

Just City in Africa

The Transformative Value of Urbanisation





© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office, 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication should be reproduced without written permission from the publisher except for brief quotations in books or critical reviews. For information and permission, write to Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office.

Opinions expressed are the responsibility of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office.

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Kenya Office
info@fes-kenya.org
P.O. Box 14932-00800
Nairobi, Kenya

Photo credits: Shutterstock

CONTENTS

The Transformative Value of Just and Sustainable Urbanization **3**

| | |
|---|----|
| The Transformative Value of Just and Sustainable Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa | 6 |
| The Value of Sustainable Urbanization and Just City Principles | 11 |
| Social Value and the Just City: Planning and Housing Lens | 19 |
| Intangible Value and the Just City: Urban Governance and Management Lens | 29 |
| Conclusions | 37 |
| References | 42 |

Urban Informality and The Making of African Cities **45**

| | |
|--|----|
| Approach to Urban Informality | 49 |
| Schematic Literature Review | 53 |
| Making the 'Urban Invisibles' Visible: Examples from Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Dakar | 59 |
| Local Experts' Perspective about Urban Formalization | 76 |
| Bibliography and References | 90 |

Urban Invisibles: Poverty and Inequality in Africa's Rapidly Growing Cities **95**

| | |
|--|-----|
| Background and Justification | 98 |
| Methodology | 102 |
| Urbanization, Economic Growth, and Inequality Nexus | 104 |
| Case Study: Access to Basic Education as a Public Good | 117 |
| Discussion: Summary of Findings | 129 |
| Pathway to Just Cities | 135 |
| References | 140 |
| Annex | 146 |

How Just is Access to Food in African Cities 149

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 152 |
| Methodology | 157 |
| How just is access to food in African cities? | 160 |
| What are the main drivers of food inequality and what are the challenges to achieve fairer access? | 165 |
| What are the effects of COVID-19 and climate change on food distribution? | 175 |
| Conclusions. Towards more just food access in African cities | 185 |
| References | 187 |

How Just is Public Transport in East African Cities 193

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 196 |
| Public transport and just urban outcomes | 200 |
| Methodology and data | 205 |
| Research results | 208 |
| Conclusions | 224 |
| References | 227 |

Introduction

Africa is urbanizing rapidly, and this comes with various challenges of ensuring the capital, infrastructure and human resource investments required to serve the urban residents are made.¹ With Africa's urban population expected to nearly triple by 2050—adding 800 million people, the current urban population of Europe and North America combined—the urgency of addressing these challenges is paramount. The main challenge is that in Africa, millions of people are living in and continuously moving into “unjust” cities: cities that are designed by and run for the few, and not the many. The majority of city dwellers – the “Urban Invisibles” – are being ignored and left behind. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kenya office defines the ‘Urban Invisibles’ as children, elderly, persons living with disability, and the urban informal sector – hence, the majority of city dwellers. Recent African urbanization analyses have confirmed the numerous problems of limited job creation, inadequate structural transformation, and poor livability seen in many sub-Saharan African cities today.

It is against this backdrop that the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kenya office and The New School (TNS) have partnered to initiate a global discussion around the transformative value of urbanization in Africa and beyond. The first step towards this much needed discussion was to research and develop the *Paper Series: Just City in Africa*.

The five papers presented here were developed under the framework of the “Just City” as conceptualized by FES. It seeks to promote a pro-citizen centered urbanization narrative, and to build progressive alliances that can achieve this goal. It recognizes that most cities are unjust since they do not provide

adequate and quality public goods and services for the majority of their residents. It also recognizes that most of the infrastructure and human resource investments required to provide these public goods and services has not been made yet, therefore providing a huge potential to harness the transformative power of urbanization across the continent.

The ‘Just City’ concept has four guiding principles which serve as the lens through which urbanization is researched, interrogated and recommendations made by the five papers. These principles are; dignity, equity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and democracy.

The five papers cover the following topics:

1. *The Transformative Value of Just and Sustainable Urbanization,*
2. *Urban Informality and The Making of African Cities,*
3. *Urban Invisibles: Poverty and Inequality in Africa's Rapidly Growing Cities,*
4. *How Just is Access to Food in African Cities, and*
5. *How Just is Public Transport in East African Cities.*

It is through the engagement of various civil society, trade unions, state and non-state actors with the paper's arguments and recommendations, that the FES and TNS seek to promote a change in the approach to the development of urbanization plans and processes in Africa to ensure no one is left behind.

1 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/10/30/urban-economic-growth-in-africa-analyzing-constraints-to-agglomeration/>

Specific attention is paid to the role of financiers of urban infrastructure, governance structures and authorities, public participation and provision of public goods and services; to achieve the transformation from unjust to just cities.

The papers are to be discussed in various dialogue platforms, inform urban policy development, and serve as a reference guide to all urban actors in Africa and across the globe. There is a deliberate focus on Global South research, knowledge generation, and experiences towards making the papers relevant and practical for application in Africa.



Bastian Schulz, Resident Representative, (FES) Kenya office

The FES and TNS seek to aid urban actors across the African continent and their development partners to reflect on their current urbanization approaches and consider implementing the recommendations made in the five papers towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and the Agenda 2063. Urbanization has the potential to transform societies – it is an unstoppable force, especially in Africa. For this multi-layered transformation to improve the living conditions of millions of Africans cities not only have to be made inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11), they also have to be made just.



