests, riverbanks, public beaches, nature-based recreation areas, botanical gardens, squares, plazas, fountains, docks and harbours, open space around important public and religious buildings, etc.

Public facilities

Play areas for children, shared spaces, exercise areas, community halls, early childhood developments centres, child and youth centres, bus stops, train stations, hobby spaces, open and night shelters, central train terminals, public libraries, museums, sport complexes, child-oriented spaces, public toilets, etc).[103]

The public spaces provision has been considered in the national urban policies of some countries. For example, Serbia's Sustainable Urban Development Strategy 2030 is exemplary in its promotion of sustainable urban planning and the provision of solutions to urban challenges. The strategy is based on a coherent set of decisions that resulted from the collaboration of various actors to establish a strategic framework for directing productive, inclusive and resilient long-term urban development in Serbia. It is a tool for urban development management, which includes strategic pillars (long-term) and several flexible elements of a stochastic nature as

a support for decision-makers on sustainable urban development. Its strategic direction, "social welfare" under the measure "social inclusion and poverty reduction in urban areas" is the "arrangement of public areas and facilities in accordance with the concept of accessibility for vulnerable categories of the population (persons with disabilities, the elderly, women with children)"[104]. Legislation can also consider this policy provision by recommending that in cities, public spaces should make up 45 to 50 per cent of the land area, with 30 to 35 per cent of the area allocated to streets and 15 to 20 per cent allocated to other types of public spaces.[105]

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103 *Guide being developed by UNICEF, UN-Habitat and WHO on the Topic of Public Spaces (2022).*

104 *"Serbia's Sustainable Urban Development Strategy 2030" (2019). https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/srb189515.pdf*

105 *UN-Habitat (2020). "National urban policies driving public space-led urban development: A quick thematic guide for mainstreaming safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces into national urban policies". https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/national-urban-policies-driving-public-space-led-urban-development.pdf.*

Some legislation espouses the following – not exclusive – characteristics for public spaces: proximity and accessibility, safety, stability, usability, playfulness and cleanliness

Girl running down the street barefoot.
Photo by Parastoo Maleki. Source: Unsplash

In the legislation of some Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan[106] and Kyrgyzstan,[107] the standard for urban land landscaping is 40 per cent. In Bhutan, the land requirement for public spaces ranges from 200 to 5,000 m^2.[108] As for child-specific standards for public spaces, the East Riding of Yorkshire in the United Kingdom outlines the legal standard that every child should live no further than 100 meters from a small play area.[109]

Another example of a national urban policy incorporating provisions of improved public spaces is from Australia. The National Urban Policy for a Productive, Sustainable and Liveable Future 2011 introduced the Sustainable Communities Programme – including liveable cities, which invests in urban development and renewal projects that, among other things, improve urban design outcomes through the redevelopment of significant public spaces to deliver higher-quality public spaces and streetscapes to benefit local businesses, communities and visitors. The policy is further encouragement for the development of urban areas that promote healthy lifestyles through cycling and walking networks, recreational facilities and high-quality public spaces.[110]

Broad categories require clarification to become child-responsive. To this end, some legislation espouses the following – not exclusive – characteristics for public spaces: proximity and accessibility, safety, stability, usability, playfulness and cleanliness.[111]

106 Tajikistan, Committee for Architecture and Construction (2018). GNiP RT 30-01-2018 "Urban planning. Planning and development of settlements".

107 Kyrgyzstan, State Agency for Architecture, Construction, Housing and Communal Services (2020). Building Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic. SN KR 30-01:2020 "Planning and building of cities and popular points of city type".

108 Government of Bhutan (2007). The Land Act of Bhutan. https://oag.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Land-Act-of-Bhutan-2007_English.pdf.

109 East Riding of Yorkshire Council (n.d.). Open space on new developments. Eastriding.Gov.Uk. www.eastriding.gov.uk/planning-permission-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-the-local-plan/open-space-on-new-developments/.

110 Australia, Department of Infrastructure and Transport (2011). Our Cities, Our Future — A national urban policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future. www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/Our_Cities_National_Urban_Policy_Paper_2011.pdf.

111 Stephenson, P. (2020). Public Spaces for Children: A Consultation with Children on their use of Urban Public Spaces. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Public Spaces for Children%27s Consultation Report %286%29.pdf.

