

## Chapter 5

### The Social Value of Sustainable Urbanization: *Leaving No One and No Place Behind*



The opportunities offered by cities lend a social value to urbanization. When cities are well-planned and managed, they can lift families out of poverty, liberate women from gender-based discrimination, point to bright futures for children and youth, offer comforts and supports to older persons in their golden years and welcome migrants looking for a better life. This wide-ranging value of urbanization is one of its most potent features. Cities are the crucible in which social outcomes will be improved for all types of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

But the social value of urbanization will only be realized alongside the intangible value of urbanization. This broad category encompasses the institutions—rule of law, property rights and democratic participatory systems, among others—that allow cities to function effectively. Embedded in this intangible value is the cultural element of cities, from the diverse backgrounds of their residents to the cultural heritage assets at their disposal.

## Quick Facts

1. The right to the city, which underpins the social value of urbanization, means that all people, especially vulnerable groups should have equal opportunities and access to urban resources, services and goods.
2. The value of urbanization is socially inclusive when it enhances gender equality, protects the rights of minority and vulnerable groups and ensures social inclusion.
3. Many cities around the world are designing and retrofitting their cities to meet the needs and priorities of children.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic is eroding the social value of urbanization by exacerbating inequality, further marginalizing vulnerable groups and pulling more people into poverty worldwide.
5. Cultural diversity contributes to the vibrancy, prosperity, inclusiveness, competitiveness, and positive perception of cities.

## Policy points

1. When adequately harnessed, the social value of sustainable urbanization offers pathways to enhancing social inclusion, reducing inequality and ending poverty; thereby, leaving no one and no place behind.
2. If integrated through inclusive policies, migrants will not only ease skill shortages, but will contribute to the social, economic cultural enrichment of their host communities.
3. A system that leaves no one and no place behind and creates equal opportunities for all recognizes that economic growth alone will not reduce inequality and poverty.
4. Sustainable and inclusive cities are the outcome of good governance that encompasses effective leadership; integrated urban and territorial planning; jurisdictional and multilevel coordination; inclusive citizen participation; and adequate financing.
5. To adequately harness the social value of urbanization, authorities must address the threats to more egalitarian cities.

Cities are unique in their ability to improve social outcomes and create ladders of opportunity. Sustainable urbanization can enhance the social value of cities by ending poverty, promoting equity and improving quality of life for all. Urban areas are where aspirations are realized, from pursuing economic ambitions to embracing social identities. However, as has been consistently emphasized throughout this Report, the value of sustainable urbanization will not be realized without strategic interventions. Unlocking the social value of urbanization requires a transformative change towards people-centred policies and programmes, rooted in the ideals of sustainable urban development.

### **Sustainable urbanization can enhance the social value of cities by ending poverty, promoting equity and improving quality of life for all**

To that end, realizing the social value of sustainable urbanization also depends on various tangible and intangible features of cities such as urban growth and cultural norms. Approximately 200,000 new city dwellers are added to the world's population daily, which translates into 5 million new urban dwellers per month in the developing world and 500,000 in developed countries.<sup>1</sup>

These regions have varying abilities to cope with this demographic influx. Urban growth rates are much faster in developing regions as demonstrated by the growth rate in Africa, which is ten times higher than Europe.<sup>2</sup> Recent reduction in fertility rates in most of the developing world means that the working-age population (25 to 64 years) is growing faster than other age groups, providing an opportunity for accelerated economic growth and social wellbeing, which is known as the “demographic dividend.”<sup>3</sup> These trends translate into differing abilities of city governments to achieve the social value of urbanization and improve residential quality of life in meaningful and tangible ways.

This chapter addresses the social and intangible dimensions of sustainable urbanization. It discusses how sustainable urbanization can contribute to the social value of cities by reducing inequality and poverty; enhancing social inclusion with a focus on gender, older persons, children and youth; and fostering effective systems of governance and institutions. The chapter further explores distinct policy responses and case studies to show how the social and intangible values of sustainable urbanization are enhanced and strengthened at the national and local levels. If pursued, these approaches can ensure that no one and no place is left behind in the process of urbanization.

### 5.1. Understanding the Social and Intangible Value of Sustainable Urbanization

The social value of urbanization is a recurring theme in the global development agenda as one of the intrinsic dimensions of sustainable development. It is foundational within the first transformative commitment of the NUA: “sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty.”<sup>4</sup> This commitment acknowledges the importance of people-centred urban development and respect for the basic human rights of migrants, displaced persons and refugees. It also promotes equitable access to physical and social infrastructure for all.<sup>5</sup> The NUA mentions social integration and inclusion, emphasizing the importance of sustainably managing the urban environment and developing programmes to achieve an improved quality of life for all. The social value of urbanization is built on the pillars of spatially-just resource distribution, political agency, and social, economic and cultural diversity.<sup>6</sup>

The intangible value of sustainable urbanization refers to effective institutions (both formal and informal), good governance, respect for human rights and celebrating cultural diversity. The synergy between formal institutions, the national constitution, laws, regulations and social norms provide the superstructure for the value of urbanization to be fully realized and improve quality of life. The informal features may not be written into law, but instead include sociological phenomena like customs,

traditions, a sense of belonging and identity, civic pride, shared urban values and participation in political and social life. Women’s empowerment and other forms of gender development are interconnected to the formal institutions and are either amplified or limited depending on a wide range of contextual factors. These attitudes and practices are fundamental to the notion of belonging, which ensures that the city will be able to serve all residents and offer equal access to public services, funds and democratic rights, including the right to hold office or be represented in government.

Enhancing the social and intangible value of urbanization is key to addressing the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, both to reduce its spread and provide an equitable social safety net for all residents. This urgent need relies almost entirely on the capacity of governments to provide resources that support physical and mental wellness. In this regard, city governments and their development partners need to actively facilitate a transition to equitable, inclusive sustainable urban development.

The processes of urbanization can be leveraged for the purpose of addressing global challenges like inequality, climate change, poverty, affordable housing, productive employment, and access to adequate infrastructure and basic services, among others.<sup>7</sup> Urbanization is an efficient way to enhance social value when cities and urban extensions are properly planned and governed through democratic and participatory processes. It is 30–50 per cent cheaper to provide services and infrastructure in cities on account of the large economies of scale; consequently, urban areas provide these services more efficiently in poor neighbourhoods which, in the long run, can contribute to reducing inequality and exclusion. Inequality can also be addressed through redistributive policies that give priority to low-income and vulnerable groups in the provision of urban services through area-based solutions.

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## 5.2. Pursuing Inclusion through Sustainable Urbanization

There is a growing consensus that inclusion needs to be explicitly integrated into urban development policies and programmes and that this focus must address the unique needs of individuals and groups (Chapter 2). The value of urbanization is socially inclusive when it enhances gender equality, protects the rights of minority and vulnerable groups and ensures civic participation. Both the SDGs and the NUA explicitly acknowledge the importance of ensuring the distribution of opportunity in the urban development processes so that everyone can benefit from the benefits associated with urbanization.

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### 5.2.1. Ensuring the right to the city

The World Charter on the Right to the City recognizes that cities are at the core of wealth creation; social, political and cultural diversity; and environmental preservation efforts. However, access to these opportunities is not equal for all inhabitants. The “right to the city” means that all people, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups, should have equal opportunities and access to urban resources, services and goods. Effective citizen participation in local policies creates the responsibility for governments to ensure just distribution of resources and acknowledge socio-cultural diversity as a source of social enhancement.<sup>8</sup>

Every city needs to fully address human rights in four main areas.<sup>9</sup> First, urban laws should lay out the entitlements due to urban dwellers. These include adequate housing, health care, safe and affordable water and sanitation, security, recreation and public space for all. Second, cities should establish the values that ought to guide the treatment accorded to individuals in urban areas, emphasizing respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, non-discrimination, inclusivity and the realization of the potential of all human beings. Third, authorities should empower city dwellers to participate in urban planning, management and governance

decisions, as well as to hold their leaders accountable. Fourth, they should guide the process of resolving competing interests for urban goods and services.

For these objectives to be fulfilled, the NUA states that Member States should “aim to achieve cities and human settlements where all persons are able to enjoy equal rights and opportunities, as well as their fundamental freedoms.”<sup>10</sup> The NUA acknowledges the right to an adequate standard of living for all, particularly for the poor and vulnerable groups. It also emphasizes participatory and inclusive decision-making across all levels of government and between stakeholders; promotes effectiveness, transparency and accountability in decision-making; encourages inclusion and respect for the rights of women, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants; and calls for an end to the criminalization of homelessness.

These commitments rely heavily on targeted policies, legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, the role of the law and institutions is to identify not only rights but also duties and the corresponding duty bearers. Laws need to be understandable, enforceable and effective, and as such:<sup>11</sup>

- offer a reasonable trade-off between the costs and benefits of compliance;
- reflect the current urban context;
- be the product of consultative, inclusive processes;
- be economically and politically inclusive while creating the basic preconditions for economic growth;
- protect the interests of the public (with a focus on the poor) when confronted by stronger commercial and political interests;
- promote stable and sustainable urban governance;

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- build strong social contracts between state and non-state actors; and
- be designed in such a way that even a relatively fragile state or city can effectively implement them.

There are practical examples of the right to the city that have incorporated a strong social inclusion and participatory agenda in different parts of the world. Dublin, Ireland has granted non-Irish, non-EU residents the right to vote in local elections irrespective of their legal status.<sup>12</sup> This form of political inclusion includes voter education and awareness campaigns, and marks a departure from the long-established link between civic rights and nationality.<sup>13</sup> Following protracted activism, the Government of India passed a law in 2014 to protect the livelihoods of street vendors and establish a participatory mechanism to regulate street vending.<sup>14</sup> In Colombia, the government has taken the necessary steps to guarantee access to basic services—water supply, sanitation, electricity, waste collection,

telecommunications and gas—for all residents including slum dwellers.<sup>15</sup> The lack of basic services is a key feature of informal settlements and is conventionally motivated by lack of secure formal tenure; the basic services guarantee effectively breaks this link and integrates slum dwellers into the mainstream space of shared basic services with or without land title.

The diversity of residents in cities presents a challenge to urban governments in their attempts to meet the needs of their underserved and vulnerable populations. By focusing their resources on cross-cutting and intersectional issues, they can begin to address significant concerns. While the needs and desires for social value are unique across the different groups within a city (Chapter 2), city governments can realize the social value of urbanization by creating cities that are gender equitable, designed for children and youth, accessible to elderly residents, welcoming to migrants and protective of the rights of minority and vulnerable groups.



