UNICEF’s Urban Planning & Programming team strives to lend greater visibility to the urban poor and to highlight people-driven solutions that can be scaled up by governments to reduce the growing disparities faced by urban children globally. The team focuses on improved data, policy, programme guidance, and providing technical assistance to the field.

UNICEF’s urban newsletter Cities 0-18 is a periodic publication to share innovations, discuss challenges, and highlight UNICEF Country Offices’ work on urban initiatives globally. UNICEF’s urban team is also creating a multi-outlet media strategy to further highlight your urban work internationally.

If your office is working on an innovative urban initiative, then we would like to hear about it! Please send an email to Kerry Constabile (kconstabile@unicef.org) and we will highlight your work in the next newsletter.

This issue features work from the following Country Offices:

- China
- Tanzania
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Indonesia
- Cambodia
- Kenya
UNICEF Finds New Ways to Make Urban Children Count

Urbanization is on the rise, according to a recent report from the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) titled “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds.” By 2030, more than 60 percent of the world’s population will live in urban areas; the UN Population Division predicts that by 2050, this figure will likely leap to 70 percent. The U.S. NIC report states that cities and megacities are in danger of becoming “burdened by vehicular congestion and costly infrastructural legacies…and deteriorating sanitation and health conditions.”

Last February, UNICEF’s “The State of the World’s Children 2012: Children in an Urban World” report noted that, since more than a billion children now live in cities and towns, “the experience of childhood is increasingly urban.” This means that children will bear the brunt of the deteriorating conditions of cities and urban slums. Worse still, these children could become a hidden casualty of urbanization, due to the difficulties of measuring their conditions accurately. As UNICEF noted, “The hardships endured by children in poor communities are often concealed—and thus perpetuated—by the statistical averages on which decisions about resource allocation are based. Because averages lump everyone together, the poverty of some is obscured by the wealth of others.” The report concluded that, to meet the challenges of our new urban future, disparities in urban living standards must be addressed with an “evaluation of interventions intended to advance the rights of children to survival, health, development, education and protection in urban areas.”

As a result of urban living data that obfuscates intra-urban disparities, NGOs often turn to rural areas, due to the misperception that people living there are worse off than urban residents. The idea is that rural areas often lack urban infrastructural supports: easy access to hospitals, schools, information and proper sanitation and running water.

Kerry Constabile, a specialist in urban planning and programming at UNICEF headquarters in New York, said that the agency is actively working to find ways to better survey and capture information on the lives of urban children. “The UN has the tools and policies to be able to respond to disasters in rural areas,” said Constabile, “but a relatively small percentage of funds go to urban areas because of the way the problems there are measured. People appear better off in urban areas based on aggregate numbers and on emergency thresholds that are defined by percentage of the population, rather than numbers of people at risk—these methods obscure the reality.”

This happened during the 2011 malnutrition crisis in the Horn of Africa, said Constabile. While the 2.3 percent Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate found in many of Nairobi’s slums fell well below the emergency threshold of 15 percent, more than 8,600 children under five were found to be acutely malnourished in these areas. By contrast, due to its sparser population, Kenya’s Isiolo district had a 15.7 percent GAM rate, which equated to fewer than 3,000 children under five who were acutely malnourished. The lower GAM rate in slums led to them receiving less attention than other areas, despite the significant numbers of children affected.
Kenya’s Isiolo district had a 15.7 percent GAM rate, which equated to fewer than 3,000 children under five who were acutely malnourished. The lower GAM rate in slums led to them receiving less attention than other areas, despite the significant numbers of children affected.

As Constabile noted, there are also particular challenges in urban areas that rural areas do not face. "It’s much easier for aid agencies to install water pumps in rural areas, where the existing water system may not be affected," Constabile explained, “but what do you do in cities and slum areas that may have existing infrastructure? We need a new approach, and that’s a lot of what UNICEF is doing, looking at specific needs and bottlenecks, and how policies and approaches might require shifting in urban areas.”