Proximity and accessibility of public spaces implies the independent movement of children to and from their destination. The East Riding of Yorkshire's guidelines, for example, outline the necessity for children to have access to three different types of public space no further than 1,000 meters from their homes.[112] Safety implies that children should be able to access public spaces through a safe journey and without obstacles[113] as well as feel safe while playing. Urban design guidelines in Victoria, Australia, for example, specify that the location of children's play areas in local parks should be visible from surrounding properties, paths and streets with appropriate lightning along main paths.[114] Stability, usability and playfulness imply children's ability to use the space for defined and undefined forms of play, physical activity and intergenerational interactions, while cleanliness, a core aspect of children's vulnerability, should protect them from air pollution, soil pollution and waste. Thus, for example, the Kenya Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Policy 2016–2030 establishes the obligation for local authorities to maintain a clean environment in public facilities such as markets, public gardens, streets, public beaches, riverbanks, etc. The authorities are also obliged to strengthen the storage, collection and transport of waste from the point of generation to treatment and disposal sites, and to ensure that public spaces are kept clean.[115]

Based on the above-mentioned country examples that incorporate child-responsive public spaces into laws and policies, the following are recommendations for urban policies and laws to realize the adequate provision of quality public spaces, especially in urban areas:

A | **Planning** *for and creating public spaces that are adequate for urban communities, with safety and design elements that are responsive to children's needs, such as accessible walkways and play areas. These facilities should be well planned and distributed in urban areas to ensure all children can easily and safely access them, mainly through non-motorized transport.*

B | **Adopting** *planning and design principles that allocate enough land for a network of public spaces and that guard against encroachment by commercial activities. These design guidelines should be responsive to the needs of children.*

C | **Design** *spaces and infrastructures that promote cultural integration and reflect population diversity.*

D | **Establishing** *capacity-building programmes on advocacy for child-friendly public spaces, stewardship, partnerships and participation of children in designing their spaces, etc – targeting national Governments, local authorities and community members.*

It is estimated that by 2050, there will be approximately 700 million climate refugees

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112 *East Riding of Yorkshire Council (n.d.). Open space on new developments. Eastriding.Gov.Uk. www.eastriding.gov.uk/planning-permission-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-the-local-plan/open-space-on-new-developments/.*

113 *Stephenson, P. (2020). Ibid.*

114 *Australia, State Government of Victoria (n.d.). Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria. Section 3. Public spaces. www.urban-design-guidelines.planning.vic.gov.au/guidelines/public-spaces.*

115 *Kenya, Ministry of Health (2016). Kenya Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Policy 2016–2030. www.wsp.org/sites/wsp/files/publications/Kenya%20Environmental%20Sanitation%20and%20Hygiene%20Policy.pdf.*

Group of children walking down the street and carrying containers with clean water. Photo by Jeff Ackley. Source: Unsplash

Additionally, the aspect of public space cleanliness is closely related to the risks posed by climate change which can negatively impact children, corresponding to UN-Habitat's environmental sustainability/climate change building block. By recognizing the link between urbanization and climate change, it is acknowledged that while climate change is a global crisis, it is most felt in cities and other urban communities where people, including children, who, ironically do not contribute significantly to activities having climate change impacts, live their daily lives,[116] especially communities in slums. Children from poor backgrounds will be heavily impacted as climate change leads to extreme weather events, water and food scarcity and resource-related conflicts. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be approximately 700 million climate refugees, most of whom will move to urban areas and settle in informal settlements.[117]

As a part of groups in vulnerable situations, children are specifically more indirectly susceptible to the impacts of climate change considering their developmental features such as immature nervous systems and cognitive capacities, thereby exposing them to higher risks with potentially long-term health consequences.[118] They will be impacted by hunger, malnutrition, undernutrition, child labour due to economic strains of households, homelessness and exploitation.[119] The vulnerability of children living in cities and other urban communities is exacerbated by rapid urbanization, poor urban planning and governance, increased air pollution which is a danger to their respiratory systems,[120] and lack of adequate basic services, especially for children living in informal settlements.

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116 Fambasayi, R. (2021). Leveraging city-level climate change law and policy for the protection of children. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 29(4), pp.872–896. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-29040007.

117 "Mexico City, Parched and Sinking, Faces a Water Crisis". *New York Times* (n.d.). www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html?_r=0&mtrref=undefined&gwh=5E4E30F667681AD-5793435ABFB125666&gwt=pay&assetType=PAYWALL.

118 Ibid.

119 UNICEF (2016). "The State of the World's Children 2016. A fair chance for every child". www.unicef.org/media/50076/file/UNICEF_SOWC_2016-ENG.pdf.

120 UNICEF (2015). "Unless we act now. The impact of climate change on children". www.unicef.org/media/50391/file/Unless_we_act_now_The_im-pact_of_climate_change_on_children-ENG.pdf.