Women-Only Subway Cars in Delhi India. © Joyfull/Shutterstock

### 5.2.2. Promoting gender inclusive urban policies and programmes

Women make up over half of the global population yet suffer systematic gender discrimination in cities. According to Oxfam, women at the bottom of the economic ladder provide 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day, which is three times more than men do. Worldwide, men own 50 per cent more wealth than women.<sup>16</sup> Gender sensitive urban policies can benefit women in diverse ways: offering increased legal protection; narrowing gender gaps in education at all levels; improving access to services and infrastructure; creating greater employment opportunities; and removing gendered socio-cultural restrictions compared to the experience of women in rural areas.

#### Anecdotal evidence suggests that female leadership has been more effective in addressing the pandemic's interlocking public health and economic impacts

To address gender-based economic inequality, governments must ensure that the economy eliminates the barriers that women face by investing in national care systems and introducing progressive taxation that favours careers over wealth.<sup>17</sup> This critical issue in addressing gender inequity has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with women on the forefront of educating children and caring for the elderly within and across families, while also at an increased risk for domestic violence worldwide.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that female leadership has been more effective in addressing the pandemic's interlocking public health and economic impacts.<sup>19</sup> Some explanations for this effect include female leaders' propensity to adopt proactive and coordinated policy responses, their more unassuming and less pretentious nature, their acceptance of diverse viewpoints, less constraint by traditional trappings of leadership, more acceptance of the science underlying the pandemic and their more hands-on leadership styles.<sup>20</sup>

Gender-sensitive governance involves both the substantive representation of women in decision-making at all levels of government and an enhanced understanding of gender-specific needs within governance structures because women are severely underrepresented in local political

leadership. In a study of 127 cities, only 40 to 50 had women in their political leadership, occupying 13 per cent of the positions.<sup>21</sup> The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recommends that women should occupy not less than 30 per cent of political positions at each level of government. In the European Union, 52 per cent of the population are women, but only 15 per cent of the mayors are women.<sup>22</sup> However, Rwanda has taken inclusion of women in the political space a notch higher, as women account for 61 per cent of the national legislature—far more than any country in the world.<sup>23</sup>

Gender-sensitive governance can be achieved by reducing gaps in policy and service provision that disproportionately affect women and recognizing their unique contribution in the formation of urban policies and programmes. This recognition involves the meaningful interaction of government representatives with grassroots women's movements and civil society groups that actively advocate for women's issues and gender equality. Strategies to give women a greater voice and agency include:<sup>24</sup>

- collective action through unions, social justice movements and the use of technology and social media to enable women access to social, economic and political resources;
- gender quotas at local, regional and national levels;
- well-resourced and strategically located governmental bodies, such as parliamentary caucuses or bureaucratic offices, dedicated to the advancement of women's interests;
- political literacy training for women;
- increased financial resources and support for women running for public offices; and

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- improved social support such as childcare and parental leave benefits.

Given that men and women experience cities and public spaces differently due to their gendered social rules, norms and culture, urban planning must consider their unique needs. Under-representation or exclusion of women in urban decision-making processes across all levels of government has profound implications for women in cities in terms of mobility, safety and access to educational and employment opportunities. In response to this exclusion, women create their own alternatives to male-dominated systems. For example, gender-exclusive transportation services with women drivers or all-women passengers offer rides to women who are willing to pay for a safer service. Such services exist in El Salvador (Linea Rosa), New York City (SheTaxi, She Rides), Cairo (PinkTaxi) and Kerala (SheTaxi), among other cities.<sup>25</sup>

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On a larger scale, various governments are partnering with United Nations Women Friendly Cities programme to develop urban areas where everybody, especially women, can equally enjoy the economic, social and political opportunities offered by the city. In these cities, women have access to health, education and social services; employment opportunities; high quality and comprehensive urban services (such as transportation, accommodation and security); and mechanisms that will guarantee their rights in the event they are subjected to violence.<sup>26</sup> Participating cities develop local equality action plans with a participatory approach and they serve as roadmaps in the areas of education, health, employment, participation in management mechanisms, violence against women and urban services. They are guided by the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other national plans and international conventions.<sup>27</sup>

### Box 5.1: Gender mainstreaming in Vienna

Vienna is an exemplar of gender mainstreaming in urban planning. The city has one of the longest legacies of gender-sensitive planning. It opened the municipal Women's Office in 1992 and began gender mainstreaming—the practice of ensuring women and men are accounted for equally in policy, legislation and resource allocation—in 2000.

Gender is integrated into the city's strategies and all public space designed and built by the city is done so with gender in mind. The outcome is an urban landscape that benefits everyone: parks are lit effectively to provide safety and access; social housing is architecturally designed with flexibility for different family situations; pavements are wider for parents and the elderly; street crossings are longer; and pedestrians are prioritized.

Today gender mainstreaming principles are enshrined in policy, with sanctions for those who do not comply. Gender-sensitive budgeting, which was introduced in 2005, requires each department to report twice a year on how their expenditure has benefited men and women equally. New housing projects must meet gender sensitivity criteria to be subsidized. It is now fairly common practice in Vienna to approach city living through a gender lens. In 2008, UN-Habitat recognized Vienna's urban planning strategy as a best practice.

Other cities are now looking to follow in Vienna's example, with Berlin, Barcelona and Copenhagen all incorporating gender mainstreaming into their urban design efforts. As a trendsetter, the City of Vienna is keen to share its experience with other cities across the world and has published two guides, "Gender Mainstreaming Made Easy" and "Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Development." They provide practical tools and tips, including gender-sensitive language, data collection and advice on how to avoid gender-mainstreaming becoming a catch-all buzzword. The latter guide focuses explicitly on how to achieve gender mainstreaming in an era of austerity and limited resources. Vienna officials believe that gender-sensitive planning is more efficient because it can better target resources for those in need.

Source: URBACT Knowledge Hub, 2019; Hunt, 2019.



Several local governments in Europe have implemented a feminist approach to urban planning. In the Spanish cities of Girona, Gavà and Donosti, a gender perspective informs public spaces and housing projects, which has resulted in better lighting in common spaces and improved spaces for pedestrians.<sup>28</sup> Gender equality in cities is also driven by grassroots organizations, as some cities are being transformed into spaces of inclusion due to the efforts of community organizations and committed citizens. Vienna is a beacon of best practices in gender-sensitive urban planning (Box 5.1).

### 5.2.3. Children and youth

Children and youth account for about 40 per cent of the world's population.<sup>29</sup> Of the 4.2 billion people currently living in urban areas, about one-third of them are children under the age of 18; by 2050, it is estimated that 70 per cent of the world's children will live in urban areas.<sup>30</sup> Many of these children, especially in the developed world, enjoy the advantages of urban life, including access to educational, medical and recreational facilities. Conversely, many in developing regions are denied such essentials; forced into dangerous, exploitative work; and

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face the constant threat of eviction, even in substandard housing. Children account for between 22–55 per cent of the nearly 2.5 million people who are trafficked annually. Around the world, an estimated 215 million boys and girls aged 5–17 were engaged in child labour and 115 million of them in hazardous work.<sup>31</sup>

Urban planning often overlooks the specific needs of children because of outmoded thinking that children are not capable of contributing to urban development.<sup>32</sup> The neglect of the needs of children is clearly demonstrated in the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in school closure and significant restrictions on their outdoor activities and socialization even as adult activities like bars and restaurants have been allowed to reopen. UNICEF



Children's playground, Helsingborg, Sweden. © Art of line/Shutterstock

shows that the mental health and psychosocial impact of restricted movement, school closures and subsequent isolation are likely to intensify already high levels of stress, especially for vulnerable youth.<sup>33</sup>

Given that the built environment offers opportunities where cities can commit to the respect of children's rights, urban planning can be deployed to create thriving and equitable cities where children live and play in healthy, safe,

### Box 5.2: Children's rights and urban planning principles

By adopting ten children's rights and urban planning principles, cities will not only support children's development but also thrive as homes for future generations. All cities should commit to:

*Principle 1: Investments* – Respect children's rights and invest in child-responsive urban planning that ensures a safe and clean environment for children and involves children's participation in area-based interventions; stakeholder engagement and evidence-based decision-making; and securing children's health, safety, citizenship, environmental sustainability and prosperity, from early childhood to adolescence.

*Principle 2: Housing and Land Tenure* – Provide affordable and adequate housing and secure land tenure for children and the community, where they feel safe and secure to live, sleep, play and learn.

*Principle 3: Public Amenities* – Provide infrastructure for health, educational and social services for children and the community, where they have access to the tools necessary to thrive and develop life skills.

*Principle 4: Public Spaces* – Provide safe and inclusive public and green spaces for children and the community, where they can meet and engage in outdoor activities.

*Principle 5: Transportation Systems* – Develop active transportation and public transit systems and ensure independent mobility for children and the community, so they have equal and safe access to all services and opportunities in their city.

*Principle 6: Integrated Water and Sanitation Management Systems* – Develop safely managed water and sanitation services and ensure an integrated urban water management system for children and the community, so they have adequate and equitable access to safe and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene.

*Principle 7: Food Systems* – Develop a food system with farms, markets and vendors, so children and the community have permanent access to healthy, affordable and sustainably produced food and nutrition.

*Principle 8: Waste Cycle Systems* – Develop a zero-waste system and ensure sustainable resource management so children and the community can thrive in a safe and clean environment.

*Principle 9: Energy Networks* – Integrate clean energy networks and ensure reliable access to power, so children and the community have access to all urban services day and night.

*Principle 10: Data and ICT Networks* – Integrate data and ICT networks and ensure digital connectivity for children and the community to ensure universally accessible, affordable, safe and reliable information and communication.

Source: UNICEF, 2018.

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inclusive, green and prosperous communities.<sup>34</sup> Many cities around the world are designing and retrofitting their cities to meet the needs and priorities of children. In Calgary (Canada), Antwerp (Netherlands), Ghent (Belgium) and Rotterdam (Netherlands), planners are designing play into the urban fabric, thereby expanding children's recreational opportunities.<sup>35</sup> In Netherlands and Finland, where cycling and walking to school are standard practice, streets and public spaces have been designed to enhance children's safety.<sup>36</sup> In many African cities, up to 70 per cent of students walk to school, often covering considerable distance, because they have no other choice, yet similar design efforts like sidewalks and cycleways remain far less prevalent.<sup>37</sup>

The health benefits of cycling or walking to school supports planning initiatives that deliver quality walking and cycling routes as seen in successful programmes such as the Belfast Healthy City (Northern Ireland) and the Greenways in East Los Angeles (US).<sup>38</sup> Programmes that cater to the specific needs of children in urban settings align with UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative, which provides guidelines for good urban planning and design to ensure that children and young people can exercise their right to the city (Box 5.2).