Dr. Michael Cohen, Professor of International Affairs & Director of the Doctoral Program in Public and Urban Policy, The New School

THE TRANSFORMATIVE VALUE OF JUST AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

MARCH 2022

Authors:

George Wasonga

Robai Naliaka

Bastian Schulz



The Transformative Value of Just and Sustainable Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Authors:

George Wasonga; George Wasonga is a seasoned urbanist with wide experience in policy, planning and governance of urban areas having served for over 25 years at regional and national level. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Society Urban Development Platform and Convener of the Just City Working Group, Kenya

Robai Naliaka is a programme management specialist and a research assistant with over 15 years experience in humanitarian and development work. She is currently a Programme Officer at the Civil Society Urban Development Platform and a member of the Just City Working Group

Bastian Schulz is a labour movement enthusiast serving currently as the Resident Representative at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office



The Transformative
Value of Just
and Sustainable
Urbanization
in Sub-Saharan
Africa

01

The decade of action towards the United Nations Agenda 2030 has been declared, eliciting greater attention to sustainable urbanization. Of particular interest to cities and urban areas is the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 with its 10 targets.



Four targets of particular interest in this paper are those relating to housing, basic services and slums (target 1), transport (target 2), inclusive urbanization (target 3) and, the environment (target 6). Achievement of these targets is expected to enhance the overall value of sustainable urbanization (UN-HABITAT, 2020). This value is considered as the totality of four individual values: a city's economic, environmental, social and intangible conditions that have the potential to improve the quality of life of residents in meaningful, visible and concrete ways.

In reality, the very meaning of sustainable urbanization is often difficult to decipher – so are the consequences of a more sustainable urbanization for the majority of city dwellers, not only but especially in Africa. This paper, therefore, suggests to breathe life into the four conditions by linking it with the just city concept. The Just City (FES, 2020) makes a

compelling case that optimization of these values is most likely to be achieved in an environment that promotes dignity, equity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and democracy – the core principles of a Just City. The Just City concept has the most potential to transform African urbanization based on a citizen-centered and more democratic approach.

The recent progress report on SDG 11 highlights the fact that before the Covid-19 pandemic, cities had rising numbers of slum dwellers, worsening air pollution, minimal open public spaces and limited convenient access to public transport (UN-ECOSOC, 2021). The report further determines that the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic are making it even more unlikely that this Goal will be achieved, with more people forced to live in slums, where the quality of life is deteriorating and vulnerability is increasing.

The United Nations estimates that 71 million people were pushed back into extreme poverty in 2020, the majority being from Africa where a large proportion of the workforce has seen their wages and incomes affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, exposing them to a degraded quality of life. Besides Covid-19, the enormous speed at which Africa's cities are growing is linked to other key development trends, most prominent among them being accelerated economic and population growth, increasing migration from rural to urban areas, the youth bulge, and the worsening effects of global warming. These trends are strongly driven by perceptions that cities – in contrast to the continent's rural areas – offer an abundance of livelihood opportunities, including employment and income generating opportunities, food security, and access to finance, education and social capital, as well as social protection. Urbanization in Africa is linked to hopes, the hopes of many.

With this rapidly urbanizing Africa, a case on the roles of planning, managing and governing cities to create inclusive growth and prosperity, while driving sustainable and socially responsible investment, has been made. In this context, special attention is paid to the interface between public policies and grassroots actions to effectively tackle the critical challenges of attaining the values of sustainable urbanization, including inequality, unemployment, climate change and inadequate housing.

This paper interrogates the value of sustainable urbanization in a rapidly urbanizing sub-Saharan Africa with a population of 1.1 billion and GDP of USD 1.8 trillion (IMF, 2019). With a specific focus on two of the four values of sustainable urbanization, it espouses the social values through a planning and housing lens, and the intangible values through a governance and management lens as factors in promoting inclusive growth and spurring socially responsible investment in tandem with the Just City principles of dignity, equity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and

democracy (FES, 2020). In doing so, it suggests avenues for improving the effectiveness of policy and democratic participation as a means of inspiring reversal of the critical urban challenges and accelerating the urban transformative force and, therefore, making cities more just.

The Kenyan urban case offers a classical illustration. This is particularly significant because it is one of the countries that is going through a period of significant urban transition, having recently adopted a progressive new constitution that fundamentally changed the relationship between the people and their government, as well as the urban governance and management configuration.

This change is primarily hinged on decentralization and the shift of power towards the citizenry through expanded democratic spaces and rights and freedoms that are embedded in the constitution. The paper argues that while people's influence in the way they are governed is a constitutional guarantee, the rate at which such guarantee translates into more inclusive growth, prosperity and well-being – into more just policies – remains impeded by intangible factors, which include institutional, governance, political, cultural and civic socio-economic perceptions. The paper concludes by justifying the integral role of the Just Cities principles in accelerating the realization of the value of urbanization as a catalyst for greater progress towards the SDG 11 targets and, therefore, sustainable development at large.

This paper interrogates the value of sustainable urbanization in a rapidly urbanizing sub-Saharan Africa with a population of 1.1 billion and GDP of USD 1.8 trillion (IMF, 2019).

It suggests an increased role of intermediary cities as the immediate frontier for transformation of Just Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Intermediary cities have been defined as cities with 50,000 to 1 million inhabitants that generally play a primary role in connecting important rural and urban areas to basic facilities, services and opportunities.

According to United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), there are over 1,400 intermediary cities in Africa that are home to over 20% of the world's population, which stood at 7.75 billion in 2020. They also accommodate over one third (36%) of the total urban population, which according to the World Bank, stood at 4.358 billion in 2020. These intermediary or secondary cities can play a catalytic role in fostering just and sustainable cities across the continent.



There are over **1,400** intermediary cities in Africa that are home to over **20%** of the world's population, which stood at **7.75 billion** in 2020.



The Value of Sustainable
Urbanization and Just
City Principles

02

Cities and urban areas continue to be home to a growing population around the world. They are key to improving development outcomes, as well as places of opportunity where aspirations can be and are often realized.