Often, slums and other informal settlements are built in hazardous areas that are located close to industrial waste dumping sites, prone to flooding, landslides and with housing or shelter that easily succumbs to extreme weather conditions compromising the safety, health and the overall quality of life for children. Also, informal settlements are usually characterized by overcrowded housing, lack of service provision such as water, sanitation and drainage, and poor waste management systems which result in high outbreaks and spread of climate-induced preventable diseases threatening the dignity, life, survival and development of children, and are a violation of the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Urban policy, therefore, needs to be cognisant that children can play an important role in fighting climate change impacts and realizing resilience through direct impacts and awareness creation. For example, Nigeria's Habitat III National Report of 2016 was designed for effective urban development planning with the active involvement of such stakeholders as urban residents, particularly the poor and groups in vulnerable situations, such as women, children, older people and people with disabilities. The country itself is considered a "country of the young", where slightly less than half of the population has reached the age of 15 years.[121] This substantial age proportion encouraged children to take part in the creation of favourable cities for their future development, including climate change issues. In the context of this initiative, Climate Change Clubs were introduced in public schools, prompting a 95 per cent increase in awareness of climate change among school children and the impact of climate change, particularly on urban planning.

Thus, the role of children in facilitating climate action has been urged to be acknowledged in, for example, Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan 2018–2022, which seeks to encourage the participation of children and young people in achieving low carbon, climate resilient developments,[122] including at the county government level. The Urban Nexus programme in the Philippines and Indonesia trains and builds the capacity of children and adolescents – particularly girls – in climate change adaptation, urban resilience planning and disaster risk reduction in eight informal settlements across Jakarta and Manila.[123] In Bangladesh, CARE International conducted workshops with women, adolescent girls and children on how to tackle climate change issues such as heat island effect, excessive rainfall, riverine and flash floods, cyclonic storms, salinity ingress, water logging, tornados, etc. with appropriate urban planning responsive mechanisms.

Based on these country examples on mainstreaming climate change issues with child-responsive objectives, the following are recommendations to apply in urban policies when considering child-responsiveness:

A | *Urban policy must equip local governments with tools to understand, prepare for and contribute to mitigation, responses and recovery from hazards and disasters related to climate change, in a child-sensitive and safe manner, without predisposing children to danger.*

B | *Urban policy should initiate capacity-building programmes in which children are taught about the causes, impacts and mitigation of climate change in urban areas, to ensure they are well prepared to tackle any upcoming challenges.*

C | *Urban policy should aim to create child-friendly spaces that are well designed, to enhance resilience to climate change and the protection of children from risks/hazards related to extreme climate events.*

121 UNICEF (n.d.). "Situation of women and children in Nigeria. Challenges faced by women and children in Nigeria". www.unicef.org/nigeria/situation-women-and-children-nigeria.

122 Kenya, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (2018). Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan 2018–2022 (vol. 1). www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/8737.pdf.

123 World Vision International, Plan International and UNICEF (2021). Tackling a Double-Threat-Children at the Front and Centre of Urban Fragility and Climate Change. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Urban Fragility and Climate Action.pdf.

3. Operationalization of UNICEF Principle 5/national urban policy economic sustainability building block into legislation

Three children walking down the street
© UNICEF/UNI82719/Pirozzi

Among the considered principles, this one focuses on the promotion of active transport and public transit systems and aims to ensure independent mobility for children so that they have equal and safe access to all services and opportunities in the city.[124] Thus, for instance, the Burkina Faso National Policy for Housing and Urban Development by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (2008) maintains that it is essential to improve the conditions of urban mobility by reducing transport costs, reducing energy consumption, protecting the environment and improving road safety. In its turn, the Comoros: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Review of the Second Year of Implementation (2013) emphasizes the improvement of security. The Government's direct efforts to increase roadway security by strengthening road networks, constructing and updating standards for ports and airports, constructing administrative buildings and public housing and establishing information and communication technology services indirectly strengthen basic infrastructure and communication services for all.

It is reported that road traffic accidents are the eighth leading cause of death across all age groups globally every year[125] with the highest number of accidents occurring in Africa. They are often more prevalent in urban areas due to rapid urbanization, poor infrastructure development, more vehicular traffic and poor maintenance of motorized transport.[126] The number of accidents is projected to rise if the status quo prevails and the Sustainable Development Goals aim to halve road traffic deaths by 2030; this could be achieved through improved road safety measures with a safe systems approach that uses evidence-based interventions in road and vehicle design, the implementation and enforcement of road safety legal and policy measures that will ensure high levels of vehicle standards on roads and enhance awareness and positive behaviour to reduce risks for drivers and other road users.

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124 *UNICEF (2018). Shaping urbanization for children. A handbook on child-responsive urban planning. www.unicef.org/media/47616/file/UNICEF_Shaping_urbanization_for_children_handbook_2018.pdf.*

125 *WHO (2021). SDG Target 3.6 Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents. www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3_6-road-traffic-injuries.*

126 *UN-Habitat (2014). Global Report on Human Settlements 2013: Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/Planning%20and%20Design%20for%20Sustainable%20Urban%20Mobility.pdf.*

Three children driving a motorbike on a busy road.
Photo by Tron Le. Source: Unsplash

Children and adolescents are among the most vulnerable road users across the globe and measures to improve road safety and security will help boost safety for all urban dwellers, including young people.[127] In the context of everyday freedoms this includes transport systems that give children independent mobility – a certain freedom to get around a neighbourhood or part of a city unaccompanied by adults.[128] Independent access to the local environment is important for children's personal, intellectual and psychological development.[129]

To be legally enforced, the following factors are essential to create child-responsive transport systems and enhance children's independent mobility: safe streets, installation of low-speed zones (in locations with high number of child travellers), improvement of pedestrian crossings, general approaches to make bus stops safe, separation of vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists) from motorized transport, the introduction of city maps as well as the creation of car-free neighbourhoods, etc.

