

What Can Local Governments Do?

A number of steps could be taken by local governments to begin addressing the situation of the urban poor and their children, according to the 'Cities and Children' report. One important measure would be to gather evidence on current disparities by disaggregating data (on health, education and other indicators) by ward, rather than assuming that all urban dwellers experience the same conditions. This will make it possible to more accurately monitor poverty, hunger and malnutrition among marginal urban communities and facilitate the search for solutions. Other steps that could be taken include:

Improving Living Conditions

- Strengthen planning and oversight in unplanned settlements to facilitate the provision of services such as water, sanitation and transport and prevent building on land that is unsafe or at risk for flooding.
- Areas currently on the fringes of existing settlements offer an opportunity to plan better-serviced settlements. Investing in peri-urban areas today could prevent costly and disruptive interventions in the future, when density is projected to increase further.
- Revise land use regulations to offer secure tenure and prevent eviction and displacement.
- Pursue partnerships with civil society groups that represent settlement residents to aid in identifying key problems and solutions.
- Consider how to use existing spaces for children's play and recreation.
- Take steps to manage traffic in urban areas, to prevent accidents and death.
- Ensure that school children can safely board and ride daladalas.

Addressing Poverty and Hunger

- Establish safety nets to help the poor to obtain nutritious food, and educate mothers to prepare healthy diets and adopt proper caring and feeding practices.
- Cities could hold "Healthy Lifestyle" campaigns with help from the media, the private sector, academic institutions and technical agencies. Schools and youth groups could play a role as well.
- To obtain baselines and distinguish trends, nutrition and food insecurity need to be monitored and urban data disaggregate to better capture the nutritional status of the urban poor.

Preparing for Climate Change

- Local authorities can help communities prevent disasters by improving environmental sanitation measures and enforcing regulations on waste and trash disposal and illegal construction.
- Children and poor communities need help to adapt to climate change. Their capacity, and that of service providers and local authorities, should be developed to strengthen resilience, and develop community-level early warning systems and environment-friendly practices.
- It is essential to better understand how climate change is affecting specific urban areas; residents, including young people, can be mobilised to carry out local "impact assessments" that will inform environmental planning in their communities.

Increasing Access to Water and Environmental Sanitation

- Invest more in water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to ensure that coverage keeps pace with rising demand.
- Partner with communities; for example, women's and children's groups can act as local hubs for WASH activities, encouraging behaviour change in communities and helping to map local needs.
- Design child-friendly toilet facilities, especially in schools, keeping in mind the needs of children with disabilities.
- Recent reforms have opened new opportunities for local governments to exercise control over WASH provision. When planning upgrades for informal settlements, local authorities can seek to incorporate water point provision, latrine construction, pit emptying and solid waste management into planning.

Improving Child Health and Combating HIV and AIDS

- Support research into the barriers limiting access to health care by the urban poor, such as weaknesses in the fee waiver and exemption systems, health insurance coverage, and the absence of affordable, reliable health services in low-income communities.
- Support research into how the urban environment and social behaviours contribute to the high rate of HIV infection in cities, as a first step toward creating protective environments for children and adolescents exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Establish child-friendly services for paediatric and adolescent HIV and AIDS care and reproductive health services.
- Organise ward and community-level mapping, in partnership with local youth and other residents, to identify HIV risk points and monitor prevention activities.

Achieving Universal, Quality Education

- Teacher deployment should be organised equally across different areas of the city. Hold teachers accountable for attending school regularly and providing quality lessons. Teacher performance can be monitored against clearly set standards, with the involvement of school authorities and members of school governance bodies.
- Strengthened capacity in districts and wards could equip local administrators to plan for the education needs of their constituencies and focus on those who have not gained access to the school system as a result of poverty, social marginalisation, disability or gender.
- School Committees also need support to manage schools independently, on the basis of resources made available efficiently and transparently. Establishing a bridge between city, ward and school governance systems would favour local planning based on the needs of communities, particularly those lacking economic resources.

Protecting Children from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

- New legislation on children makes local governments responsible for carrying out services and activities designed to fulfil children's rights; they can do so by framing and implementing relevant bylaws and regulations and promoting programmes to care for and protect children.