To read the rest of this article, click here to visit The Interdependent, the online magazine of UNA-USA: http://bit.ly/10nyFLH.

Increasing Opportunities for China’s Migrant Children

According to the National Committee on Children and Women under the State Council (NWCCW) there are over 20 million migrant children living in China’s cities. Because so many of these migrant children lack any type of official registration, their complex health, educational, and psychosocial needs are often overlooked.

Since 2001, NWCCW and UNICEF have been collaborating to develop a system to register migrant children in cities throughout China. "The registration system developed by the project makes these children more visible to the local authorities and facilitates their protection and referral to services," said Zhang Yali, Plan of Action and Promotion of Child Rights Program Officer of the UNICEF Office for China, "Knowing the exact number of the children of migrants can help the government arrange resources for their education or health."

While many parents are reluctant to register their children, fearing state penalties, free medical check-ups, sports kits, books and computers are provided to provide incentive. Furthermore, these provisions help close the “digital gap” between migrant children and their peers.
Since the registration system was developed, UNICEF has registered 682,000 migrant children and therefore increased their access to health and education services, and increased the availability of data on migrant children to support municipal urban planning.

**Sources:**

National Committee on Children and Women under the State Council

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**Urban MICS in Ghana**

Over the course of 2010–2011, in order to better understand the nature and effects of urban poverty on children in Ghana, UNICEF worked with the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research to carry out a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Accra, the country’s capital city and largest urban area. UNICEF uses MICS, an international household survey initiative, to assist countries in collecting and analysing data to monitor the situation of children and women.

The MICS survey in Accra focused on five densely populated and underprivileged suburbs: James Town, La, New Town, Nima and Bubiashie. These were chosen for their low incomes, high unemployment, dilapidated infrastructure, poor sanitation, frequent outbreaks of communicable diseases and vulnerability to natural disasters.

The survey revealed that even disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods are far from homogeneous, and that there are significant disparities between richer and poorer residents even within areas known to be ‘pockets of poverty’.

One area of study was access to improved sanitation, defined as access to a facility that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact. While around 85 per cent of the population were found to be using sanitary means of excreta disposal, the fact that the majority used shared facilities was cause for concern. Among the surveyed population, 52 per cent reported using a public facility, 12 per cent shared facilities with five or more other households, and 11 per cent used a facility shared by up to five households. Only 11 per cent of the population had access to a private improved sanitation facility.

Wealthier households were most likely to have flush toilets connected to a septic tank, while ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines were the most common form of sanitation among poorer households. Poorer households were also most likely to use public facilities.

Inadequate urban sanitation provision also affected the safe disposal of children’s excreta. Safe practice, defined as either disposal by the child using a toilet or children’s faeces being rinsed into a toilet or latrine, was practised in only 34 per cent of cases. Almost 45 per cent of children’s excreta had been disposed of in garbage, and 19 per cent through drains or ditches. Wealthier households were more likely to engage in safe practices than poorer ones.

These examples attest to the importance of obtaining accurate, disaggregated data specific to the urban situation in order to accurately assess and address areas that need urgent attention. Instruments such as MICS enable a better understanding of the patterns of disadvantage and the factors that adversely influence outcomes for children – thus making it possible to target policies and programmes to the needs of specific urban populations.

*Taken from the State of the World’s Children 2012: Children’s Rights in Urban Settings.*

**Click to read the full report.**

**Source:** UNICEF Ghana Country Office.
Reducing Urban Health Disparities in Nigeria: Lagos State Investment Case

UNICEF Regional Director David Gressly and the Lagos State Government launched the Lagos State Investment Case document, identifying disparities in the Nigerian healthcare system—especially in urban areas. The case states that Nigeria’s maternal and under-5 mortality rates are among the highest in the world, and urban slum dwellers among the most vulnerable subpopulations within the country itself.

The document has three key recommendations which are 1) Bringing the health system closer to the communities, 2) Bringing the communities closer to the health system and 3) Ensuring the quality of health services with additional resource needs articulated at $8 per capita in the first year up to $19 per capita in the 9th year.