Ensuring children's safe access to strategic locations such as schools, parks, playgrounds, sport clubs, music and community centres, theatres, etc. is vital for their growth, survival and development. Safe streets not only prevent road injuries and fatalities but they also allow children to feel comfortable and encourage independent, active travel.[130] This can be achieved by urban design features such as shorter block lengths and narrower streets, speed limitations relative to housing, city or neighbourhood levels, installation of traffic signals and traffic-calming measures (speed bumps, humps, cushions), banning street parking on roads leading to schools' main entrances, clear and visible road signs, creation of pavements along the main roads, etc. Thus, for example, Pryor Creek (Oklahoma, United States) in its 2000 City Code, outlines the limitations of depth and length of blocks to provide safe and convenient travel routes.[131]

127 Small, M. and Runji, J. (2014). *Managing Road Safety in Africa: A Framework for National Lead Agencies*. www.ssatp.org/sites/ssatp/files/publications/SSATPWP101-Road-Safety-Framework.pdf.

128 Shaw, B., Bicket, M., Elliott, B., Fagan-Watson, B., Mocca, E. and Hillman, M. (2015). *Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action*. Policy Studies Institute. https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/7350_PSI_Report_CIM_final.pdf.

129 Moore, R. C. (1986). *Childhood's Domain. Play and Place in Child Development* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315121895.

130 Luke, N., Tak, R., Samios, A. and Adriazola-Steil, C. (2020, September 10). *What Makes a Child-Friendly City? Redesigning Safer and Healthier Urban Spaces for Young People*. Thecityfix.Com. https://thecityfix.com/blog/what-makes-a-child-friendly-city-redesigning-safer-and-healthier-urban-spaces-for-young-people-nikita-luke-rohit-tak-ariadne-samios-claudia-adriazola-steil/.

131 "City Code of Pryor Creek" (2000). https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/pryorcreekok/latest/pryorcreek_ok/0-0-0-6628.

Children walking on the school yard
© UNICEF/UN0828710/India Country Office

The 2015 Parking Policy Statement of Islington in the United Kingdom outlines the necessity of keeping areas close to schools clear of parked vehicles so that passing vehicles can see children crossing the road,[132] while the 2021 Nation Planning Policy Framework developed by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government states that parking should only be allowed where there is a clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage the local road network.[133] In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where walking is the predominant transport mode[134] and pedestrian pavements are inadequate,[135] the 2016 Resettlement Policy Framework presents pavement provisioning or upgrading as an improvement corridor.[136]

In Accra, Ghana, the Pedestrian Road Safe Action Plan for Accra Metropolitan Assembly 2018–2022 frames meaningful engagements with children to identify challenges faced during the walk to school with further development of pedestrian walkways.[137] Further, in Mount Royal (Quebec, Canada), its 2005 Policy for the Installation of Speed Humps on Residential Streets, revised in 2015, provides for the instalment of speed humps in the immediate vicinity of 30 km/h zones, near primary schools and playgrounds.[138] In Australia, the 2019 Guide to Appoint School Bus Stops establishes that the waiting area for school children should be in an area well clear of passing traffic, free of roadside hazards and it should be a hard stand, all-weather waiting type, preferably 8 meters from the edge of travel lanes.[139]

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132 *"Islington Parking Policy Statement" (2015). www.islington.gov.uk/~/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/transportandinfrastructure/information/adviceandinformation/20152016/20150723parkingpolicystatementjuly2015.*

133 *United Kingdom, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). National Planning Policy Framework. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf.*

134 *Global Road Safety Facility and World Bank (2020). "Annual Report 2020". https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/469711609919953694/pdf/Global-Road-Safety-Facility-GRSF-Annual-Report-2020.pdf.*

135 *Government of Ghana (2015). Ghana National Spatial Development 2015 – 2035 (vol. 1). https://www.luspa.gov.gh/media/plan/NSDF_Final_Report_-_Vol_I_Final_Edition_TAC.pdf.*

136 *Ethiopia, Addis Ababa City Roads and Transport Bureau (2016). "Resettlement Policy Framework". https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/987341468257698361/pdf/Ethiopia-Addis-Ababa-Urban-Transport-and-Land-Use-Support-Project-resettlement-policy-framework.pdf.*