- More targeted planning would permit identification of children needing special protection measures and favour coordination among all service providers.
- To have a clear idea of the magnitude of children's rights violations in urban areas, it is necessary to develop community, ward and district-level data on different types of violations and establish monitoring systems to measure progress toward the eradication of violence, abuse and neglect of children, child labour and trafficking.
- City and municipal authorities can serve as a central point for coordination with decentralised bodies responsible for enforcing child protection, such as District Child Labour Committees, Social Welfare Officers, local police and the judiciary.
- Local governments could build awareness among those in direct contact with children about the need for child protection support community efforts to report violations of children's rights.
- City and municipal authorities should ensure that effective services are in place to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

Fostering Child Participation in Governance

- City-wide and community-level campaigns could raise awareness among parents, teachers, police, the judiciary and local authorities about the importance of facilitating young people's participation in families, schools and municipal government.
- All possible opportunities for child participation should be explored, strengthened or expanded, including permanent forums in local governance, Junior Councils and Student Councils, to mainstream children's priorities into municipal policies, programmes and budgets.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that children risk for exclusion due to age, gender, place of residence or other factors are encouraged to participate.
- Children and adolescents should be supported to partner with adult stakeholders in government and local communities and develop comprehensive plans to make their communities and cities friendlier to children.



UNICEF/Paul Joynson-Hicks

During 2011-2012, UNICEF worked with several NGOs to conduct a series of consultations aimed at better understanding urbanisation trends in Tanzania and their impact on children, especially those living in informal urban settlements in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya and Stone Town.

A Look at ARUSHA CITY

Cities and Children
The Challenge of Urbanisation in Tanzania

Consultation findings

Consultations conducted in Arusha with 220 children, parents and other community members, as well as local government officials and social service providers, revealed that:

- **Homes:** About 75 per cent of the city's housing is unplanned; lacking roads, water pipes, rubbish removal, storm drains and electricity. Informal settlements are overcrowded, households of seven or eight people live in one room, and several households may share a single house. In some wards 80 per cent of homes are made of mud. Despite these conditions rents have risen steadily, putting the poor at a disadvantage. Overcrowding leaves children with no space for recreation and increases risk for the spread of contagious diseases.
- **Water:** Water supply is intermittent and purchasing from vendors is too expensive for many households. When children have to wait on long lines to fetch water before going to school they are often late, and subject to punishment.
- **Food:** Most poor urban households have some days every month when no food is available. Children are sent to do odd jobs, beg, or even resort to theft or prostitution to obtain food.
- **Hygiene:** Sanitation is poor: latrines are shared by many people and not kept clean and garbage collection is irregular, leaving piles of trash along pathways.
- **Child labour:** Children are hired as seasonal labourers on coffee estates or flower farms or as house girls; or involved in the commercial sex industry. They work on farms, at mines and car washes and engage in petty trade (fish, coffee, scrap metal); they are used as drug couriers and sometimes in prostitution rings. Street children are exposed to violence and sexual abuse, as are girls working as domestic helpers.
- **Participation:** Opportunities for children to be heard are very rare, whether in the home, school or local government. A few of the children said they have a student council where they can discuss lack of books, desks and toilets. Community representatives said that at home, men make all major decisions without consulting children.
- **Transport:** Transportation poses several risks to children: such as road accidents caused by unqualified, speeding motorists and harassment and abuse of children on daladalas.



Arusha's population has grown to around 400,000 people, due mainly to steady population growth and migration. As the largest commercial centre in the area, Arusha attracts migrants from villages, other cities and other countries who seek opportunities in gemstone mining, industry, commerce, tourism and other fields. Around half of the city's population is comprised of children aged 18 or under – 200,000 children and adolescents.



Life on Arusha's streets

My father used drugs and was a known as a thief in Arusha. He died when I was very young. My mother used to beg on the street and she would take me and my two younger siblings along with her. Now my mother depends on me for money. I don't like living at home.

There is no bed, no food, no dishes, no water, no electricity and no toilet. I prefer to live on the streets. Every morning my mother comes to ask for money so I give her Tsh 1,000 or more to buy food for the day. Even if I have not eaten, I give her my last money to make her happy.

I have been living on the streets since I was nine years old. I sleep on a cardboard box. When it rains I get soaked and the nights are cold. I bathe and wash my clothes by the river. Some days I make no money, so I go to sleep on an empty stomach. Sometimes the bigger boys bully the little ones and take their money, food or clothes.