Most of this urbanization is occurring in intermediary (secondary) cities, which brings these cities to the core of the value chain for sustainable urban development. This growth is strongly driven by Africans' perceptions that cities, in contrast to the continent's rural areas, offer an abundance of livelihood opportunities, including employment and income-generating opportunities, food security, and access to finance, but also to public goods like education, housing and transport, social capital as well as social protection (Stapleton, 2015). The enormous speed at which Africa's cities are growing is also linked to other key development trends, most prominently accelerated economic and population growth, increasing migration from rural to urban areas, the youth bulge and global warming (UNCTAD, 2018).

On the global front, Africa is the world's least urbanized continent, and yet the rate at which its cities are expanding is faster than other regions – at an average of 3.5% per year (Huang, 2015). This growth of urbanization varies across the continent, ranging from the already heavily urbanized North Africa (47.8%) to the least urbanized sub-Saharan Africa (32.8%) (AfDB, 2012). Between 2000 and 2014, the world's cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants grew at an average

annual rate of 2.4%, with 43 of these cities growing twice as fast, 4 of them in Africa (UCLG, 2020).

The aggregate rate of urbanization on the continent is projected to grow from 40% in 2015 to 56% in 2050 (UNCTAD, 2018). In other words, in the next 25 years, Africa's urban population will double. By 2040, the majority of Africans will be living in cities. By 2050, more than half of Kenya's population will be urban. The problem, or let's call it the key challenge, not only but especially in Africa, is that millions of people are currently moving into "unjust" cities. The population in some African cities and urban areas has already ballooned beyond the 10 million mark. For example, Cairo, the largest city in Africa, has a population of about 9.1 million people, but more than 20 million people live in its metropolitan area.

The focus of sustainable urbanization is, however, shifting to the more than 1,400 intermediary cities in Africa. This is because of their scale and spatial distribution, where they offer and decentralize housing, basic facilities, and services more cost-efficiently than the metropolitan regions, capital cities and mega cities.

Africa is the world's least urbanized continent, and yet the rate at which its cities are expanding is faster than other regions – at an average of **3.5%** per year



These intermediary cities hold the promise of a more “inclusive, safe and resilient” urbanism, and development of more balanced and sustainable urban systems, especially in rapidly urbanizing Africa.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the United Nations estimated that 71 million people had been pushed back into extreme poverty in 2020, the majority being from Africa. Some 1.6 billion informal workers, or half the global workforce, have seen their incomes affected. These circumstances highlight the importance of cities and urban areas, particularly in Africa, which are threatened with a diminishing quality of life against the backdrop of a rising urban population, the devastating effects of climate change and the persistence of the pandemic. In the same breadth, the Covid-19 crisis has pushed African intermediary cities to reflect on agricultural production, highlighting the urgent need to develop more sustainable food systems, more resilient family farming as well as better quality health care systems.

Furthermore, the development of intermediary cities is associated with high consumption patterns whose effects lead to the generation of high levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, thereby accelerating the adverse climate change impacts. Coupled with this, intermediary cities have to cope with the growing population of urban poor inhabitants comprising about 60% of their population, and occupants of fragile ecosystems and informal settlements (UCLG, 2020).

Climate impacts arising from rising temperatures, air pollution, inefficient energy consumption patterns and loss of biodiversity stress the resilience capacity of the population in the intermediary cities and increase the vulnerability of the urban poor.

African governments, as member states of the UN, ascribe to the global commitments that espouse the importance of cities. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which collectively form the backbone of international development policy, recommendations, goals, targets and indicators for member states.

A common thread in each of these instruments is the recognition of local governments as important partners in the drive for a more sustainable future. Local governments – devolved power – therefore hold an important key to promoting the value of sustainable urbanization and have the potential to make cities more just.

It is also important to recall that the African Union (AU)’s Africa Agenda 2063 aims to deliver inclusive and sustainable development while embracing the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. This is a demonstration of a shift in focus from the “struggle”¹ to “inclusive social and economic development” characterized by, inter alia, continental and regional integration and cooperation, democratic governance, peace and security, amongst other inclusive socio-economic development strategies.

Under the banner of the Pan-African Vision of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena”, Agenda 2063 envisions a long-term 50-year development trajectory for Africa. It inspires Africa to revise and adapt its development agenda due to, amongst other factors, ongoing structural transformations; renewed economic growth and social progress; and the need for people-centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment.

1. The African Agenda has been dominated with the struggle for freedom and building democratic governments in the run up to the 2013 adoption of the 50 year Africa Agenda 2063

It is local governments that are responsible for creating and sustaining value in cities and urban areas, and therefore, they are best positioned to make urbanization more people- and less business-centred.

UN-HABITAT's vision is "a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world". According to the UN program, the value of sustainable urbanization is defined as the totality of a city's economic, environmental, social and intangible conditions that have the potential to improve the quality of life of residents in meaningful, visible and concrete ways (UN-HABITAT, 2020). The intangible conditions include institutional, governance, political, cultural and civic perception. This definition recognizes the multidimensional and cross-sectoral nature of sustainable urbanization. The values are unpacked into four strands, as follows (see Figure 1):

- **Economic value** is depicted through the lens of the national economy, property development and prosperity across the urban-rural continuum. Rural to urban transitions can provide for a transformative power to re-engineer urban economies through value chain enhancement.
- **Environmental value** is depicted through the lens of cities and climate change, the built and natural environment and ecosystem services. For instance, measures to reduce emissions and policies that encourage the use of alternative sources of energy need to be in place in order to enhance the environmental value and curb the rising GHG levels. In addition, energy-

efficient buildings, low carbon public transport and encouraging cycling and walking are essential environmental values.

- **Social value** is depicted through a city's quality of life and focus on inclusivity and equity. For instance, transformations anchored on people-centered development, gender justice and youth empowerment principles are key to meeting the financial and human resource challenges in the management of intermediary cities in Africa.
- **Intangible value** is depicted through its governance systems, political institutions, cultural production and multi-level policy coherence.