137 *"Pedestrian Road Safe Action Plan for Accra Metropolitan Assembly 2018 – 2022" (2017). https://ama.gov.gh/documents/Pedestrian-Safety-Action-Plan-FOR-PRINT-INDIVIDUAL-PAGES.PDF.pdf.*

138 *Government of the Town of Mont Royal. (2015). "Policy for the Installation of Speed Humps on Residential Streets". www.ville.mont-royal.qc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/politique_installation_dos_ane_eng.pdf.*

139 *"Guide to Appointed School Bus Stops" (2019). https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:7cO44WVCtmoJ:https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/appointed-school-bus-stop-guide.pdf+&cd=16&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ua&client=safari.*

Group of children playing outside
© UNICEF/UN0647712/Bänsch

Another component of a safe street concept is applicable exclusively for schools, such as school streets (sometimes called "healthy school streets", "school exclusion zones" or "car-free school streets"[140]), which implies areas that are closed to traffic for set times to support walking and cycling to school. This will improve safety and air quality, promote the increase of active travel, encourage independent mobility and foster social cohesion and reduce traffic congestion.[141] For example, the Canadian cities of Mississauga, Vancouver and Victoria, under the School Streets Programme, introduced measures for the drop-off and pick-up times at the street adjacent to each school and road closure times to motor vehicle traffic for greater access to walking, biking and rolling for up to 45 minutes depending on the location.[142]

The creation of low-speed zones is common near schools, child centres, playgrounds, parks (including skate parks), sport facilities and zoos, and covers the streets along the building and the area one to two blocks around it.[143] Such low-speed zones provide the following benefits for children: fewer traffic fatalities and serious injuries; increased physical activity and play as well as improved quality of life and public health.[144] There should be specific traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, curb extensions, raised crosswalks, crossing signs, enforced speed limits, zone pavement markings and other traffic-calming devices established to remind drivers to treat the area with special care and attention. Speed limits should not exceed 30 km/h, with restrictions for heavy vehicles to reduce the risk

140 "Sustrans School Streets" (2019). www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/uk-wide/sustrans-school-streets.

141 8 80 Cities. (n.d.). What are School Streets Programs? 880cities.Org. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/school-streets/.

142 Walk. Bike. Roll. (2021). School Streets Pilot Overview. https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/school-streets-pilot-report.pdf.

143 Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre and Safe Routes to School (2015, July). Around the School. Guide.Saferoutesinfo.Org. http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/engineering/the_school_zone.cfm.

144 World Resource Institute and Global Road Safety Facility (n.d.). Low-Speed Zone Guide. Empowering communities and decision-makers to plan, design, and implement effective low-speed zones. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/465801621306401895/pdf/Low-Speed-Zone-Guide-Empowering-Communities-and-Decision-Makers-to-Plan-Design-and-Implement-Effective-Low-Speed-Zones.pdf.

School streets improve safety and air quality, promote the increase of active travel, encourage independent mobility and foster social cohesion and reduce traffic congestion

of both death and serious injury.[145] In Alberta, Canada, Section 107 of the Alberta Traffic Safety Act,[146] revised in December 2022, prescribes a maximum speed limit of 30 km/h within school and playground zones, in both urban and rural environments. A municipality has the right to lower a maximum speed limit but it shall not be lower than 20 km/h.[147] By their nature, school zones should prioritize the mobility of children who walk and bike to school, encourage and enforce very low motor vehicle speeds, ensure proper lane width (3 meters is a recommended maximum), alert drivers to the presence of children and maximizing pedestrian visibility by ensuring clear sightlines (e.g. no parked cars) leading up to the school zone.[148]

The improvement of pedestrian crossings also influences the general safe street concept for children. Such crossings can help create more walkable neighbourhoods and pedestrian networks so that children can safely reach destinations. For example, the United Kingdom 2007 Manual for Streets requires tactile paving on all types of crossings (uncontrolled, informal, pedestrian refuges and kerb build-outs, zebra or signalized crossings)[149] while the private firm Arup in a report titled Cities Alive: Designing for Urban Childhoods highlights that making crossings colourful[150] and raised intersections promote optimal pedestrian visibility and slow speeds.[151] New Zealand, in Chapter 15 of the 2009 Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide enshrines the possibility to include kerb extensions and pedestrian islands at zebra crossings to enhance children's safety.[152]

Road safety, among other things, also consists of bus stops for children. The general parameters to make these bus stops safe include providing sufficient lighting, means for surveillance, available seating with covers, providing traffic management techniques to reduce vehicular speeds, the creation of a pedestrian network and bicycle infrastructure around bus stops[153] supplemented with attractive and practical design[154], legible signage and playful murals to make children's journeys more enjoyable.[155]

145 Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre and Safe Routes to School (2015, July). "Around the School". Guide.Saferoutesinfo.Org. http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/engineering/the_school_zone.cfm.