I wash windcreens for a living. On a good day I can make up to Tsh 3,500. All my money goes to food, usually leftovers by hotel clients, and I get my water from a tap. When I'm sick I get a sick note from a local NGO to give me access to free treatment and medication at a nearby hospital. Life on the streets is very hard. We live on the streets but we don't like it.

Saidi (16), Arusha City

Some of the suggestions made by consultation participants to local government authorities are listed below:

- Expand the distribution of electricity to all areas of the city
- Build ditches to contain floodwaters, so that homes are not affected
- Conduct road safety programmes and punish traffic offenders
- Provide school buses so that children don't have to walk to school
- Build more schools and more homes for low-income households
- Open spaces for children to play are needed in each neighbourhood
- Urban settlements need libraries, sports fields and youth centres
- Regulate the price of basic goods such as sugar, oil, kerosene and maize
- Parents and schools should collaborate on how to plan a proper food budget so that children can have food at school
- Enforce laws prohibiting violence and abuse and inform communities about them, to change attitudes and behaviour, involving NGOs and the religious community
- Child abuse cases should be tried quickly and perpetrators given heavy punishment
- Create employment opportunities for young people
- Establish small loan facilities to help low-income families become self-reliant
- Educate society about the effects of child labour and enforce laws against it
- Educate the community about children's rights so that they are respected and enforced
- Establish functioning Junior Councils at ward and higher levels where children can voice their concerns and be taken seriously.

It is imperative that national and local governments become more aware of these trends, or poor urban children will remain invisible in city policy and planning.

Children in Urban Tanzania

The conditions described in Arusha's informal settlements are similar to those reported in other cities, confirming the findings of a study published by UNICEF in 2012: 'Cities and Children: The Challenge of Urbanisation in Tanzania.' The new study explores urban growth and its impact on children and their rights. It suggests that local governments, the closest level of governance to constituents, are in an ideal position to work closely with the urban poor, including children, to identify the most serious obstacles they face and advance toward solutions.

Among the key findings were:

- Tanzania's cities are growing at a fast pace, but wealth and access to services are not distributed equitably
- Today, nearly half of Tanzania's urban population is made up of children
- Millions of children in cities are growing up amidst poverty and hunger
- Policymakers and providers of critical urban services have not focused sufficiently on meeting the needs of the urban poor
- Although services are usually more available in cities, residents of informal settlements lack access to them – due to distance, fees, or other barriers
- Throughout Tanzania, only about 16 per cent of urban dwellers have a reliable income
- Living conditions in urban settlements are precarious:
 - Most space is occupied "informally" due to complex land-use regulations; so homes lack infrastructure and services and residents are less willing to invest in improvements
 - Only 20 per cent of homes in informal settlements have direct water connections
 - The haphazard nature of construction prevents easy access for all forms of transport, as well as trash collection trucks, which allows garbage to pile up.

It has long been thought that urban children have advantages over rural children, but in Tanzania the 'urban advantage' is diminishing; for example:

- Infant and child mortality in urban and rural areas are now almost the same, cities perform worse for child deaths during the first month of life (neonatal mortality)
- Nearly twice as many urban as rural families cited "cost" or the need to work as the main reason for their child's school drop-out
- Children living in cities, especially poor and vulnerable children, continue to be at a far higher risk of HIV infection than rural children

When national statistics reveal disparities between urban and rural children, it often appears that children in cities are better fed, educated and in better health. But national averages fail to reflect disparities that exist within cities: children living in different wards of the same city experience very different conditions. These intra-city disparities usually reflect differing levels of household wealth, which affects access to services such as clean water, schools and electricity. As conditions in rural areas slowly improve and cities grow, poverty is becoming increasingly urban, revealing sharp disparities between the poor and other city dwellers.

Addressing urban growth and childhood poverty is possible if greater opportunities are created for urban families to acquire land, afford better quality housing and access basic services (including health, education, water and sanitation) and governments reach out to those most affected, facilitating their involvement and participation in defining key problems and shaping solutions. Encouraging children and adolescents to contribute their ideas and energy to improving city life will help Tanzania's urban areas to become child-friendly.