Intermediary cities² play an important role here as they are increasing in number owing to Africa's rapid urbanization and their changing functions and stature. In this context, effective urban policy formulation and implementation ought to recognize the special place of intermediary cities, their nature and growth trends over time, their role in achieving inclusive and sustainable urbanization in Africa, and their integration into metropolitan regions.

Urbanization, with its various dimensions, is a force that cannot be stopped, neither in Africa nor globally. The decade of action towards the UN Agenda 2030, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 11 with its 10 targets, brings to focus four specific targets that resonate with the Just City principles. These are targets related to housing, basic services and slums (target 1), transport (target 2), inclusive urbanization (target 3) and environment (target 6).

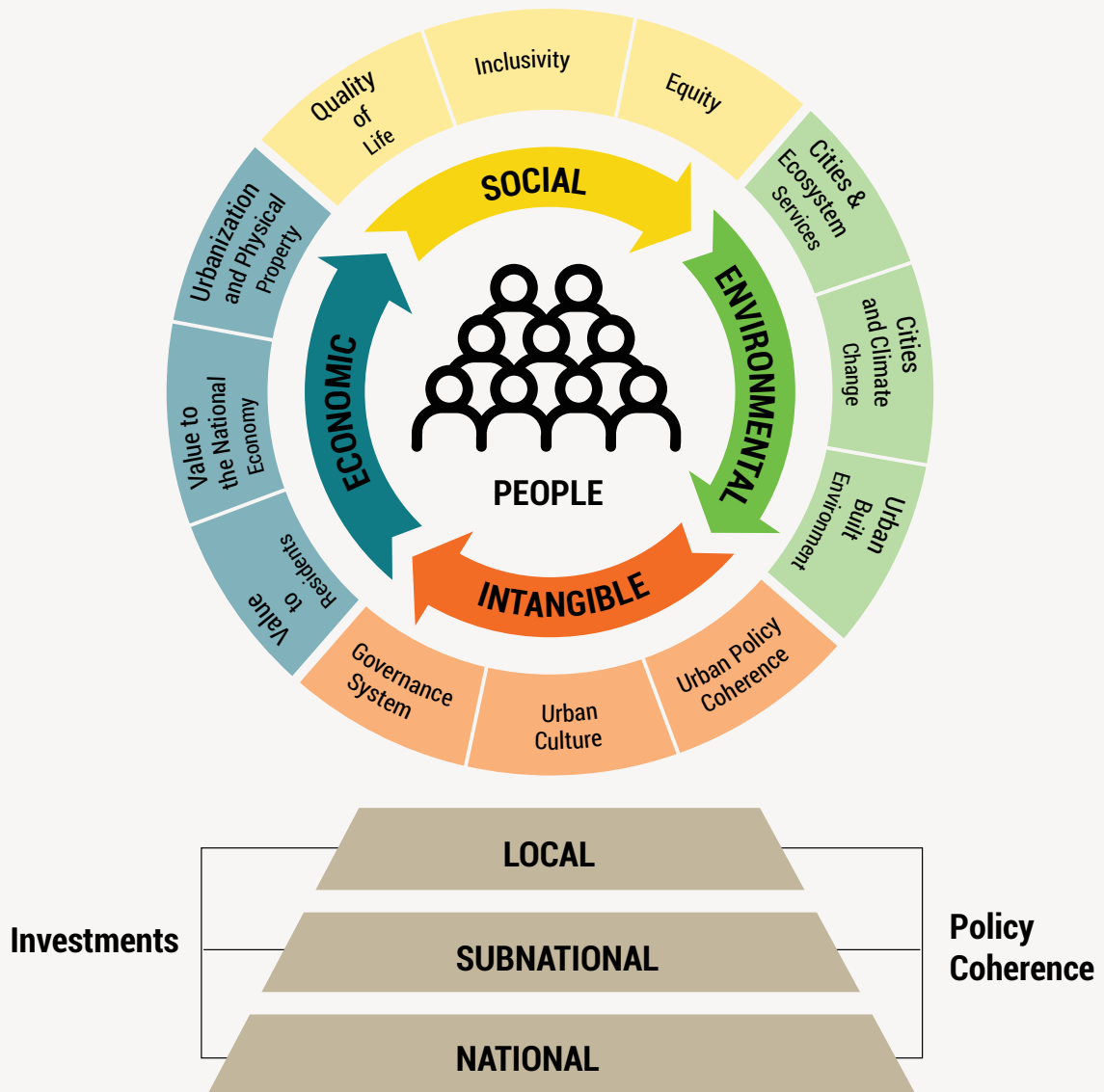


It is local governments that are responsible for creating and sustaining value in cities and urban areas, and therefore, they are best positioned to make urbanization more people- and less business-centred.

2. According to United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), there are over 1,400 intermediary cities in Africa

FIGURE 1:
Values of Sustainable Urbanization

Source: UN-HABITAT, World Cities Report 2020



Achievement of these targets is expected to enhance the value of sustainable urbanization expressed as the totality of a city's economic, environmental, social and intangible conditions that have the potential to improve the quality of life of residents in meaningful, visible and concrete ways (UN-HABITAT, 2020).

The Just City concept makes a compelling case for meaningful, visible and concrete improvements in the quality of life inspired by an environment of dignity, equity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and democracy, as the core principles of a Just City. A recent progress report on SDG 11 determined that the direct and indirect impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are making it even more unlikely that this Goal will be achieved, with more people forced to live in slums, where the quality of life is deteriorating and vulnerability is increasing (UN-ECOSOC, 2021).

With this realization and as a transformative force, sustainable urbanization should, therefore, accelerate the ability of governments to meet the diverse needs of urban residents that fulfil their aspirations and

improve their well-being. This brings to the fore the importance of the intangible value, particularly in the placement of institutions that uphold inclusive governance systems that are responsive and accommodative of the popular interests of the urban populace. These values are complemented by the Just City principles (see Figure 2).