146 "Alberta Traffic Safety Act" (2000). https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/t06.pdf.

147 "Guidelines for School and Playground Zones and Areas" (2007). https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/c68b3fbd-6de0-4021-9b97-4d1fab49e8a6/resource/c14e70b4-4bde-4709-bf9c-f2fd17b3fb4f/download/schlpgnd.pdf.

148 World Resource Institute and Global Road Safety Facility (n.d.). "Low-Speed Zone Guide. Empowering communities and decision-makers to plan, design, and implement effective low-speed zones". https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/465801621306401895/pdf/Low-Speed-Zone-Guide-Empowering-Communities-and-Decision-Makers-to-Plan-Design-and-Implement-Effective-Low-Speed-Zones.pdf.

149 United Kingdom, Department of Transport (2007). "Manual for Streets". https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072722/Essex_Manual_for_Streets_Redacted.pdf.

150 Arup (2007). "Cities Alive: Designing for Urban Childhoods". www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/cities-alive-designing-for-urban-childhoods.

151 World Resource Institute and Global Road Safety Facility (n.d.). "Low-Speed Zone Guide. Empowering communities and decision-makers to plan, design, and implement effective low-speed zones". https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/465801621306401895/pdf/Low-Speed-Zone-Guide-Empowering-Communities-and-Decision-Makers-to-Plan-Design-and-Implement-Effective-Low-Speed-Zones.pdf.

152 New Zealand, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (2009). "Pedestrian planning and design guide". www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/pedestrian-planning-guide/docs/chapter-15.pdf.

153 Zhang, K. J. (2012). Bus Stops Urban Design. https://issuu.com/kjzhang/docs/bus_stop_urban_design_kevin_jingyi_zhang.

154 UNECE (2020). A Handbook on Sustainable Urban Mobility and Spatial Planning Urban Mobility and Spatial Planning Promoting Active Mobility. https://thepep.unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Handbook%20on%20Sustainable%20Urban%20Mobility%20and%20Spatial%20Planning.pdf.

155 In the framework of the "Growing Up Boulder" programme in Colorado, U.S., jointly with local children it was possible to upgrade bus stops to make them enjoyable for children. Regeneration Team Greater London Authority (2019). Making London Child-Friendly. Designing Places and Streets for Children and Young People. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ggbd_making_london_child-friendly.pdf

Three boys walking down the street.
Photo by Charu Chaturvedi. Source: Unsplash

Ontario, Canada, under the framework of its Child- and Youth-Friendly Land-Use and Transport Planning Guidelines also has provisions for the establishment of easy transfers between bus routes for child usability.[156] Safe cycling facilities for children consist of bike paths or lanes designed to have sufficient width, as well as the introduction of protected bike lanes separated from motorized vehicles. UN-Habitat suggests 2 meters as a minimum width for one-way movements and 3 meters for two-way movement,[157] which will also accommodate a cargo bike or a three-wheeler. In 1997, New York City in the United States, established the New York State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to develop bike networks that formed a part of existing urban plans.[158]

Oslo, Norway, has encouraged bicycle use through its urban planning regulations for a long time, and in 2015, the city introduced yet another strategy that makes the width of lanes flexible (e.g. 2 meters for the bicycle lane width is recommended on the uphill sides of streets so that cyclists feel more comfortable and safe).[159] Massachusetts, United States, in its state-wide guide, provides for specific guidance on planning, design and operations for separated bike lanes. It highlights the need to establish bollards, delineator posts, flexible poles, concrete carriers or planters between the streets, or to divide bike lanes and streets with buffers to create a physical separation between the bike lane and vehicle traffic.[160] Such safe cycling facilities would attract a wider spectrum of cyclists, including children.

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156 Gilbert, R. and O'Brien, C. (2005). Child- and Youth-Friendly Land-Use and Transport Planning Guidelines. https://bel.uqtr.ca/id/eprint/3120/1/Child-%20 and%20youth-friendly%20land-use%20and%20transport%20planning%20 guidelines.pdf.

157 UN-Habitat (2020). "Streets for walking and cycling". https://unhabitat.org/ sites/default/files/2020/06/streets-for-walking-and-cycling.pdf.

158 United States, New York State Department of Transportation (1997). New York State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/ bicycle/maps/app_repository/bike_and_ped_plan.pdf.

159 World Resources Institute (n.d.). Safe Bicycle Lane Design Principles. Responding to Cycling Needs in Cities during COVID and Beyond. https:// wrirosscities.org/sites/default/files/safe-bicycle-lane-design-principles.pdf.

160 MassDOT (n.d.). "Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide". www. mass.gov/doc/chapter-3-general-design-considerations/download.