### 5.2.4. Ageing in cities

The global population is ageing, with the 65 and over cohort now the fastest growing age group (Chapter 1). As an increasing proportion of the world's population gets older and moves to or remains in cities instead of retiring to the countryside or returning to an ancestral village, authorities will have to pay greater attention to the needs



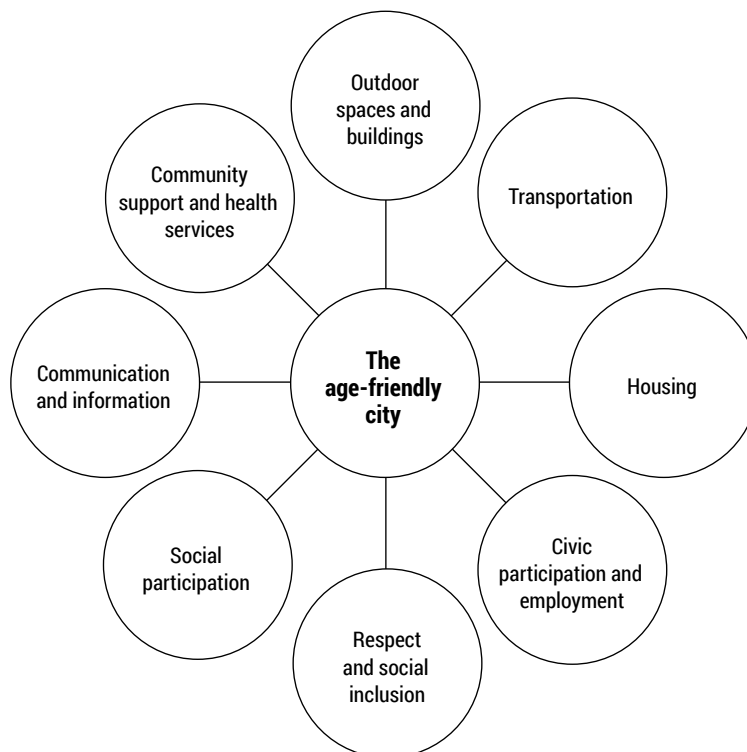
Three senior women sitting on the bench. Santiago de Compostela, Spain. © Lina Balciunaite/Shutterstock

of older persons in urban design and planning. COVID-19, which disproportionately impacts older persons, may temporarily slow this trend.

The WHO developed the Age-friendly City initiative to encourage active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people grow older.<sup>39</sup> In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.<sup>40</sup> The WHO age-friendly city consist of eight entry points for cities to better adapt their structures and services to the needs of older people: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services (Figure 5.1). More than 700 cities in 39 countries participate in the WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities to promote healthy, active ageing and improve the quality of life for people aged 60 and over.<sup>41</sup>

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has adopted the principles of age-friendly cities by focusing on a multi-dimensional approach that includes financial assistance, medical care, community and residential support, transport and mobility, housing and the built environment, active ageing, more flexible employment and family-friendly measures with local governments playing a key role.<sup>42</sup> Hong Kong's challenges in creating an age-friendly city stem from home modifications in small high-rise apartments and accessible mobility in a city where most people rely on public transportation. Spain provides another example of local governments taking a proactive role in urban ageing. Cities have adopted age-friendly cities policies with the goal of improving the physical and social environment of cities in a way that will allow older people to live in dignity, enjoy good health and continue to fully and actively participate in society.<sup>43</sup> In Indonesia, the government is improving mental and physical health by promoting social activities, stress management and early detection of cognitive decline or related vascular or degenerative disorders in older adults.<sup>44</sup> Addressing these concerns, especially social isolation and

**Figure 5.1: Age-friendly city topic areas**



Source: World Health Organization, 2007.

mental health, are particularly acute in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has limited many older persons' opportunities for social interaction.

The megatrend of ageing has implications for the built environment especially as it relates to housing, transportation, recreation and social services. These core components of cities need to be adapted to the needs an increasingly ageing population. Planning for an ageing urban population requires innovation to address increased demand for health care, recreation, transportation and other facilities.<sup>45</sup> Planners in various contexts, especially in developing countries, will have to have to rethink basic assumptions as they learn to integrate active elderly living into the urban fabric.

### 5.2.5. Urban poor migrants

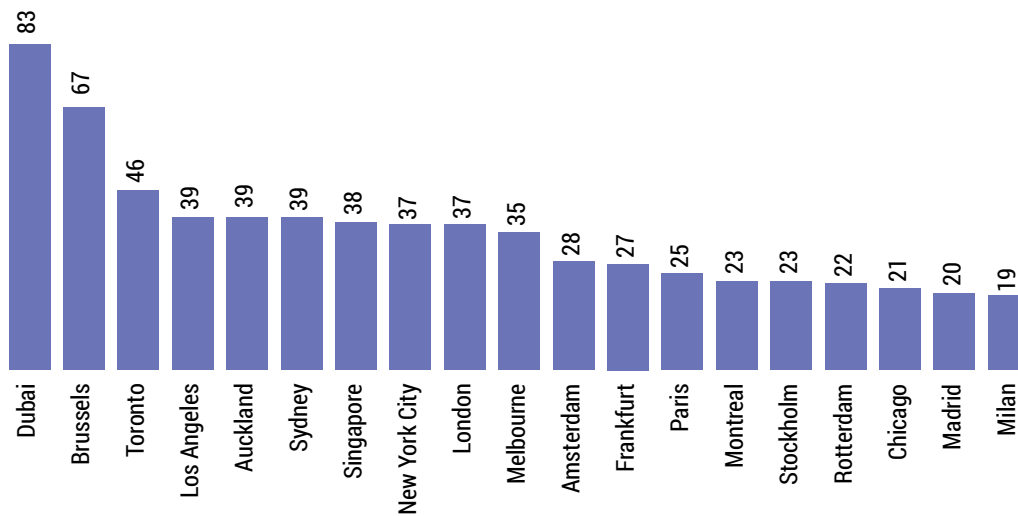
The constant migratory flow to cities, whether from rural areas or through intranational and transnational migration, contributes significantly to urban population growth with impacts on age distribution, since migrants are usually young. Cities are the most desired destinations

for migrants. In Toronto, Los Angeles, Sydney, London, Melbourne and New York, foreign-born residents represent over one-third of the population. In Brussels and Dubai, they significantly outnumber the local population (Figure 5.2). International migration is increasingly transforming urban areas into heterogenous, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual spaces (Chapter 1).

There are currently 763 million internal migrants<sup>46</sup> and 272 million international migrants worldwide<sup>47</sup> (Chapter 1). In China, about one-tenth of the child population (27.3 million) has migrated internally along with their parents. However, a significant number of children and youth also move within countries on their own. An analysis of 12 countries found that one in five migrant children aged 12–14 and half of those aged 15–17 moved without a parent.<sup>48</sup>

Irregular and forced migration due to conflicts, climate change, floods and famine reflects another face of migration, which is more dramatic because of the greater number of refugees and displaced persons moving from their homes to other regions within their countries or to

**Figure 5.2: Foreign-born population in some major cities**



Source: IMO: Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.



Migrant workers journey back home during a nationwide lockdown to fight the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. © Manoj Paateel/Shutterstock

other countries. Such is the case of the dramatic experience of the tens of thousands of African migrants who brave the odds to cross deserts and the sea without any guarantee of ever being socially integrated into European host countries. This trend is also the case of the migration between some violent regions in Colombia, Venezuela, Central America and Mexico, displacing people to neighbouring countries—for example from Venezuela to Colombia, from Honduras and El Salvador to Mexico or from Central America and Mexico to the US.

International migrants often lack even the most basic civil rights in their host countries and face various forms of social and economic exclusion, including from the democratic process. Immigration is one of the most politically charged debates in developed countries.<sup>49</sup> A 2014 European Union opinion survey revealed that immigration was the third most frequently mentioned political issue after unemployment and economic conditions.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, migration was a defining issue in the Brexit referendum on the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

At the same time, some cities and local governments have been welcoming of refugees and immigrants.<sup>51</sup> The German

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cities of Munich, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart and Freiburg have established “welcome departments” within their city halls to prepare for the arrival of refugees and immigrants. For the shrinking cities of Europe, North America, Japan and the Republic of Korea experiencing an ageing population, low birth rates and deindustrialization, the arrival of migrants is an opportunity to revive their fortunes.

If cities and local governments look beyond the humanitarian emergency lens, they can see migrants as integral to the socioeconomic development of their cities. This perspective requires effective integration programmes in the form of housing, employment, education and health, safety and security, social protection and according migrants a sense of belonging.<sup>52</sup> If integrated through inclusive policies, migrants will not only ease skill shortages, but will serve as valuable contributors to the social and economic

### Box 5.3: Montréal: A city of immigration

One in two residents of Montréal was born abroad or has parents who were born abroad. Immigrants account for 33.2 per cent of the population. The city's residents are from 120 different countries of origin and speak 200 languages and dialects. Every year, Montréal welcomes an average of 35,000 newcomers with permanent immigrant status and 68,000 with temporary status due to Canada's well-functioning national immigration policy. This equates to nearly 280 people arriving each day into the city.

Natural increase is declining, leading to the demographic challenge of an ageing population. Rising immigration is important to balance demographics. Montréal has declared itself a "sanctuary city" to respond more effectively to the needs of residents without legal status or with irregular immigration status. While legal immigration is the norm, illegal immigrants are on the rise primarily because of US immigration policy.

The positive contribution of immigration to Montréal's demographic, social and economic development is undeniable. However, the municipal administration must cope with the challenges of integrating new citizens, adapting its services to respond to the difficulties migrants face and reducing obstacles to their integration. These challenges include maintaining, financing and coordinating services among various levels of government; institutionalizing measures to alleviate unfamiliarity with available resources and services; and dealing with language-related specificities that can create situations of isolation and exclusion.

*Housing:* Nearly half of Montréal's recipients of social assistance are born outside of Canada. Immigrant families face difficulties at times in finding adequate and affordable housing.

*Education:* To welcome new arrivals, special classes and services in minority languages, among other amenities, are needed. Access to education for children with an irregular immigration status is a major concern.

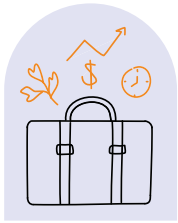
*Employment opportunities:* Some immigrant groups, especially those belonging to visible minorities, face difficulties in job integration, even though many of them have an educational level equal to or greater than that of Montréal's population. Common problems include lack of recognition of achievements and jobs below their skill levels.