Sara Beysolow-Nyanti, Chief of the Lagos Field Office, says this commitment from the Lagos State government has yielded some “fabulous” initial results including: the placement of a health sector coordination mechanism for monitoring purposes, efforts towards private sector collaborations, and greater fiscal commitments from the state in reducing health disparities.


Click to read the full document.
UNICEF Brings Water, Sanitation and Hygiene to Indonesia’s Slums

More than fifty percent of Indonesians live in cities, and this figure is projected to rise to 60 percent by 2015. The swift increase in urban migration and urbanization has outpaced the expansion of water and sanitation facilities; many households that draw water from a pump, well or spring are doing so within 10 meters of a septic tank or toilet discharge. Diarrhea is still a major cause of death amongst Indonesian children under the age of five years. Compared to children from households using piped water, diarrhea rates are 34 per cent higher among young children from households using an open well for drinking water.

UNICEF’s WASH program is pioneering much-needed improvements in water, sanitation and hygiene in urban areas in the country. For Indonesia’s urban slum dwellers, access to potable water is particularly problematic. As WASH Specialist Claire Quillet points out, some slum dwellers in Indonesia are just above the poverty line; they may work in Jakarta and take home a decent salary. But, instead of paying high city rents, they save their wages and send money back home to their village-dwelling families.

While slum dwellers avoid high city rents, though, they fall victim to the other costs of living in slums. Without access to safe water sources, they are forced to buy water at vastly inflated prices from water vendors, who, says Quillet, overcharge for their services.

“The water vendors sell the water at a much higher price than the price in Jakarta” she said. “They do their business because they know the water company cannot legally put their pipes there. People have no choice.”

Quillet said that WASH has been helping communities and working with water companies to find a solution:

“Because the slum settlements are mainly illegal, the water company cannot provide water to these people. So we developed a specific way [to help]. The water company will pipe water up to the border and the community will provide and connect the remaining pipe to their households, creating the pipe network for household water supply. The water company cannot do it at a household level and provide a tap in each house.”

Since 2007, UNICEF, along with Mercy Corps, Care International and government officials, as part of the Water, Environment and Sanitation program, have been working with five cities in eastern Indonesia, all of which have dense slum populations: Ambon, Makassar, Jayapura, Kupang, and Mataram. As well as this urban component, it also works in rural areas and schools.

According to the assessment report on the project, it was a success and made a significant contribution to the hygiene practices in the targeted communities in five cities in eastern Indonesia. For example, a total of 175,275 urban slum inhabitants benefited having access to sanitary toilets and have adopted proper hand washing techniques using water and soap. A total of 19,635 (98 per cent of the target figure of 20,000) persons from 3,927 households in urban slums gained access to safe drinking water. Advances were also made in solid waste management and garbage disposal.

The successful model established in urban areas by WASH was used to develop the “Green and Clean Slums Project” funded by USAID that was implemented by UNICEF in the cities of Makassar, Kupang and Jayapura. The programme, which ended recently, focused on improving water and sanitation by building the capacity of water utilities and city water and sanitation working groups, providing community and school facilities, and improving solid waste management.
By helping the community build latrines where they are most needed, promoting hygiene behaviour change, and improving the environmental conditions of the slums through the provision of solid waste management, “Green and Clean Slums” was a way for local government, local water companies and slum communities to work together; it is also a truly noteworthy example of the innovative work that UNICEF is implementing to help Indonesia’s urban poor.

UNICEF Surveys at Risk Young People in Cambodia – Most in Urban Areas

Young Cambodians – those aged between 10-24 – make up one third of their country’s population. Some of them, particularly those who migrate from rural to urban areas and those practicing high risk behaviours, are among what UNICEF’s country office in Cambodia terms the ‘Most at Risk Young People’ (MARYP), who are vulnerable because they have moved away from their families and support networks at home.