A city mapping initiative, in turn, helps to identify the most appropriate and safe routes for children. The initiative has been implemented in many ways, for example, through neighbourhood walks with the mayor, joint mapping workshops between urban planners and children in Heidelberg (Germany)[161] Tokyo (Japan),[162] Cupertino (California, United States)[163] in both private and public ventures. Such maps were developed in close collaboration with children to increase their safety on their way to school, while biking or walking. The creation of car-free neighbourhoods is an effective way to provide safe, dedicated spaces for children to cycle or stroll on their own. Such an initiative was implemented in Pontevedra, Spain, in 2017, through the introduction of car-free policies to adapt to the

needs of people with functional diversities, including children.[164] In London, United Kingdom, in 2020, bold plans were introduced under the London Streetspace Programme aimed at banning cars and widening pavements on some of its busiest streets.[165] This programme is projected to have innumerable benefits for children living there as it promises to improve their safety, wellbeing and enhance their interests in the community and schools.

Based on the above-mentioned examples of countries incorporating child-responsive road safety provisions into laws and policies, the following are recommendations for child-responsiveness in urban policies and laws:
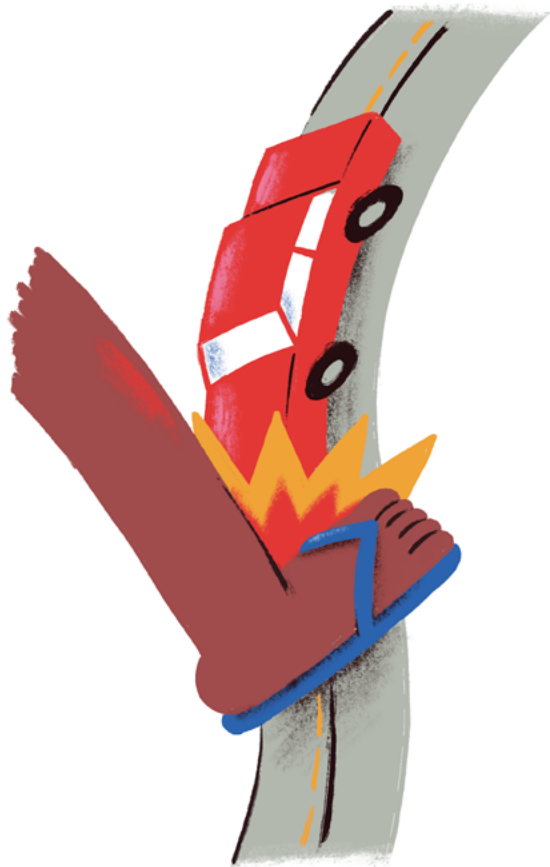
A | *Prioritizing measures to realize transport security and safety by preventing transport-related incidents, deaths and injuries to children.*

B | *Proposing safety measures in local street areas and road sections frequented by children by adopting child-responsive infrastructure such as: physical traffic calming measures (e.g. speed bumps, extended curbs and raised crosswalks, separation of vulnerable road users from motorized vehicles), child-responsive pedestrian crossings, low speed zones of a maximum of 30 km/h, clear and visible signage, child-responsive terminals and increasing the use of segregated non-motorized transport channels.*

C | *Instituting safe road user programmes such as safety campaigns targeting users of motorized and non-motorized transport. This will help them to be aware and to understand the importance of the safety of children and support policy measures to advance road safety evidence-based interventions.*

D | *Setting the standards for child-responsive design of transport infrastructures such as roads, non-motorized transport channels, terminals and crossings, safe school zones and enforcing policies to implement and operate these standards.*

161 Kinderwegepläne Heidelberg. (n.d.). Heidelberg.De. www.heidelberg.de/hd,Lde/HD/Leben/Kinderwegeplaene.html.

162 Krysiak, N. (2020). Designing Child-Friendly, High-Density Neighbourhoods. Transforming our cities for the health, wellbeing and happiness of children. https://90ffb89e-d990-4f1a-90f3-7974ef8ea8c5.filesusr.com/ugd/534ed-b_5e8553bb853d40228da3083a0ed1eede.pdf.

163 City of Cupertino (n.d.). Cupertino Safe Routes to School. Cupertino.Org. www.cupertino.org/our-city/departments/public-works/transportation-mobili-ty/safe-routes-2-school/what-is-cupertino-safe-routes-2-school-sr2s.

164 Council of Pontevedra (2017). "Fewer cars – more city. Pontevedra". www.pontevedra.gal/publicacions/fewer-cars/files/assets/common/downloads/publication.pdf.

165 Sims, A. (2020). "This map shows plans to make London the biggest car-free capital in the world". TimeOut. www.timeout.com/london/news/this-map-shows-plans-to-make-london-the-biggest-car-free-capital-in-the-world-051820.