*Integration and social cohesion:* Montréal is recognized as an open and welcoming city with a rich and positively perceived diversity. However, cohabitation by people of diverse cultures, socioeconomic conditions and religions often lead to misunderstandings and tensions within and between neighbourhoods. One of the city's emerging (though marginal) issues is violent radicalization that could be attributed to social precariousness, family problems, discrimination, feelings of marginalization and exposure to extremist ideologies. Integration in the workforce is also a challenge.

Montréal recognizes cultural diversity as an asset that enriches the city's sense of living. Understanding the value of cultural diversity is one of the basic premises of Montréal's social compact, enabling the city to innovate continuously through its approach and programmes. The city believes that immigrant integration rests on the principle of co-responsibilities shared by immigrants themselves and the host society, which has proven to be a positive and empowering approach.

Critical factors contributing to the success of its initiatives include many complementary services that facilitate the welcome and integration of newcomers (i.e. support from the first stage of their establishment to help with finding housing and assistance with job searching, among others), as well as joint consultation and coordination. Also, tailor-made services and appropriate communication are essential, as the need for services can differ depending on a person's immigration status. Moreover, it is not always simple for these new citizens to sift through the variety of municipal services.

*Source: World Economic Forum, 2017.*



**If integrated through inclusive policies, migrants will not only ease skill shortages, but will serve as valuable contributors to the social and economic development of their host communities**

development of their host communities. For instance, over the last one and half decades, immigrants have accounted for 47 per cent of the increase in the workforce in the US and 70 per cent in Europe.<sup>53</sup> Employed migrants contribute more to taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits, with the exception being where there is a larger share of older migrants.

The absence of effective integration and social cohesion policies can lead to the formation of segregated and marginalized communities, which could serve as breeding grounds for frustration, disenchantment, vulnerability and even radicalization.<sup>54</sup> The policies for integrating migrants differ considerably. They range from benign policy approaches that empathize with migrants to outright brutality on the part of law enforcement agencies. Since 1989, Montréal, Canada, has established a policy framework to respond to migration and integration-related challenges in a welcoming fashion (Box 5.3).<sup>55</sup>

Migrant workers are among the most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The lockdowns designed to halt the spread of COVID-19 have led to massive loss of jobs all over the world with migrants being highly vulnerable (Chapters 1, 3). This trend will no doubt affect some of the 164 million migrant workers worldwide<sup>56</sup> for whom returning home can mean falling back into poverty. In the Gulf countries, tens of thousands of migrant workers in the construction, hospitality, retail and transport sectors have lost their jobs and have been forced to return home (Chapter 1).

**The lockdowns designed to halt the spread of COVID-19 have led to massive loss of jobs all over the world with migrants being highly vulnerable**

The loss of employment will affect the ability of migrants to make remittances to their home countries. Many developing countries will be hard hit as remittances are predicted to fall by 20 per cent from US\$551 billion in 2019<sup>57</sup> to US\$445 billion in 2020<sup>58</sup> on account of the economic downturn associated with COVID-19. The top remittance-recipient countries in 2019 were India, China, Mexico, Philippines, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Ukraine. They received a total of US\$350 billion or 63.5 per cent of all remittances in developing countries.<sup>59</sup> A decline in remittances would have major implications for urban areas, given their role in poverty reduction, housing finance, education and health care to improve family members' quality of life.

### **5.3: Pursuing Equity through Sustainable Urbanization**

Urban development presents an opportunity to move from equality to equity and remove the systemic barriers that prevent vulnerable individuals and groups from realizing the benefits of the social value of urbanization (Figure 5.3). Inherent in the notion of social value is the belief that urban spaces should not perpetuate inequality or allow for the appropriation of the benefits associated with urbanization by certain groups to the exclusion of others. In such situations, existing structures and institutions are skewed in favour of dominant groups in society, who may legally or otherwise maximize these for their own benefits not by chance but by design and perpetuate the extant conditions that favour them.<sup>60</sup>

**Urban development presents an opportunity to move from equality to equity and remove the systemic barriers that prevent vulnerable individuals and groups from realizing the benefits of the social value of urbanization**

The concept of equity recognizes that redistributive mechanisms are put in place for a fair and more efficient use of resources, skills and opportunities to target the most vulnerable with the highest levels of support. The drive for equity also involves enhancing socioeconomic equality and providing for universal civic participation in the social, political and cultural spheres.<sup>61</sup> For the social



**Figure 5.3: Equality versus equity**

In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Source: City for All Women Initiative, 2015, p. 17.

value of sustainable urbanization to be fully realized, identifying and addressing the root causes of exclusion and inequity are critical.

### 5.3.1. Addressing urban inequity and inequality

For social value to be fully harnessed, urban mechanisms must necessarily address issues of inequity and inequality. In most urban contexts, however, emphasis on economic growth has led to wealth concentration and an increase in urban poverty and inequality in both developed and developing countries. High levels of inequality and exclusion from the decision-making sphere negatively impact social cohesion and the quality of institutions and policies, which slows progress on human and social development.<sup>62</sup> In addition, many cities are not prepared for the multidimensional challenges associated with urban

**The growing inequality gap between developing and developed countries goes beyond differences in income, wealth, access to education, health, employment, credit, natural resources and the quality of life.**

inequality because they lack the sound institutions that are crucial for achieving more equitable cities.

These institutions provide the superstructure that enables underlying factors to operate and deliver maximum benefits for a majority of the population. Institutional inadequacies take the form of weak legal and institutional frameworks, disregard for the rule of law, poor enforcement of property rights, excessive bureaucracy and proliferation of corrupt practices, among others, all of which are incompatible with the notion of equitable cities.

The growing inequality gap between developing and developed countries goes beyond differences in income, wealth, access to education, health, employment, credit, natural resources and the quality of life. For many of the poor, their birthplace and gender increase the odds against them simply because of where they were born.<sup>63</sup> Inequality is multidimensional in how it is reflected within cities, where there is social and spatial exclusion as well as discrimination due to race, gender, group identity, age and other factors. In majority-white multi-ethnic societies, Afro-descended people face particularly acute discrimination, especially in how they are policed by state security forces. That

### **Box 5.4: Black Lives Matter sparks a global urban social movement following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis (US)**

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police officers arrested George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, after a convenience store employee called 911 and told the police that Mr. Floyd had bought cigarettes with a counterfeit US\$20 bill. Seventeen minutes after the first squad car arrived at the scene, Mr. Floyd was unconscious and pinned beneath three police officers, showing no signs of life.

Floyd's death sparked protests in nearly 550 places across the US and over 60 countries against racism and police brutality. Some 15 to 26 million people in the United States participated in demonstrations in June 2020. These figures would make the recent protests the largest movement in the country's history.

The protests raised awareness about inequality, social exclusion and racial bias in many facets of society. Urban planners, designers, and architects called attention to the need for "design justice," or the principle that for nearly every injustice in the world, there is an architecture that has been planned and designed to perpetuate it. Design justice seeks to dismantle the privilege and power structures that use architecture as a tool of oppression and sees it as an opportunity to envision radically just spaces centred on the liberation of disinherited communities.

That built-in oppression takes many forms. It is in the planning decisions that target non-white communities for highway projects and "urban renewal" schemes conceived to steer economic benefits away from existing residents. It is in a design philosophy that turned neighbourhoods into mazes of "defensible space" that often criminalize blackness under the guise of safety. And it is in the proliferation of public spaces that often fail to let certain cultural communities congregate without fear of harassment.

*Source: Hill et al, 2020; Buchanan et al, 2020; Lee Jr, 2020.*

longstanding issue came to a head in June 2020 following the killing of a black man in Minneapolis, US (Box 5.4).

The level of income inequality in cities as reflected by their Gini coefficients varies across regions of the world (Chapter 1). European cities have the lowest levels of inequality among developed countries, while cities in North America especially the US have the highest levels of inequality. Among developing countries, Asian cities generally have the lowest levels of inequality; in some cases, comparable to European cities. However, several Chinese cities are beginning to experience widening inequality brought about by internal migration and the lack of adequate safety nets for migrants. Latin American and African cities have the highest levels of inequality. Over the last decade, income inequality in some Latin American cities has been declining due to social programmes that address income and socio-spatial inequality like informal settlements, economic informality, urban violence and the marginalization of women. Levels of inequality are higher in large cities than in small cities and more pronounced at the urban than national level (Chapter 1). The COVID-19 pandemic is exposing and exacerbating existing inequalities in urban areas along several dimensions (Box 5.5).

Inequality in urban areas is undermining the social value of urbanization. A more proactive approach is therefore required to deal with urban inequality challenges and to take advantage of the economic and social opportunities offered by urbanization. Socially-oriented macroeconomic policies are a prerequisite to progressive urban social programmes; that is, if the value generated by urbanization and public investments were more equitably distributed among the most vulnerable social groups in urban settings, there will be greater possibilities of increasing economic prospects, boosting innovation, enhancing productivity and above all addressing socio-spatial inequality.

### **Inequality in urban areas is undermining the social value of urbanization**

In seeking to achieve a more egalitarian society, it is crucial to institute redistributive policies that serve to counter market forces by giving priority to low-income and underserved areas in the provision of urban services.

### Box 5.5: COVID-19: Reinforcing inequalities in urban areas

COVID-19 is reinforcing inequalities that characterize many urban areas. The lockdown and physical distancing measures have disproportionately affected vulnerable low-income households, especially informal sector workers who must leave their homes to earn a living. Working from home favours white-collar and high-income workers who have the necessary amenities. Similarly, online schooling applies to well-off households, and not low-income families who attend schools in informal settlements or where technologically enabled learning facilities are unlikely to be available.

The overcrowded nature of slums and informal settlements, which house up to 60 per cent of the population of some cities in poorly serviced and precarious locations, means that self-isolation and physical distancing is at best illusory. It is not clear how can physical distancing be maintained in Dharavi slum in Mumbai (India) that has a population density of 270,000 people per square kilometre or in the world's largest refugee camp, Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh), with a population of about 3 million people.

Inadequate water, poor sanitation and hygiene in crowded slums, refugee camps and migrant workers' hostels means that handwashing as a preventive measure against the spread of the novel coronavirus is a major challenge. In 2017, 3 billion people globally had no handwashing facility at home, 1.6 billion had limited facilities without soap or water and 1.4 billion had no facility at all. In the least developed countries, close to three-quarters of the population lacked handwashing facilities with soap and water.

Older persons and minority groups are at a higher risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19. In China, those aged 60 years and over accounted for 81 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths. A similar pattern appears in the US, where 80 per cent of COVID-19 deaths occurred among adults aged over 65 years. In Italy, 83.4 per cent of deaths were those over 70 years old. The propensity of older persons to die from COVID-19 has led to the prioritization of health care for younger people, thus reinforcing negative stereotypes that could have the effects of stigmatizing and discriminating against the elderly.