The specific intersection between the values of sustainable urbanization and just city principles is around social values and intangible values. In this context, social values embrace dignity (quality of life) and equity and diversity (inclusivity and equity). The Just City principles of rights and responsibilities, and democracy are embraced in the intangible values, primarily within the context of governance systems, urban culture (rights and responsibilities) and urban policy coherence (democracy). The concern, therefore, is how these intersections create a transformative force significant enough to make not just cities in Africa but also globally more just and better places for the majority, not just the wealthy few.

FIGURE 2:
Just City Principles



Dignity

This is the right of an individual or a group to be valued, respected, and treated ethically. It is to recognise the worthiness of a human individual or a group. It implies respect of the individual or a group regardless of their perceived socio-economic or political status.



Equity and Diversity

An equitable city is one where the city and its benefits are shared equitably among the citizens. A city of diversity is a city where there is an understanding that democratic processes may result in the exclusion of others (especially minorities) so measures should be put in place to ensure justice for all, including minorities and visitors.



Rights and Responsibilities

A city where the rights of all citizens and visitors are observed. These rights are counter-balanced by citizens taking responsibility in the affairs of the city and in developing their city.



Democracy

A city where citizens make collective decisions on the basis of informed majoritarianism, but in a manner that respects the dignity of all and that considers equity and diversity.



Social Value and the
Just City: Planning
and Housing Lens

03

Africa is urbanizing rapidly and is facing enormous urban challenges, such as the growth of slums and increasing inequality (UN-ECOSOC, 2021) intermediary cities, with their smaller economies and often less capacitated local governments compared to primary cities, face particularly severe challenges.

3.1 Planning

Furthermore, intermediary cities are among the fastest growing urban agglomerations in Africa. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) notes that 210 million Africans live in one of the continent's 1,400 intermediary cities. Unlike urbanization in many other parts of the world, urban population growth in most of Africa has generally not been accompanied by a commensurate increase in formal employment, resulting in growing urban poverty and increased urban vulnerability (Bryceson & Potts, 2006; Fox, 2012). The capacity of government bodies to plan for and manage urban growth in Africa is generally relatively weak (Myers, 2011).

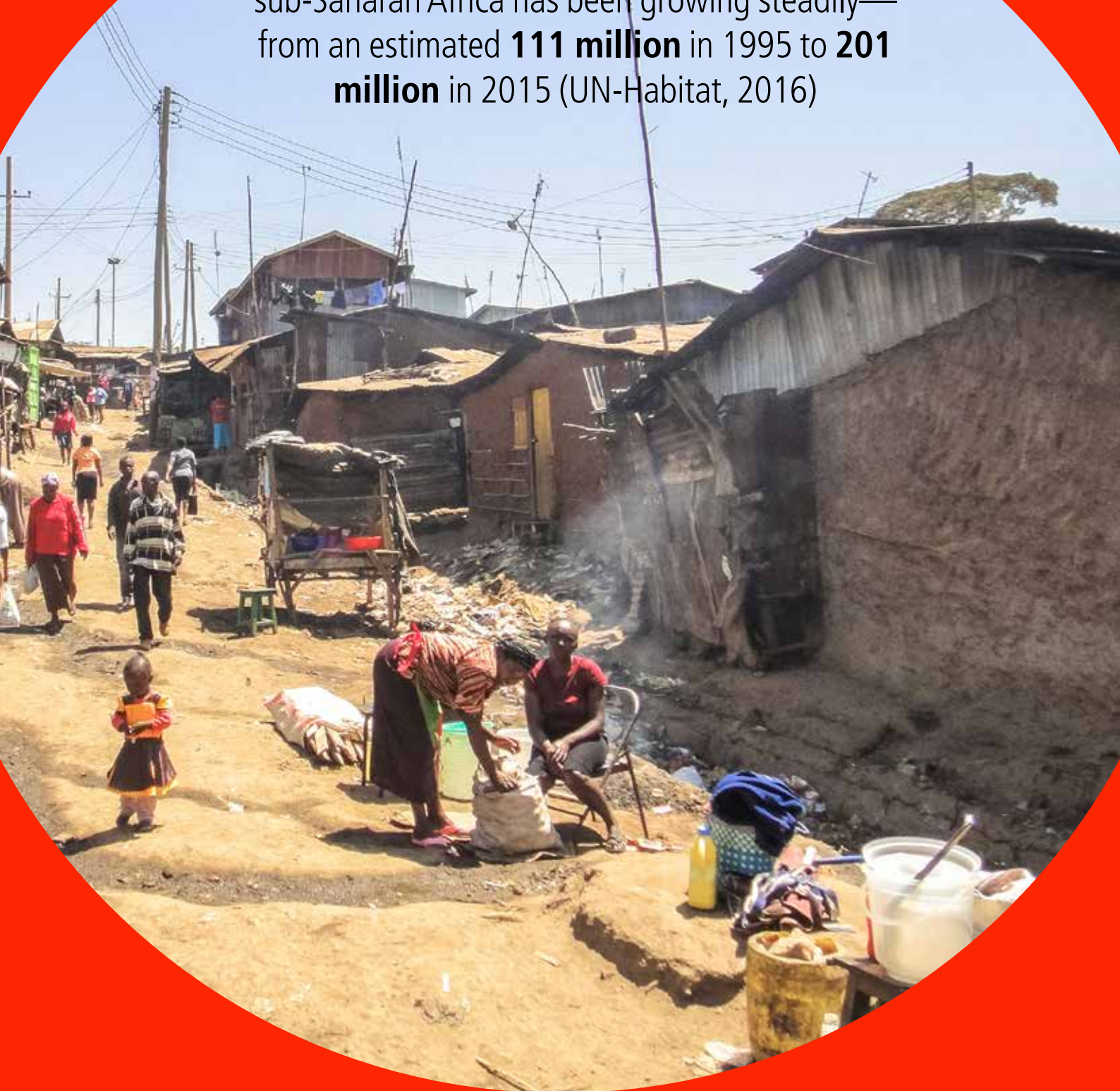
Most of the urbanization in the region is unplanned, is far from efficient regularization, and is unjust. Furthermore, local government institutions are faced with resource

constraints, both human and fiscal, to meet the ever-increasing demand for services and inclusive development. The net result of rapid urbanization and inadequate capacity for planning or managing cities is a rise in inequality, an increasing prevalence of informality, and increased health risks.