Key **Reflections**

Smiling girl holding on a rope.
Photo by Muhammad-taha Ibrahim. Source: Unsplash

The physical surroundings in which children and young people grow influence and shape their interactions, development and experience of life into adulthood. Of the global slum population, it is estimated that between 350 to 500 million are children who suffer directly and indirectly from multiple deprivations, experience more acute limitations to urban services, and have limited access to public infrastructure and amenities such as schools, health facilities, community centres and libraries. Additionally, urban areas have very limited and context-specific policies, laws and public investments that are tailor-made for children, which leads to their marginalization and exclusion and hinders the realization of their fundamental human rights. This has also led to structural territorial and urban inequalities between regions and within countries, between urban and rural areas and within cities that affect the realization of children's rights. As a response to these challenges, UN-Habitat and UNICEF have collaborated to develop this guidance to provide direction to urban practitioners and other stakeholders on how to adequately mainstream the rights of children in urban policies and legislation – the key drivers of change in cities – with the aim of building sustainable and inclusive urban spaces.

Regarding participatory urban planning and despite the need for a comprehensive approach that involves all stakeholders to achieve inclusive outcomes in the context of urbanization, certain fundamental principles are not put into practice and leave children out of the decision-making processes. Thus, this guidance reiterates the crucial role of children in decision-making processes, as exemplified by global normative instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the European Union Charter. Furthermore, in the urban context, the New Urban Agenda encourages opportunities for dialogue that are inclusive of age and gender, with participation from various stakeholders, including children. It emphasizes the importance of enabling children to have a voice and influence in urban policies that affect their lives. Based on the above, the guidance outlines three broad forms of child participation (consultative, collaborative and child-led) with specific examples of their implementation in the urban planning realm. Their operationalization is depicted by urban planning-related legislative and policy best practices in Austria, Chile, Germany and Uganda.

Another component covered by the guidance is mainstreaming children into national and subnational urban policies through legislation. It contains an overview of the basic principles applicable, their development processes as well as an analysis of how children can be integrated into these development processes or cycles. Thus, each of the five phases of the national urban policy cycle (feasibility, diagnosis, formulation, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation) is illustrated with specific actions to be followed and outputs to be achieved. Additionally, the guidance showcases the operationalization process of UNICEF principles in national urban policy. For instance, it provides how housing and land tenure (UNICEF Principle 2) in combination with the national urban policy social sustainability building block, promotes social inclusion. Regarding the quality of housing, Michigan in the United States provides

an example of best practice as it has regulations that require each room used by children to have adequate ventilation and be maintained at a safe and comfortable temperature so that children do not feel too hot or cold. Concerning transport and road safety, the guidance demonstrates that it is necessary to install low-speed zones (in locations with high numbers of child travellers), improve pedestrian crossings as well as to make bus stops safe, etc. In Australia, for instance, the waiting place for school children should be in an area well clear of passing traffic, free of roadside hazards and it should be a hard stand, all-weather waiting type, preferably eight metres from the edge of travel lanes.

As the document has been developed using a cross-sectoral approach between UN-Habitat and UNICEF's international best practices, the guidance encourages a united effort to enhance the well-being of all individuals while addressing existing individual and societal susceptibilities. Although each of these institutions has its own specific sphere of influence, the interlinkages between urban planning and social services serve as an illustration of the cross-sectoral approach which has resulted in defining child-responsive social services. Cities should have social amenities (medical, educational etc.) that ensure safety for all children – particularly the most vulnerable in urban areas – and adequate infrastructure through effective spatial planning that enables access to quality water, sanitation and hygiene services. To operationalize the urban planning and social services delivery through a child-centred approach, the guidance provides examples from normative (Sweden) and institutional (Bahamas, Kenya) spheres. Overall, the guidance not only provides various ways for meaningful child participation, but also provides the principles and mechanisms which should be incorporated into the policy and legislative instruments to successfully promote sustainable and inclusive urban spaces for all, especially children and young people.

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UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have developed this Guidance on Child-Responsive Urban Policies, Laws and Standards to support Governments to create urban spaces where children can access basic services, clean air and water; where children feel safe to play, learn and grow, which includes ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are integrated into public policies and decision-making processes. The present document highlights the important role that policy and legislation play as drivers of change; they set normative standards and minimum expectations for duty-bearers in all aspects of children's life, survival and development. Hence, the rights and interests of children in the urban context should be considered and mainstreamed in planning, financing, administrative and structural reforms at all levels of government, including at the local level. Thus, this document contains a succinct but comprehensive summary of the best practices, country-specific, practical examples, including a set of global child-rights frameworks that are necessary to grant children equal value and to guarantee them the necessary protection and opportunities for participation. This guidance has been developed in such a way that it is useful for governments at all levels, children-led institutions, young peoples' associations, sectoral institutions, urban practitioners, non-state actors, and community-based organizations and children.