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. In the US, African-Americans account for up to one third of coronavirus deaths but constitute 14 per cent the population. In Chicago, African-Americans account for 72 per cent of COVID-19 deaths but make up only 30 per cent of the population. In New York City, Black and Latino residents were twice as likely to die as compared to white or Asian residents. These differences in part reflect underlying inequality in access to economic opportunities, health care, poverty, pre-existing medical conditions and employment service jobs deemed essential during lockdown, all of which make African-Americans highly vulnerable to COVID-19.

*Source: Extracted from Chapter 1.*

### In seeking to achieve a more egalitarian society, it is crucial to institute redistributive policies that serve to counter market forces by giving priority to low-income and underserved areas in the provision of urban services

The provision of infrastructure and social services in poor neighbourhoods will reduce inequality and enhance social value, cohesion and inclusion. In cities of developed

countries, a key issue to be addressed are manifestations of the various forms of exclusion and marginalization that migrants and other minority groups face, many of which have been worsened by the impacts of COVID-19 (Box 5.5).

A system that leaves one no and no place behind and creates equal opportunities for all recognizes that economic growth alone will not reduce inequality. Governments in Latin America use redistributive policies to bring significant improvements to the living standards of the urban poor through massive investment in health and education. A

### A system that leaves one no and no place behind and creates equal opportunities for all recognizes that economic growth alone will not reduce inequality

classic example is the *Bolsa Família* (Family Stipend) in Brazil that supports millions of poor beneficiaries, most of them living in urban areas, through transfers which are made conditional on requirements such as school attendance, visits to clinics, periodic immunization, prenatal check-ups for pregnant women and remedial education for children and those at risk of being drawn into child labour. By 2015, *Bolsa Família* accounted for 12–21 per cent of the recent sharp decline in inequality and reduced the proportion of Brazilians living below poverty by 7 million from 13 to 3 per cent.<sup>64</sup>

Creating inclusion for the benefits of urbanization requires the removal of the systemic barriers that impede access to goods, services and opportunities, as the European Union is pursuing through initiatives such as Cities Against Social Exclusion. This programme demonstrates the concerted efforts by cities and regions to develop effective policies to counteract social segregation, identify good practices and develop innovative solutions for fostering social inclusion.<sup>65</sup> Stockholm is working to remove barriers to full civic engagement for women, youth, the homeless, older persons and the disabled.<sup>66</sup> Vienna is developing an action plan that entails non-discrimination at all levels while improving political and social participation of all minority groups, including migrants, and monitoring social diversity and integration with measurable indicators.

#### 5.3.2. Eradicating poverty in cities

It is estimated that one-third of all urban residents are poor, which represents one-quarter of the world's total poor with the majority residing in small cities and towns.<sup>67</sup> The rate of growth of the world's urban poor is greater than that the rate of growth of the world's urban population.<sup>68</sup> This fact implies that the urban share of poverty increases with the increasing pace of urbanization, resulting in a greater concentration of poverty in urban areas. The absolute increase in extreme poverty in Africa has implications for poverty in its urban areas given the rapid pace of urbanization. Urban poverty in many African countries is increasing faster than national

poverty.<sup>69</sup> This trend is due in part to the influx of poor rural migrants and the inability of city authorities to adequately respond to their multiple needs.

### It is estimated that one-third of all urban residents are poor, which represents one-quarter of the world's total poor with the majority residing in small cities and towns

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of urban poverty globally with about 23 per cent of the urban population living below the international poverty line and 29 per cent experiencing multidimensional poverty (Table 5.1). In Kenya, while rural poverty declined remarkably from 51 per cent in 2005–2006 to 39 per cent in 2015–2016, urban poverty declined only marginally from 32 to 29 per cent, but increased in absolute numbers from 2.3 million to 3.8 million.<sup>70</sup> The increase is attributed to high population growth, increased cost of living due to high housing, transportation and high food prices, as well as scare employment opportunities, all of which significantly reduced disposable income for urban households.



A woman fetches water. Satkhira, Bangladesh. © UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn

**Table 5.1: People living in monetary or multidimensional poverty, 2013**

Region	Monetary headcount ratio (%)			Multidimensional headcount ratio (%)			Number of economies	Population coverage (%)
	Urban	Rural	Rural share of the poor	Urban	Rural	Rural share of the poor		
East Asia and the Pacific	3.9	6.5	67.8	4.2	10.2	75.5	13	28.9
Europe and Central Asia	0.2	0.5	52.7	0.8	1.8	52.2	17	90.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	1.9	11.2	61.0	2.5	19.9	68.2	17	91.5
Middle East and North Africa	0.9	6.4	84.8	1.9	11.5	83.2	9	72.1
South Asia	3.9	15.2	90.3	10.5	33.3	88.4	5	23.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.6	55.9	83.4	28.8	81.8	85.2	29	60.7
Rest of the World	0.4	0.6	30.7	0.4	0.6	30.7	29	39.6
Total	4.1	21.0	81.3	5.6	33.6	83.5	119	45.0

Notes: Estimates based on the harmonized household surveys in 119 economies  
Source: World Bank, 2018b, p.113.

The incidence of poverty will be worsened by the deleterious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chapter 1). Residents of urban areas in India, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, which account for half of the world's 736 million people living in extreme poverty, are likely to fall further into the poverty trap. Even in relatively well-off regions—East Asia, the Pacific, Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean—millions are expected to enter poverty on account of COVID-19. In Latin America, 28 million people are expected to fall into poverty, with women being overrepresented due to the decline in economic activity precipitated by COVID-19.<sup>71</sup> The portended increase in poverty will have adverse ramifications for achieving SDG 1 of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030. The interlocking nature of this goal means that failing to achieve SDG 1 will negatively impact other goals like hunger and improved nutrition (SDG 2); healthy living (SDG 3); and inclusive and equitable education (SDG 4).

Urban areas offer significant opportunities to generate prosperity, which in turn can be leveraged to eradicate poverty. Generally, higher levels of urbanization are associated with lower levels of poverty. When well-planned and managed, cities can be “real poverty fighters,” if adequate policies are implemented.<sup>72</sup> Realizing the poverty eradication gains of urbanization will, however, depend on how well urban growth is planned and

### Urban areas offer significant opportunities to generate prosperity, which in turn can be leveraged to eradicate poverty

managed, and the extent to which the benefits accruing from urbanization are equitably distributed. Formulating the necessary policies and enabling institutions and organizational change is crucial in eradicating poverty. As developing countries rapidly urbanize, it is important that the necessary investments are made to respond to the increase in population. Managing urbanization should therefore be an essential component of nurturing growth and eradicating poverty.

No city can harness the social value of urbanization when large segments of its population live in extreme poverty. There are several ways by which the social value of urban areas can be enhanced to eradicate poverty, including through the provision of affordable housing, access to land and finance, employment opportunities, a facilitating environment for entrepreneurship and basic

### No city can harness the social value of urbanization when large segments of its population live in extreme poverty

infrastructure. Access to a wide range of good and services, like education, health and recreation, enable citizens to attain their full potential by developing their intellectual capacity and ability to lead full, productive and fulfilling lives. Harnessing the social value of urbanization entails promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of minority and vulnerable groups, as well as ensuring widespread civic participation in the social, political and

cultural spheres. The failure of cities to fully integrate excluded groups into their decision-making process creates and reinforces poverty.

Planned urbanization has helped millions escape poverty through higher levels of productivity, employment opportunities and improved quality of life via better education and health, large-scale public investment

### Box 5.6: Eradicating poverty through improved water supply and sanitation in Surkhandarya province

In the early 2000s, Surkhandarya province in Uzbekistan experienced challenges with water supply and sanitation. Deteriorated, outdated and leaking infrastructure, power outages and lack of revenue hindered better service. Improving the health and living conditions of the people by providing access to safe and reliable water supply and improved sanitation was therefore the government's top priority. While its water and sanitation coverage was relatively high, households in urban areas were supplied with water for only 6 to 16 hours a day, and those in rural areas for between 2 and 10 hours a day.

It was against this backdrop that the Surkhandarya Water Supply and Sanitation Project was approved by the Asian Development Bank in 2009. The goal of the project was to improve living standards, environment and public health in the urban areas of Surkhandarya province by providing safe, reliable, inclusive and sustainable water and basic services, as well as improving community hygiene for 340,000 people living in the seven districts of Kizirik, Angor, Muzrabad, Shurchi, Kumkurgan, Jarkurgan, Sariasiya and Termez City.

The Asian Development Bank prepared a sector strategy, road map and investment plan up to 2020; the authorities rehabilitated and constructed water supply systems, strengthened the capacity of the *vodokanals* (operating arm of water supply and sanitation agency) and developed a commercial approach to customer services. The province adopted three strategies to address the specific needs of the poor, which accounted for 32 per cent of the 2014 population. First, the project covered connection fees, thus eliminating a significant barrier to access by the poor. Second, the *vodokanal* installed mandatory meters that were to be repaid over three years. Finally, the partners built socially inclusive processes into the project to ensure that everyone benefited equally.

The rehabilitation and provision of water supply resulted in significant savings in the purchase of water, which previously consumed about 30 per cent of household monthly income. Access to a water supply system improved the quality of people's lives in small- and medium-sized cities in Surkhandarya province. About 367,000 residents were provided with safe, reliable and inclusive piped water, with the main beneficiaries being 3,079 low-income families, of which 47 per cent were women-headed households. This project provided equitable access to safe and reliable water supply for urban and poor rural communities and vulnerable groups. It also increased the time for other more productive and enjoyable activities, improved health and reduced health care expenses for the poor.

The project provided safe drinking water, ventilated pit latrines and septic tanks in 17 public schools in the seven districts, as well as improved sanitation and promoted positive hygiene behaviour among schoolchildren to prevent communicable diseases. It is anticipated that 90 per cent of the population will be provided with safe and reliable water over 20 hours a day by the end 2020, if an uninterrupted electricity supply is ensured. As of March 2015, water supply varied from 15–22 hours per day as compared to 2–6 hours before the project implementation.

Source: Asian Development Bank, 2019.



Bijoy Sarani Railway Slum, Bangladesh, Dhaka. © UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn

## Planned urbanization has helped millions escape poverty through higher levels of productivity, employment opportunities and improved quality of life via better education and health, large-scale public investment and access to improved infrastructure and services

and access to improved infrastructure and services.<sup>73</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in East Asia, where increases in urbanization over the last three decades have been accompanied by a remarkable decrease in poverty. The provision of improved water supply and sanitation played a key role in reducing poverty in the urban areas of Surkhandarya Province in Uzbekistan (Box 5.6).