UNICEF Cambodia, in partnership with the Interdepartmental Committee on HIV/AIDS and Drugs of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, completed a survey in 2010 that identified the circumstances and motivations of young people “whose behaviors put them at greater risk of HIV infection, including multiple unprotected sexual partnerships, unprotected anal sex with multiple partners, and injecting drugs with non-sterile equipment.” The subsequent survey report put forward policy and programming recommendations to improve support for at-risk young people, recommendations that the office has been working to implement.

The young people surveyed by UNICEF came from eight provinces in Cambodia: Battambang, Banteay Mean Chey, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk, Koh Kong, and Svay Rieng. Most of those polled lived in urban areas: 71.6 percent, as opposed to 28.4 percent from rural areas. The urban focus was deliberate, says UNICEF HIV Specialist Ulrike Gilbert, as HIV prevalence is higher in urban areas of the country.

The survey used time-location sampling, a method used to recruit members of a target population at specific times in set venues; to that end, the interviewers targeted so-called local hotspots, which they found mostly located in urban areas. Local hotspots identified included karaoke parlors, massage parlors, bars, street corners, public parks, snooker clubs and computer game shops. The interviewers found that the best time to go to these places to talk to MARYP was late in the evening, when the bars and parlors were at their most active.

Some interesting differences between rural and urban MARYP were unearthed by the survey. For example, rates of involvement in so-called “sweetheart” (boyfriend/ girlfriend) relationships were highest among urban youths aged between

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The report noted that the absence of family support and guidance amongst MARYP meant that there was a program opportunity to develop skills and vocational training for them, as well as a referral service to guide them to health services.

Ulrike Gilbert points out that “the survey confirmed the multiple risks young women and men face in hot spot locations in urban areas and that many were not reached with effective interventions. In the concentrated epidemiological context of Cambodia, it is important to ensure that high impact interventions reach young cohorts of key affected populations, such as young sex workers, young people who use drugs and young men who have sex with other men”.

In the years following the survey, UNICEF has made use of the results in a variety of projects. The findings were used to inform the development of the National AIDS Strategic Plan, and ensured that young key populations and their multiple vulnerabilities were included. The Ministry of Education used the survey results in 2011 in the process of revising the national education and HIV plan. The results were also used to inform the development of new Standard Operating Procedures for HIV prevention by the Minister of Health.

Another outcome of the MARYP survey was a 2012 follow up qualitative study, ‘Examining life experiences and HIV risks of young entertainment workers in four Cambodian cities.’ The qualitative study took place in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Poi Pet and Sihanoukville. It was based on a sample of 82 young women, young men and young transgendered persons who were in the entertainment industry (i.e. worked in bars, karaoke parlors, etc.) and reported having sex for money. The operational study provided in depth insights into the triggers, motivations and context of sex work. Although a number of factors influenced entry into transactional sex, the primary driver, which was shared by all study populations, was financial.

A key difference between the participant groups was that young women were working to support their parental families or their children and were more likely to have had experienced sexual violence, while male and transgendered entertainment workers were primarily working to support themselves and sexual violence was not a significant concern.

The UNICEF regional office, along with UNESCO, has used the 2010 study for regional training on MARYP. The results of the survey were used by the Cambodia country office to inform the development of a wealth of new guide programming priorities, including the expansion of support to local harm reduction efforts among young drug users, particularly women with young children, in Phnom Penh.

Click here to read the full survey.
UNICEF Carves Out A Niche for Basic Service Delivery and design at High-Level CSW Panel

From providing an architectural blueprint for gender-separated bathrooms in schools to harnessing the power of the Olympic Games to draw attention to children’s right to play, UNICEF is at the forefront of policy making and programming that provides safe urban spaces for women and children.

At a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) panel in March 2013, Christian Salazar, Deputy Director of Programme Division at UNICEF, joined Executive Director of UN Women Michele Bachelet, Deputy Director of UN-Habitat, Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, and civil society leaders from Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, to highlight the significance of reclaiming urban public spaces for women and girls. Within UNICEF, innovative programming and policymaking in this arena is taking place. The solutions are low-cost, yet incredibly effective.

