

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.
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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. Consultations were held in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya and Stone Town.

A Look at MBEYA CITY

Cities and Children
The Challenge of Urbanisation in Tanzania

unicef



UNICEF/Paul Joyntman/IFDCS

Consultation findings

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

- Youth migration to Mbeya is increasing due to worsening rural poverty.
- Rapid growth has led to a serious housing shortage; homes are very small and built close together, with no planning; children and adults often share one room. Overcrowding and lack of planning leave children with no place to play.
- The city provides very little by way of infrastructure (water taps and roads) or social services (electricity, schools).
- Few poor households can afford a water connection and some don't boil water, leading to regular cholera outbreaks.
- Population growth has outstripped the city's trash collection capacity, leading to large piles of garbage in some wards.
- Most poor households eat two meals a day; rising food prices force families to rely heavily on staples such as ugali (stiff porridge), cooked bananas and potatoes.
- Lack of quality schools in poor neighbourhoods means many children travel long distances to school; they reported discrimination and abuse by daladala drivers. Those who walk to school are at risk of injury due to reckless and unlicensed drivers and lack of road safety education.
- Children stated that they have very little say in decisions made at home, except sometimes related to which school to attend. Only at secondary schools are adolescents given the opportunity to voice their opinions, through Student Councils.
- Child marriage is common; parents encourage it to receive dowries and some children agree to it because they are given false hope of a better life and greater opportunities.
- Community members believe that children become involved in crime due to the widespread influence of urban violence and foreign media.



I had just passed my Standard VII exams when my father suddenly fell ill and died. I had to drop out of school because my mother couldn't afford to pay for all four of us, so she decided it was best to let my older brother complete his education so that he could later support the whole family.

Now I sell onions on the street while my mother works on a farm. I'm on the street from 7am until 6pm. I make about Tsh 2,000 a day, my profit is very small but helps me to buy some food. If I could talk to the Minister of Education, I would ask him to help all disadvantaged children with free education up to Form 6, because education is the key to life. I still help my siblings with their homework. I wish I could go back to school, but unfortunately I can't. Not for now.

Mussa (14), Mbeya City



Mbeya City is one of the fastest-growing urban centres in Tanzania, with an annual population growth rate of 7 per cent and a total population of over 900,000. Growth in recent decades reflects the combination of a steady stream of rural migrants and robust natural population growth. The city is a strategic point for agriculture and business in southwest Tanzania; mining and timber are also major economic activities.

Among the suggestions to local government authorities (LGAs) mentioned by participants in the consultations were:

- Improve socio-economic status of poor households to reduce the number of children who have no alternative but to live on the streets.
- Invest in water supply, especially in the poorest areas, and educate people about disinfecting water to reduce disease.
- Build recreation centres for children in town; consider the need for playgrounds when planning communities.
- Hold massive campaign on environmental sanitation (garbage collection, hand-washing before and after toilet use) and invest in cleaning public latrines, especially at schools.
- Improve infrastructure for disabled children, such as special pathways along roads and at school.
- Build quality schools closer to communities so children won't have to take long bus rides.
- Provide food subsidies to families unable to provide children with nutritious meals, or give parents loans to start a business.
- Educate caregivers on how to feed children; health workers should provide education on food budgeting for low-income families.
- Parents should take more responsibility for their children by: not sending their children to work or to fetch water alone, making sure they attend school and communicating with their teachers.
- LGAs should develop child-friendly employment codes and crack down on harmful child labour.



One day my step-father gave me Tsh 1,000 to buy flour and vegetables but I didn't have enough to buy kerosene. When I got home he beat me so hard that my blue dress was covered in blood. I was in so much pain and I felt so sad. He just cares about his alcohol. He drinks in the morning then he leaves the house and doesn't come back until about 2am drunk.

His job is to take sacks of potatoes from the farms to the bus stand for transporting to other towns. My mother is so sick, her chest is always bothering her so she can't work. She goes to the hospital but she can't afford to buy the medicine they prescribe for her.

My father also beats my mother so much and he hits her chest. The other day he beat her so hard she was bleeding from her nose. I wish I could get away and take my mother with me, but where would we go? We have no money.

Lemna (14), Mbeya City

Children in Urban Tanzania

The conditions described in Mbeya City's informal settlements are similar to those reported in other cities, confirming the findings of a 2012 study published by UNICEF: '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.

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.