Where inclusive social and economic institutions and policies undergird the development process, urbanization and poverty reduction tend to be closely related. However, the direction of causality is neither simple nor unidirectional because of the impact of other intervening factors such as economic growth, pro-poor policies and the extent to which the benefits and opportunities associated with urbanization are equitably distributed.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, planned urban growth is essential for eradicating rural poverty, since sustainable urbanization creates prosperity for both rural and urban populations.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, cities are also the engines of rural development, as they offer rural dwellers better access to information, jobs and services.

Sustained economic growth is a necessary but not the only condition for eradicating poverty. The main challenge is not so much to increase growth, but to ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all segments of the population.<sup>76</sup> Rising levels of poverty in the face of economic growth as seen in many countries is a clear indication that the benefits of economic growth are not always evenly distributed and that growth does not automatically translate into ending poverty. A major predicament is that policies designed

## Sustained economic growth is a necessary but not the only condition for eradicating poverty

to achieve economic growth—and thus the prosperity of cities—do not necessarily result in improved economic and social opportunities for the poor and could indeed worsen existing poverty even while improving the urban economy. Policymakers will have to face important non-economic and equity considerations that must be balanced against economic growth. A city that is not socially inclusive or equitable is unlikely to harness the social value of urbanization.

## 5.4. The Intangible Value of Sustainable Urbanization

While cities offer numerous tangible values, they also offer intangible ones (Chapter 2). This section examines various elements of the intangible value of urbanization, including sound institutions, effective governance systems and urban culture—all of which facilitate a sense of belonging and collective values among urban dwellers.

### 5.4.1. Effective institutions

Sustainable urbanization requires effective institutions both of a formal (constitution, laws and regulations) and informal nature (social norms, customs and traditions) capable of supporting policies and programmes that enhance the social value of cities and make them liveable for all. Effective institutions are indispensable to the management and governance of any city. Sound institutions and mechanisms that empower and include urban stakeholders are crucial for generating value through urbanization, as they provide the supportive framework responsible for steering urban development and enabling it to operate and deliver maximum benefits to a majority of the population. All of these characteristics are incompatible with sustainable urbanization. The most relevant institutional changes affecting urban areas<sup>77</sup> with implication for the value of urbanization are:

- Gradual mainstreaming of the equity agenda by local authorities in close collaboration with national governments
- Adoption of activities and responsibilities beyond traditional local government mandates such as provision of health, education, or housing



- New urban configurations that will bring changes to the size and form of institutions at urban, metropolitan and regional scales
- Weaker local authority finances, especially in smaller cities, owing to undependable transfers from financially strapped central governments
- Slow expansion in effective municipal tax bases, which fail to keep up with demographic growth
- Lack of adequate coordination among national, provincial and local authorities, hampering both planning and implementation of urban policies
- Inadequate or poorly enforced rules and regulations governing urban management due to weak, inefficient institutions and poor civil society participation

UN-Habitat has shown with compelling evidence that the impact of ineffective and weak institutions on sustainable urbanization appears to be more pronounced in African and Arab cities, where over 40 per cent of urban experts cite institutional inadequacies as the single most important impediment. This challenge is less prevalent in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean as indicated by 24 per cent and 27 per cent of the respective urban experts. What this discrepancy implies is that cities in Africa and Arab States need to do more to develop effective institutions as a basis for enhancing the value of urbanization. Indeed, in many developing countries, the institutions required for leveraging and distributing the benefits associated with urbanization, if any, are poorly developed. Sound institutions as called for in the NUA determine the efficacy of urban policies and programmes implemented by all levels of government, including non-state actors.

**In many developing countries, the institutions required for leveraging and distributing the benefits associated with urbanization, if any, are poorly developed**

Creating sound institutions requires effective collaboration between public agencies and non-state actors. Citizen organizations that find a collective value in the city must also take part by increasing their participation in political and social affairs. Working on socio-political agreements among stakeholders and local governments could be a strong driver for better urban governance (Chapter 7). These agreements require a coherent framework, based on leading-edge knowledge of effective, long-lasting urban governance and supported by up-to-date technical knowledge and information. Further, discussions should be directed towards building a long-term, integrated and participatory urban vision based on mutual trust and collaboration.

As participatory agreements, they should be legally formalized in urban plans and programmes, as well as in action-oriented social pacts or agreements to comply with the socially agreed vision of the city. Some urban experiences have led to more equitable and inclusive processes in the distribution of urban facilities and the creation of social capital through mutual collaboration between city governments, stakeholders and social actors as shown in Villa El Salvador (Peru), Barquisimeto (Venezuela) and Porto Alegre (Brazil).<sup>78</sup> Overall, the active participation of governmental institutions and social and citizen organizations is critical to enhance the intangible value of planned urbanization.

#### **5.4.2. How cities and human settlements are governed**

Local governments are key stakeholders in building urban and metropolitan governance within a diversity of political and legislative structures, with varying executive and legislative city responsibilities. Governance is a key component of the intangible value of urbanization and is crucial to providing, maintaining and restoring sustainable and resilient services and social, institutional and economic activity in cities and human settlements.<sup>79</sup> Good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable urbanization and poverty eradication.<sup>80</sup> Although it is commonly accepted that good governance leads to improvements in service delivery, questions remain about how to achieve these ideals. In this regard, the NUA provides a blueprint for achieving good governance and its transformative commitments encourage governments to take the necessary steps to strengthen national, subnational and local institutions.

### Box 5.7: Citizen report card: A tool for urban governance

The Citizen Report Card (CRC) is a simple but powerful tool to provide public service agencies with useful feedback about the quality and adequacy of their services. It is a governance tool that can be used by citizen groups, service providers and policy makers alike to gauge access to services, their quality, problems and hurdles.

The CRC also identifies the key constraints that users, especially the poor and the underserved, face in accessing public services and the effectiveness of staff providing services. These insights help generate recommendations on sectoral policies, programme strategies and management of service delivery to address these constraints and improve service delivery. It can be particularly effective when respondents are asked to rate a wide range of providers, as this allows for relative rankings, which have been proven to be an effective way of providing incentives for improvement.

The CRC was pioneered in Bangalore in 1994 and has since been replicated in other Indian cities such as Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune, as well as many cities in the developing world. In Mumbai, the civic NGO PRAJA used the report card findings to jointly design and make operational a citizen charter on services with the City Municipal Corporation. In addition, two cities in Ukraine and a social development project in the Philippines have prepared report cards based on this model with World Bank support. In the twin cities of Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana, the Citizen's Report Card used a new initiative to elicit feedback on the delivery of water and electricity, which formed the basis for follow-up on complaints and to advocate for citizens' priorities in service delivery.

In 2010, the Rwanda Governance Board introduced the CRC as an invaluable tool for the collection of feedback from citizens for the purpose of ensuring improvement in the quality of service delivery. The 2018 CRC is designed to provide citizens satisfaction as a core component of accountable governance. The Rwanda CRC gives feedback to service providers in 15 broad sectors, which include infrastructure, land, private sector, hygiene, sanitation, social welfare, family issues, security and citizen participation.

The CRC findings have provided further impetus to ongoing efforts to improve service delivery. The finding that 20 per cent of citizens had no dustbins near their houses compelled the Bangalore Municipal Corporation to address this aspect of solid waste management. The report card stimulated Karnataka Electricity Board to undertake a survey on its own to obtain public feedback about its services.

One significant issue that emerges from the CRC work is that a lack of information is a serious barrier that limits citizen access to public services. This challenge has catalysed the agencies to introduce greater transparency in their operations and led to greater interaction between the service providers and citizen groups.

A progression in the influence of the CRC in Bangalore over the years can be seen, from limited impact (with dissemination of feedback) to more impact (with dialogue and public pressure for change) to greater impact (with advice on reform). The skills, resources and organization required to play all three roles will not always be available to civil society organizations. Nonetheless, independent civil society groups can play a useful role to provide such feedback which, in turn, can act as a stimulus to reforms.

*Source: Administrative Staff College of India, 2008; Global Communities 2015; Citizen's Rwanda Governance Board, 2018; UN-Habitat, undated.*

The prevailing situation is that many city governments, especially in developing countries, are weak due to limited power over key public services, including planning, housing, roads, transit, water, land use, drainage, waste management and building standards. Local governments often lack the financial resources to make their cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Chapters 1, 8). When governance capacity is weak, cities are constrained in their abilities to address the persistent and emerging challenges associated with urbanization.<sup>81</sup>

Sustainable, resilient, safe and inclusive cities are the outcome of good governance that encompasses effective leadership; integrated urban and territorial planning; jurisdictional and multilevel coordination; inclusive citizen participation; and adequate financing. Strong leadership is critical for overcoming fragmentation across departments, various levels of government and investment sectors when building consensus and eliciting action on specific agendas.<sup>82</sup> Integrated urban and territorial planning across broad urban regions is vital for effective governance. Territorial and spatial strategies are central in addressing the risks associated with climate change and public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic that transcend jurisdictions and require effective and contextually appropriate response strategies. Multilevel coordination is essential not only in areas such as land, transport, energy, emergency preparedness and related fiscal and funding solutions, but in addressing poverty and social exclusion through innovative mechanisms of inter-territorial solidarity.<sup>83</sup>

### **Sustainable, resilient, safe and inclusive cities are the outcome of good governance that encompasses effective leadership; integrated urban and territorial planning; jurisdictional and multilevel coordination; inclusive citizen participation; and adequate financing**

The provision of sufficient, affordable and quality basic services is considered a core function of urban governments, which they deliver through a wide range of arrangements with the private sector and relevant stakeholders. However, in many cities, delivery is constrained by the challenges of coordination, governance,

finance and capacity, and further exacerbated by the pace and scale of urbanization. Over the years, urban dwellers have been empowered to make their voices count by holding service providers accountable for the quality of services delivered (Box 5.7).