“Something as simple as building [separate] toilets for boys and girls in schools ...is a really high impact intervention,” said Salazar at the event, referring to UNICEF’s transitional learning space initiative, led by the Education Section. “We know how to do it. We are promoting specific architectural plans [that show] how to do this in a safe and respectful manner.”

Panelist Suneeta Dhar of Jagori, an NGO working in New Delhi to eradicate violence against women, singled UNICEF out for praise at the event, saying that the organization was able to cut through rhetoric with concrete solutions.

UNICEF is working on dynamic policies and programs that facilitate and encourage equitable access to basic services, transportation, and safe spaces, and provided concrete design and planning solutions to urban inequities.

For example, in Nairobi, baseline assessments that were carried out as part of the Safe Cities programme revealed a lack of basic sanitation facilities, water, and access to electricity in informal settlements. Recognizing that the absence of these basic services contributes to increased vulnerability to violence for children, community-led plans for improved hygiene and sanitation, disease surveillance and access to affordable energy sources are currently being developed.

Access to safe city streets is also key in the prevention of violence against women and children. At the panel, Salazar highlighted Bogota’s Ciclovia – where streets are closed to cars and other motorized vehicles and opened up to cyclists and pedestrians – is a shining example of an initiative to make cities safe for children and everyone.

“It creates such a change in the environment of the citizens, women and men alike, the old and the young; they move around the city, they identify more with the city,” said Salazar,” adding that it “creates a different attitude towards the public and the public spaces and how to behave in those public spaces.”

The impact of public city spaces on the security and well-being of children and adolescents mentioned by Salazar is one of the reasons why UNICEF is currently partnering with the city of Rio with Vamos Jogar, an initiative for cities in the region that will harness the power of the upcoming World Cup and Olympic Games in Rio. Through Vamos Jogar, UNICEF aims to help shape public policies and programmes, to ensure that children in the region have access to safe spaces to play. While the programme is open to all children, accurate surveying of slum areas by local authorities as part of Vamos Jogar will play a key role in bringing access to sport and play to the poorest of the urban poor children. UNICEF is holding a workshop in April to develop indicators for the local authorities to use in their surveys, and cities that participate will make a
public commitment to improve children’s access to sport and play.

At the panel, Salazar stressed the need for strong partnerships with municipalities and civil society. He mentioned UNICEF’s current partnership with the World Bank’s Global City Indicators Facility (GCIF); together, they are launching the first urban child development index for the Child Friendly Cities global initiative. The index provides an established set of indicators that measure city services for children and adolescents—such as health, safety, and transportation—as well as quality of life issues, including safety and air pollution rates and pairs these indicators with a globally standardized methodology.

With urbanization on the rise, UNICEF is working to ensure that the lives of urban women and girls are not limited, but rather expanded, with policy and programming that is sustainable, scaleable, wide ranging and far reaching.

(This article originally appeared on ICON).

Shedding Light on Urban Children in Tanzania


Already, more than one in four Tanzanian children lives in one of the country’s myriad of cities and towns. Given current urban growth rates, this proportion is increasing rapidly.

While national development plans and policies give strong attention to Tanzania’s rural areas, Cities and Children argues that children growing up in urban areas merit greater attention than have received so far. Many of these children, especially those living in unplanned urban settlements, are often no better off, and sometimes are worse off, than their rural peers—in terms of living conditions, access to quality services, infrastructure and amenities, and exposure to risks that are specifically associated with the urban environment and lifestyle.

One aim of the report was to demystify the notion of an unqualified ‘urban advantage’, a notion largely based on the fact that official urban/rural statistics only capture broad aggregates, depicting the status of an "average urban child" who seems invariably better off than rural children, but who doesn't actually exist—thereby missing out on the countless urban children for whom the promise of a vaunted urban life simply does not hold true.

Cities do offer great potential for improving the lives of children, but only if the process of urban growth is managed properly.

Click here to read the full report.

Source: UNICEF Tanzania Country Office.