The growth of “slums” is the most tangible manifestation of these issues. In 2014, an estimated 56% of sub-Saharan Africa's urban population lived in informal settlements or other types of slums—that is to say, areas lacking adequate housing and public services. The number of households living in slums in sub-Saharan Africa has been growing steadily—from an estimated 111 million in 1995 to 201 million in 2015 (UN-Habitat, 2016). In Kenya's capital Nairobi, for example, over 60% of the population lives in informal settlements that occupy less than 10% of the city's total area. To illustrate the social value that embraces dignity, equity and diversity principles of the Just City, this paper isolates urban planning and affordable housing as important entry points for assessing social value.

This paper isolates **urban planning** and **affordable housing** as important entry points for assessing social value.

The number of households living in slums in sub-Saharan Africa has been growing steadily— from an estimated **111 million** in 1995 to **201 million** in 2015 (UN-Habitat, 2016)



Proper planning is at the core of meeting the social value and providing dignity to the urban population. When cities are “just”,

- they 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 comfort and support to older persons in their golden years, and
- welcome migrants looking for a better life (UN-HABITAT, 2020).

They can also contribute to a more inclusive economic development and sustainable growth path. However, social value is only achievable where intangible values exist in the form of institutions that respect and uphold the rule of law, rights and democratic participatory governance. To achieve dignity, recognition and respect ought to be granted to the diverse values inherent in the heterogeneous nature of urban occupation in form of culture, traditions and norms.

The Kenyan case offers a classical example. Planning has evolved since the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010. Through Article 184, the Constitution of Kenya devotes the planning role to urban governance and management institutions, as guided by the urban law, the Urban Areas and Cities Act (2011). The same constitution obligates urban institutions to develop urban plans through highly inclusive processes that observe the participatory and citizen-centered doctrine of the constitution. Additional laws have been enacted to inculcate a culture of planning among all levels of government (national, county and urban). Such laws include the Physical and Land Use Planning Act (2019), the County Government Act (2012) and the Public Finance Management Act (2012). The National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) 2016 lays further emphasis on planning with clear social safeguards.

A recent survey, (World Bank, 2021) however, reveals that the laws and policies on their own are insufficient to deliver the social value promise. Despite a significant investment in strengthening urban institutions for improved service delivery, the World Bank survey faults the current institutional planning practice, particularly its non-inclusive nature. In other words, the reality is very different from the rights granted under the 2010 constitution. As a result, there are a number of cases of displacements and evictions that have occurred in the process of pursuing development outcomes, thereby increasing social vulnerability rather than enhancing social values. Significant premium is put on the development of infrastructure at the expense of social development. Hence, Kenyans’ aspirations differ heavily from reality and the day-to-day experiences of the majority of the country’s urban population.

Kenya is home to over 70 intermediary cities that comprise about 63 municipalities and four cities³ Rapid growth of intermediary cities in Kenya has been observed and will increase with devolution, which has spurred decentralized development across the country. While most of these cities are headquarters for county governments, attracting people, funding, investments, business and tourism, amongst others, a majority fall short of fulfilling the participatory principles, thus alienating large populations in the city.

Networks of intermediary cities have an important role to play in encouraging research and experimentation and in sharing successful experiences in the planning and management of these cities. For instance, Kenya has recently established the Association of Urban, Cities and Municipal Managers & Authorities of Kenya (AUCIMMAK)⁴ to facilitate knowledge and experience exchange locally and with external networks. According to the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC)⁵, initial efforts are underway to set up a regional platform of engagement between the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC) and AUCIMMAK to address a shared vision for

3. Government of Kenya (2022); Kenya Position Paper to 9th Africities Summit (unpublished)

4. GoK (2022); Kenya Position Paper to 9th Africities Summit (unpublished)

5. Interview with Eng Hilda Luoga, Project Development Officer, LVBC (Jan 2022)

planning and managing the Lake Victoria region's resources.

For urban planning to improve, participatory urban planning accompanied by appropriate policies, regulatory and legislative frameworks must be put in place and made functional. To make participatory urban planning functional, various tools are available to facilitate citizen-centric planning. One such tool that has recently been deployed in Kenya. It is the U_CODE (TU-Dresden, 2019) e-participation, which enables the creative participation of the citizenry on a massive scale.

Through the co-design environment, U_CODE enables communication and collaboration between large numbers of citizens and professional experts. A key novelty is a public project space for non-professional civic users – a highly accessible, low-threshold public interface. For citizens who want to engage actively in the design process, a “Project Play Ground” is provided, which features highly experiential design tools. U_CODE enables professional creatives to utilize the public's creativity, to follow public opinions and sentiments, and to derive design intelligence from them. The design and decision-making process is informed and transformed by impulses of “citizen experts” as a driving force.

3.2 Housing

In the housing sector, the World Bank estimates that by 2030, three billion people, or 40% of the world's population, will need new housing units. Rapid urbanization is pushing up demand for housing in sub-Saharan Africa (IFC, 2022). African cities become the new home of over 40,000 people every day, many of whom find themselves without a roof over their heads. Both state and non-state actors are putting in efforts to do more to develop the property sector, both to provide new and affordable housing and to encourage an industry that requires significant building materials and has the potential to be a major employer.