Given the wide range of actors participating at different levels in decision-making, there is a need to foster network-based rather than hierarchical governance.<sup>84</sup> For instance, the evolving roles of private and public actors, combined with new forms of political participation, facilitate a transformation of urban governance. In such contexts, the institutions and values that underpin them have played an instrumental role in aligning and reconciling interests and fostering shared paradigms of urban governance. For example, the Citizens' Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona is a strategy that articulates shared objectives and actions between Barcelona's City Hall and different actors in the city, promoting co-production through network-based actions.<sup>85</sup> The programme is the outcome of a two-way interactive process that entails a top-down process proposed by the municipal government intersecting with a bottom-up process based on the effort and interests of different organizations and social networks working within the city's social welfare system.<sup>86</sup>

#### **5.4.3. Cultural diversity in urban areas**

Culture is an intangible value for city development with tangible manifestations.<sup>87</sup> Culture is the life blood of urban areas and it addresses different forms of social integration, which involves understanding the informal and formal institutional structures of the past and the present. As shown earlier, foreign-born residents constitute a significant proportion of the population of many cities; thus, making these cities more heterogeneous and multicultural. People from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds now live together. The cultural diversity of cities contributes to their vibrancy, prosperity, inclusiveness, competitiveness, attractiveness, positive perception and overall development. Indeed, the cultural diversity of cities is viewed as a social asset that can be harnessed in various ways. Culturally diverse cities feature more innovative workforces given that they benefit from a wider range of international knowledge links, idea generation, problem-solving and diverse decision-making.<sup>88</sup>



Cuban people are performing an African Dance in the Old Havana City, Capital of Cuba. © EB Adventure Photography/Shutterstock

### Box 5.8: An innovative entrepreneurial model for culture-based urban regeneration in Ségou, Mali

The former capital of the ancient Bambara kingdom from the mid-seventeenth century, Ségou lies along the Niger River, 240 kilometres from Bamako. Its urban heritage is characterized by vernacular Sudanese architecture in red terracotta and colonial buildings. With an estimated population of 163,000 inhabitants, Ségou's development indicators are low compared to the rest of the country, with approximately 65 per cent against 49 per cent nationwide. Yet, the city has an interesting development potential due to its outstanding urban heritage, cultural vitality, geographic location and economic base.

With a view to harnessing these assets, a group of local entrepreneurs working through the Foundation Festival on the Niger launched the *Festival sur le Niger* in 2005. Each year, the festival gathers national and international artists and musicians and showcases local cultural industries. With around 30,000 visitors per year on average, the festival has been a major catalyst for the local economy, especially the arts, crafts and agricultural sectors. Over 150 local enterprises are involved, contributing to 140 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs. The tourism sector has boomed, increasing ten-fold between 2005 and 2010, which has fostered the gradual upgrading of tourist infrastructure.

Through this dynamic, other culture-based initiatives have emerged, including the Kore Cultural Centre, a training centre dedicated to cultural professions, and the Ndomo Centre, a production centre for traditional Bogolan weaving, targeting unemployed youth. Two certifications were created through the SMARTS-Ségou programme which focused on locally-woven loincloths and cultural tourism. The city has recently initiated a project entitled Ségou, Creative City to develop an integrated municipal cultural development policy and a sustainable cultural development programme.

The project was conducted using an innovative entrepreneurial model. Although initiated by local entrepreneurs, it received strong support from local authorities, which resulted in a formal public-private partnership, the Council for the Promotion of Local Economy. The Council stands as a service for cooperation and the promotion of local enterprises, economic actors and local authorities of the city. It also provides advisory consulting and training to local authorities and enterprises on its socio-economic and cultural development programme. The model tapped into the *Maaya* process, an ethical concept grounded in Malian culture based on the principles of serving and involving the community, building confidence and reinforcing relationships, mobilizing local resources to foster autonomy and sustainability and ensuring coherence with local values.

Source: UNESCO, 2016.

Urban areas contain the cultural diversity, creative capital, vitality, social infrastructure and career choices to help attract the skills and talent required to generate and exploit knowledge and build dynamic competitive advantage. New migrants to cities create new opportunities, offer new skills, bring fresh perspectives and generate new requirements for institutional innovation.<sup>89</sup> Many countries have long recognized the importance of cultural diversity and have initiatives, policies and programmes aimed at enhancing the diversity of their population.

While cities have always been melting pots, there are certain features of contemporary cultural diversity that are

novel.<sup>90</sup> First, cultural diversity in cities is both wider and deeper than ever before. Second, it is far more affirmative as minorities and immigrant groups demand equal rights, access to urban opportunities and the right to participate in decisions that affect their collective life. Third, the forces of globalization, which drive international migratory patterns, entail sustained flows of ideas, symbols and meanings, which permanently link places of origin and present sites of domicile.

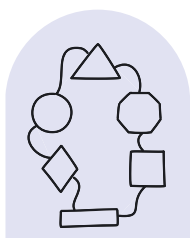
Cultural diversity has important implications for how urban areas are planned and managed, and in the process impinges on the value of urbanization. It is important to

## Cultural diversity has important implications for how urban areas are planned and managed, and in the process impinges on the value of urbanization

seek the right balance between cultural groups seeking to preserve their identity in cities and the need to avoid extreme forms of segregation or even marginalization and urban fragmentation.<sup>91</sup> There is the possibility that cultural diversity could also make participatory processes around planning issues more complex as different socio-cultural groups have different expectations and needs.

### **Culture and sustainable urbanization**

The NUA acknowledges the importance of culture and cultural diversity to the sustainable development of cities and human settlements. The NUA further recognizes that culture should play a pivotal role in the promotion and implementation of new sustainable consumption and production patterns that contribute to the responsible use of resources.<sup>92</sup> Culture features prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as target 11.4 seeks “to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.” Cities should therefore celebrate and harness their cultural identity and integrate these cultural elements into development programmes and policies to contribute to sustainable urbanization.



**The NUA acknowledges the importance of culture and cultural diversity to the sustainable development of cities and human settlements**

Many cities are increasingly placing culture at the heart of urban regeneration and renewal. This does not only improve the physical environment, but also the non-physical elements of urban space through creative means that advance the quality of place, thereby promoting cultural infrastructure.<sup>93</sup> A city’s cultural and historical heritage can foster urban regeneration and catalyse the

local economy (Box 5.8). This strategy has also been used by cities experiencing industrial decline like Glasgow (UK), Liverpool (UK), Barcelona (Spain) and Bilbao (Spain), among others, to boost their economic fortunes by promoting their identity as cultural centres often in the form of an iconic museum, popular festivals and arts-focused higher education.<sup>94</sup>

Cultural elements are widely perceived to enhance the image and attractiveness of the city.<sup>95</sup> Assets such as museums, heritage theatres, concert halls, opera houses and galleries not only have symbolic benefits to the city’s image, but they also serve as powerful magnets for creative people by offering attractive lifestyle opportunities, thereby boosting economic fortunes of cities.

Creative industries, which are inherently urban, are the intersection of culture, the arts, business and technology. They can contribute to sustainable and inclusive prosperity (Chapter 1). Cities as diverse as Austin (music and technology), Berlin (visual arts), Mexico City (contemporary art and television), Mumbai (film) and Seoul (gaming and digital media) have thriving creative industries that have contributed remarkably to their respective urban economies. For instance, Austin’s creative economy has generated some 50,000 arts-related jobs spanning film, television, gaming and other visual arts.<sup>96</sup> In Mexico, the export of creative goods and services generates over US\$5 billion per annum, making the country the largest cultural exporter in Latin America.<sup>97</sup> Mumbai’s Bollywood is the world’s largest concentration of film production, with some 900 movies a year further spawning related creative industries such as design, digital media, fashion, food and music.<sup>98</sup> Given its pervasive influence, creative industries are emerging as one of the most important dimensions of new economies in regions around the world.<sup>99</sup>

With the spread of information and increased mobility, cities are experiencing an upsurge in tourism. The natural landscape and the built environment, with their intangible traditional and contemporary assets, constitute a cultural heritage that attracts tourists. Culture-driven urban tourism is rapidly developing and generates spending and employment, as well as various backward and forward linkages that have the multiplier effect of creating additional jobs to cater for visitors.

Many of the top destination cities for tourists are known for their cultural landmarks, creative industries and entertainment (Table 5.2). In 2018, Dubai recorded the highest amount spent by international visitors globally with a total of US\$30.2 billion.<sup>100</sup> Other cities where international visitors spending is high are Bangkok (US\$20 billion), Singapore (US\$16.6 billion), London (US\$16.5 billion) and Paris (US\$14.1 billion). In terms of employment, 1,000 additional tourists generate 409 jobs in Bali, 105 jobs in Dubai, 87 jobs in Phuket, 16 jobs in New York City, 15 jobs in London and 11 jobs in Paris.<sup>101</sup> These figures show that the employment generation of urban tourism is higher in cities with lower labour costs. Cities in developing countries, where labour costs are generally low, can use urban tourism to create employment opportunities, especially for young people, which in turn will lift many people out of poverty, although the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily curtailed the global tourism industry.

Culture can be used as a political instrument in pluralistic societies to help define identities, with important implications for inclusive planning.<sup>102</sup> Cultural diversity places new demands in terms of mediating between conflicting lifestyles and expressions of culture. For instance, conflicts around religious buildings, burial arrangements, ritual animal slaughter and building aesthetics are issues that are increasingly being addressed in urban areas.<sup>103</sup> If not properly managed, these cultural differences could trigger anti-immigrant resentment, alienation and even violent conflict.

The challenge facing many cities is how to meet the needs of a contemporary city—improve infrastructure, eradicate poverty and promote economic growth—without destroying or eroding its cultural heritage. Cities also face the challenge of how to develop cultural heritage sites that at the same time preserve them for the long term. Urban regeneration and revitalization programmes should avoid using blueprints that reflect the desires and aspirations of minority elites or propose solutions that do not reflect the shared legacies of the majority. In order to take concrete steps towards fostering social integration, building a sense of shared identity and nurturing community belonging, there is a need for effective and meaningful participation of the local community and grassroots groups in planning, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.<sup>104</sup>

The preservation of cultural heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social value, with the ability of inspiring and promoting citizen participation in public life, improving the well-being of individuals and communities, contributing to the reduction of social inequalities and fostering social inclusion.<sup>105</sup>

**The preservation of cultural heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social value, with the ability of inspiring and promoting citizen participation in public life, improving the well-being of individuals and communities**

**Table 5.2: Top destination cities 2018**

Rank	City	International visitors (million)	Rank	City	International visitors (million)
1	Bangkok	22.78	11	Seoul	11.25
2	Paris	19.10	12	Osaka	10.14
3	London	19.09	13	Makkah	10.00
4	Dubai	15.93	14	Phuket	9.89
5	Singapore	14.67	15	Pattaya	9.44
6	Kuala Lumpur	13.79	16	Milan	9.10
7	New York	13.60	17	Barcelona	9.09
8	Istanbul	13.40	18	Palma de Mallorca	8.96
9	Tokyo	12.93	19	Bali	8.26
10	Antalya	12.41	20	Hong Kong SAR	8.23

Source: Mastercard, 2019.