While the private sector may be driven by profit often enabled by government subsidies, non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) approach is predominantly humanitarian in nature, addressing gaps in housing provision among disadvantaged groups, or the so-called “urban invisibles” (FES, 2020). One of the NGOs in this category is Habitat for Humanity, (UN-Habitat, 2021) which recently worked with Cities Alliance and Slum Dwellers International under the Build Solid Ground project to compile a compendium of best practices for housing in Africa (Cities Alliance, 2003, 2011).

The NGO approach essentially addresses the right to adequate housing and shelter. This right is embodied through several core elements, namely:

- legal security of tenure, including protection against forced evictions;
- availability of services (safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking and lighting, refuse disposal, waste management, recycling);
- affordability;
- access to housing finance;
- accessibility;
- habitability (providing physical safety, adequate space and protection from the elements);
- location (in relation to employment opportunities, health care, schools, childcare centres, resilience and disaster risk reduction, transport, and security); and
- cultural adequacy. As this is recognized in the common understanding of the right — and in recent important global agreements — all of these elements must be addressed.

The World Bank estimates that by 2030, three billion people, or 40% of the world's population, will need new housing units. African cities become the new home of over 40,000 people every day.

A practical illustration of the non-state approach is the Habitat for Humanity Micro-Build Fund. This fund is a US\$100million housing-focused microfinance investment vehicle dedicated to helping low-income families. The fund lends to microfinance institutions, which in turn provide small loans to families to build safe and durable homes as much as their finances allow. The fund has grown rapidly; it provided access to better housing for more than 986,000 people as of December 2020.

Micro-Build has disbursed US\$136.9 million across 55 institutions in 32 countries. For example, through a partnership between Habitat for Humanity International and the Mastercard Foundation, technical assistance has been provided to nine leading financial institutions in Uganda and Kenya to develop housing microfinance products and services. To date, more than 69,000 loans have been disbursed, and US\$60 million has been mobilized for developing incremental housing finance in these two countries, supporting over 70,000 families⁶.

While this non-state approach is tailored to include vulnerable groups in the housing delivery value chain, the deficiency of supportive government policies remains a barrier. As the area of housing microfinance is relatively young, there is a need for promotion, knowledge exchange and capacity building for microfinance institutions and other non-state actors who could offer these products and services.

In respect to government subsidies, according to the World Bank (World Bank, 2015) government subsidy programs have done little to promote wide-scale housing affordability.

For example, over the course of more than 40 years, Nigeria's Federal Housing Authority had met only 15% of its goal of supplying 261,000 units (2012). An alternative subsidy program of discounted credit to developers has encouraged land speculation rather than housing production (Abdullahi & Aziz, 2011).

In Tanzania, housing parastatals compete directly with the private sector, but provide affordable units to middle- and upper-income groups. In other countries, such as Zambia, Ethiopia and Liberia, housing subsidy programs are aimed at a single city, or in the case of Ghana, a single tenure type (home ownership). Kenya's affordable housing programme is also heavy on the single tenure type of home ownership. The government of Cameroon allocated US\$50.1 million to fund the Government Program of Construction of 10,000 Social Housing Units and Development of 50,000 Buildable Plots in 2009.

Despite the ambitious targets, only 1,175 units had been built as of 2015. Moreover, 80% of Cameroon's population cannot afford these social housing units. In conventional affordability terms, these units are far outside of the typical price-to-income range of between 3:1 and 5:1, with prices 44 to 51 times typical income levels. Indeed, even for public employees, price-to-income ranges for homes in these developments range from between 10.5-13.5 median incomes, or two to three times conventional affordability thresholds.

A World Bank report identifies two barriers to accessing the government subsidy programs (World Bank, 2003).

First relates to their poor design that often lacks targeting and monitoring criteria. This opens them to capture by the wealthier in society.

Second is the structural limits in the supply and demand chains, including land, infrastructure, construction materials and technology, which raise the production cost of housing. In this case, subsidies are unable to cushion affordability for low-income groups and, therefore, unable to bring the supply to scale to meet the demand. As such, in such situations, subsidies end up compensating for housing market dysfunctions and inefficiencies.

⁶ Habitat for Humanity and Mastercard Foundation, 2018.

A different level of non-state approach is illustrated through the International Finance Corporation and Chinese multinational construction and engineering company, CITIC Construction, that launched a US\$300 million investment platform, CITICC (Africa) Holding Limited, to develop affordable housing in multiple African countries. The platform will partner with local housing developers and provide long-term capital to develop 30,000 homes over the next five years. IFC estimates that each housing unit will create five full-time jobs – resulting in nearly 150,000 new jobs on the continent (IFC, 2022). This model, however, has received criticism on account of its being “volume-based” as opposed to “value-based”.

A key element of the criticism arises from the minimal human interaction in the process, with the target recipients being pre-judged as needy and desperate for solutions in any form. Hence, it's far from inclusive and, therefore, not necessarily “just”. Other models, such as the Kenya Affordable Housing Programme (KAHP) that is fully reliant on shoring up capital from local investors and providing a so-called win-win situation through equal access to re-mortgage financing, appear to be more inclusive, though even there, the human interface remains relatively insufficient.

As sub-Saharan Africa becomes more urbanized, non-state approaches can help governments meet the critical need for affordable housing. Public sector instruments that address aspects of housing provision, such as affordable building technology, construction regulation, and service infrastructure, among others, are essential in ensuring end user affordability.

Furthermore, it is important to provide for multiple occupancy options instead of focusing purely on home ownership since a majority of urban residents are tenants because they don't have the financial means to own individual real estate property. With a combination of private sector financing and public instruments, the subsidy programs

interlaced with non-state approaches have the potential to transform Africa's housing markets by providing high quality, affordable homes for rent and ownership, creating jobs, and demonstrating the viability of the sector to local developers, focusing on regions where large portions of the population live in sub-standard housing and have limited access to credit to build, expand, or renovate.