### Measuring the contribution of culture to sustainable urbanization

Cities have increasingly become strategic in assessing the value and contribution of culture to sustainable urban development. Sustainable cities are also an entry point for advocacy to promote the role of culture in sustainable development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda represents a unique opportunity to reflect on existing approaches to measuring the contribution of culture to development and assess whether alternative frameworks may be necessary. Culture and creativity contribute directly to the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—and at the same time, these three dimensions of sustainable development contribute to the safeguarding of cultural heritage and nurturing creativity (Figure 5.4).<sup>106</sup>

The task of measuring the contributions of an tangible value like culture to sustainable urban development has generated several approaches.<sup>107</sup> A comparative analysis of these approaches and alternatives is a good start, but the real priority is for cities (or countries) to be able to measure their own cultural stocks and how these can contribute to the trajectory of sustainable urbanization (Box 5.9). Further efforts along these lines will require the localization of global efforts to measure and track the

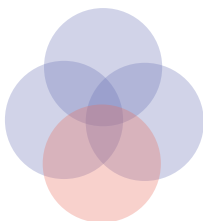
contribution of culture to sustainable development. At the same time, the experience of development projects and interventions have clearly demonstrated the importance of local knowledge and community participation in achieving sustainable urban development.<sup>108</sup>



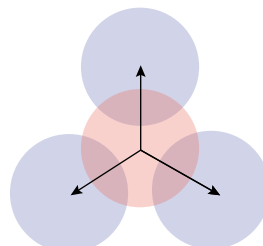
A beautiful street art takes shape as a volunteer group of young girls work together painting a store front to bring a new breath of life to the community area. Subang Jaya, Malaysia. © SWEEANN/Shutterstock

**Figure 5.4: Culture and sustainable development: Three models**

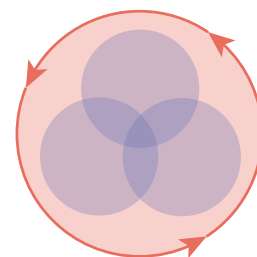
Culture in sustainable development



Culture for sustainable development



Culture as sustainable development



*The three roles of culture (represented in orange) in sustainable development (the three circles represent the three pillars). Culture added as a fourth pillar (left diagram), culture mediating between the three pillars (central diagram) and culture as the foundation for sustainable development. The arrows indicate the ever changing dynamics of culture and sustainable development (right diagram)*

Source: Dessein et al, 2015.

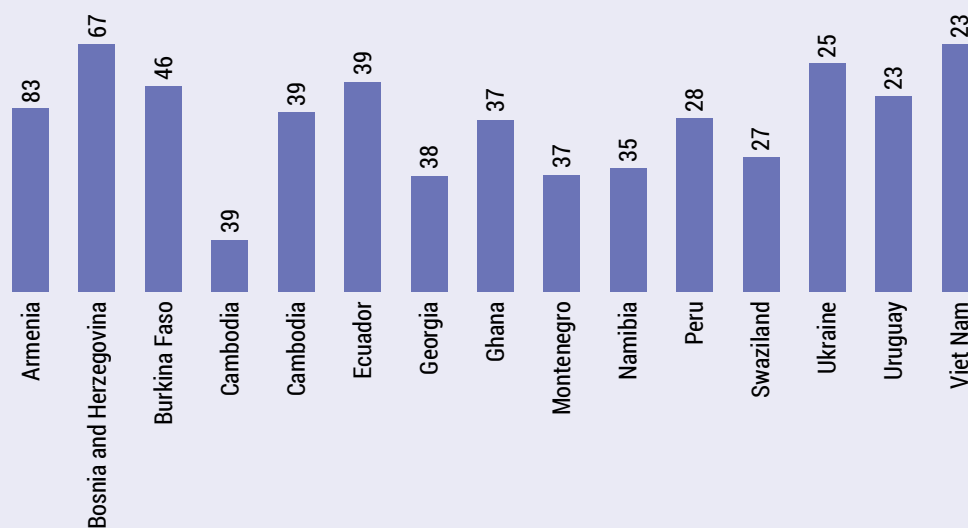


### Box 5.9: Equity in distribution of and access to cultural resources within countries

Cultural infrastructure is crucial to create environments conducive to the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors and clusters, as they can foster cultural, economic and social vitality alike. Without basic infrastructure, establishing viable cultural ventures is extremely difficult. Hence, cultural infrastructure is essential if cultural assets are to work for development.

Cultural infrastructure and spaces are often poorly distributed between urban and rural areas, particularly in developing countries. Results obtained from 2011 to 2017 in 15 countries under UNESCO's Culture for Development Indicators project revealed the skewed distribution of selected cultural infrastructures and facilities (museums, exhibition venues dedicated to performing arts, and libraries and media resource centres) relative to the distribution of the population in administrative divisions immediately below state level (standard deviation). On a scale from 0 to 1 (with 1 representing the situation in which cultural infrastructures are equally distributed amongst regions according to the relative size of their population), the average score of the 15 countries was 0.46, ranging from 0.14 in Cambodia to 0.66 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Viet Nam.

Distribution of cultural infrastructures relative to the distribution of population immediately below state level, 2011-2017



To tackle this shared challenge and support regional equity in the distribution of cultural resources and infrastructures, countries are implementing a range of measures. For instance, New Zealand will prioritize investment in both tangible and intangible cultural infrastructure and research opportunities to augment public spending, review current funding models and strategic outcomes and offer policy advice on the performance and financial strengths of key cultural and media agencies.

Other examples include Lithuania's Regional Culture Development Programme; Cyprus's construction of a multipurpose cultural centre to assist the creation of sustainable communities in urban and rural areas; Georgia's Supporting Dissemination of Culture in the Regions programme that fosters cultural and social inclusion of people residing in the regions, promotes the cultural expressions and cultural participation, and maintains and develops cultural sites, spaces and infrastructure; Latvia's Regional Policy Guidelines regarding investment in the development of infrastructure services; and Ecuador's National Territorial Strategy that fosters social and territorial equality, cohesion and integration.

Source: UNESCO, 2017.



Mehrangarh Fort with Jodhpur city scape at sunset. A UNESCO World heritage site at Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India. © Roop\_Dey/Shutterstock

Culture will be instrumental in the shift to a more sustainable urban future. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents a broad view of culture that includes cultural heritage, creative industries, cultural products, creativity and innovation. Culture's contribution to sustainable development includes local communities, economies, materials and cultural diversity. This perspective demands that the contribution of culture to sustainable development is viewed beyond the economic value it generates, but instead encompasses ways to promote and measure social cohesion and cultural diversity. Indeed, culture and innovation hold the key in terms of how cities can contribute significantly to addressing global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.<sup>109</sup>

There is a clear need to have accurate and timely cultural data and metrics for development goals to be widely achieved. Cities need effective systems with performance-based metrics that enable local authorities to make correct decisions on the best policies to adopt. In a culturally diverse urban setting, timely data is fundamental to understanding patterns through visualization and measuring the economic and social impact of culture in urban progress. Similarly, making cities sustainable requires addressing knowledge

and innovation gaps, broadening participation across stakeholders and incentivizing behavioural and cultural change at the individual, neighbourhood, corporate and city levels. Therefore, a cultural data revolution may be necessary for future successful cities.

### **There is a clear need to have accurate and timely cultural data and metrics for development goals to be widely achieved**

The culture that exists in cities is as old as civilization itself. While the size and economy of cities may ebb and flow, the culture and connection to the land and integration with natural ecosystems is relatively permanent. Important insights can be gained from the contribution of culture and heritage to sustainable development, if the necessary steps are taken to measure, track and understand the tangible and intangible stock of culture in cities across the globe.

UNESCO and UN-Habitat, along with other partners, have developed indicators that can effectively track the contribution of culture to sustainable urbanization.<sup>110</sup>

These indicators cover four thematic areas: environment and resilience; prosperity and livelihoods; knowledge and skills; and inclusion and participation. These indicators are designed to assess the quantitative and qualitative contributions of culture through adopted urban policies and public action that integrate culture in the implementation and monitoring of global agendas.

The underlying shifts around many urbanization trajectories is the attraction to urban economic, cultural, social and educational opportunities, along with the quality of life that a city provides. While many of these shifts are visible, they are not well assessed partly due to the lack of cultural heritage or historical data. With the drive to collect new cultural and heritage data with and by cities, greater insights will be provided on the role of culture in driving sustainable urbanization in close to real time and on a wide variety of issues.

## 5.5. Concluding Remarks and Lessons for Policy

When adequately harnessed, the social value of sustainable urbanization offers pathways to enhancing social inclusion, reducing inequality and ending poverty in all its forms; thereby, leaving no one and no place behind. No city can claim to be equitable when large segments of its population are excluded from the benefits of sustainable urbanization or live in extreme poverty. By harnessing the social and intangible value of urbanization, cities can serve as an entry point in the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, especially in terms of accelerating sustainable solutions for eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.

**When adequately harnessed, the social value of sustainable urbanization offers pathways to enhancing social inclusion, reducing inequality and ending poverty in all its forms; thereby, leaving no one and no place behind**

The social value of urban areas can eradicate poverty through the provision of affordable housing, access to land and finance, employment opportunities, a facilitating

## To adequately harness the value of urbanization, authorities must address the threats to developing more egalitarian cities

environment for entrepreneurship and basic infrastructure. Access to a wide range of good and services like education, health and recreation will enable citizens to attain their full potential by developing their intellectual capacity and ability to lead full, productive and fulfilling lives.

Harnessing the social value of urbanization entails promoting gender equality and ensuring that the right to the city is secured for all, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups. It also requires guaranteeing equal opportunities and access to urban resources, services and goods while fostering effective citizen participation in local policies with responsibility, enabling governments to ensure just distribution of resources and acknowledging cultural diversity as a source of social enrichment.

To adequately harness the value of urbanization, authorities must address the threats to developing more egalitarian cities that are due to inadequate planning, management and governance; perverse distributive systems that benefit the few rather than the many; systemic barriers that impede access to goods, services and opportunities; weak institutions incapable of redressing inequality and social exclusion; inability to enforce the rule of law; inadequate and unpredictable financing especially at the local level; reduced municipal autonomy; poor coordination between local governments and other tiers of government and engagement with stakeholders; and a poor rate of community participation.

Harnessing the social value of urbanization requires good governance that encompasses effective leadership; integrated urban and territorial planning; jurisdictional and multilevel coordination; inclusive citizen participation; adequate financing; and leveraging culture and cultural diversity for sustainable urban development. It also requires the joint and participatory effort of all levels of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and citizens supported by effective institutional framework and policies as called for in the New Urban Agenda.

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