Research conducted on the Kenya Affordable Housing Programme (KAHP) revealed the predominance of home ownership models as opposed to rental models (Omenya, 2019, 2020). Citing the German and South Africa affordable housing programs, the research suggested policy recommendations for affordable rental housing. These recommendations advance the concepts of “housing as a safety net” and “housing as a platform” for the vulnerable in urban society. In this concept, it is presumed that it is the government's responsibility to avail serviced land for housing development, as well as provide a conducive policy and regulatory environment for competitive delivery of affordable housing.

It is further presumed that the vulnerable in society are already suffering from deprivation and have developed various coping mechanism that ought to be integrated in the design of their houses. In these vulnerable communities, the house serves more than just a chamber for living as it often combines the possibility of doing business.

Informal settlements studied in Uganda, Tanzania and Senegal reveal that residential spaces host a wide range of economic activities and community services (Carrizosa, 2022). Space-use intensity in consolidated informal settlements demonstrates that houses are much more than just houses, and that informal settlements are more than residential areas; they are foremost economic sites of production. In other words, social protections and urban services are being co-produced by the citizens.

The point here is to acknowledge the extent of these activities, so policy is able to fine-tune itself to these realities, and hence be more effective and just.

Finally, by bringing together the strengths of state and non-state actors, policymakers have the ability to share a diverse range of resources, technologies, ideas and skills in

a cooperative manner that can work to improve how urban infrastructure assets and services are delivered to low-income communities (UN-Habitat, 2011). For such a co-production approach to be “just”, they ought to invest in the innovative potential of the target group and allow room for a varied landscape of inputs, which are not just limited to local labor, recycled construction material, and energy efficient construction methods.





Intangible Value
and the Just City:
Urban Governance
and Management
Lens

04

The essence of using a governance lens is recognizing that there are a wide range of actors involved in urban governance, with very different interests and agenda but with unequal distribution of capacities, power resources and financial means.

4.1 Urban Governance

The essence of using a governance lens is recognizing that there are a wide range of actors involved in urban governance, with very different interests and agenda but with unequal distribution of capacities, power resources and financial means. Large gaps often exist between poor and better-off urban residents in terms of access to social, economic and political opportunities (particularly decision-making) and the ability to participate in, and leverage, the benefits associated with urban living. Cities in Africa are often run by and for a rather small group of citizens and not the majority – the “urban invisibles”.

Warren Smit (2018) notes that governance does not occur for its own sake; there are particular objects, tangible or intangible, that are governed. UN-HABITAT’s World Cities Report (2020) identifies the intangible value of sustainable urbanization as being depicted through its governance systems, political institutions, cultural production and multi-level policy coherence. As pointed out already, the Just City principles of rights and responsibilities, as well as democracy, are embraced in the intangible values, primarily within the context of governance systems, urban culture (democracy) and urban policy coherence.

In this paper, we consider the description of governance as “*collective practices addressing societal problems*” (Förster, 2016). In an urban context, these “problems” are the collective issues that have always impacted the lives of residents whenever large groups of people live in close proximity to each other. These include “how to govern”, “who can do what where”, “how to ensure access to public services”, or “how to ensure there is a well-functioning and affordable transport system”.

The paper adopts three basic objects of governance, namely land, infrastructure and services, and mobility. Land is an assurance of security and a guarantee for dignity. Infrastructure and services ensure equitable access to affordable services and public goods among the diverse economic and social nature of urban populations. Mobility is essential in advancing the rights of the populace to exercise their responsibilities in different spatial locations and jurisdictions.

- The first basic object of urban governance is **land allocation and land use management**, which essentially is about who can do what and where.

- The second basic object of urban governance is the **provision and management of basic infrastructure/ services**, such as water, sanitation, and waste management.
- The third basic object of governance is the **movement/accessibility system**, which is essentially about how people and goods can get around from one location to another.

Beyond these basic objects of urban governance, found in most contexts, there are also many other possible objects of urban governance, such as

- ensuring good health and well-being,
- ensuring safety from crime and violence,
- disaster risk management,
- education,
- social/cultural development,
- economic development,
- environmental management,
- housing and shelter, etc.

According to UN-HABITAT, governance is one of the key pillars of the intangible values of sustainable urbanization. It is argued that development outcomes can only be transformative if decision-making systems and structures are broken loose and made responsive and accountable to a broad section of civil society. In order for them to be just, they have to be inclusive. Cities need to be designed by and run for the majority, not just for the few minority.

There is, therefore, a renewed interest in the mechanisms through which decisions are made, particularly at the city level, where the impacts of development projects on different social groups have been particularly marked. Urban politics, it is argued, can only become truly sustainable if new modes of participatory governance are introduced alongside economic and environmental policy programs.

Urban politics can only become truly sustainable if the so-called “urban invisibles” are being heard and included because most often they are the key recipients of injustice with almost no means of escaping from it.

The Africa Agenda 2063 aims to deliver inclusive and sustainable development while embracing the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. This is a demonstration of a shift in focus from the “struggle” to “inclusive social and economic development” characterized by continental and regional integration and democratic governance, among other issues.

Agenda 2063 inspires Africa to revise and adapt its development agenda due to, among other factors,

- ongoing structural transformations;
- renewed economic growth and social progress; and
- the need for people-centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment.

Transformations anchored on people-centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment principles are key to meeting the financial and human resource challenges in the management of intermediary and tertiary cities but also in the management of metropolitan areas. Structural transformations that change the relationship between governments and the people to one that is symbiotic and complementary and facilitates realization of rights are fundamental in this context.



The Africa Agenda 2063 aims to deliver inclusive and sustainable development while embracing the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance.



As an illustration, Kenya, having embraced a devolved government system in 2013 accompanied by a transition in local urban governance and management, is undertaking governance transformations that are anchored in the supreme law of the country and that support the establishment of new institutions. These legal instruments, including the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011, allow for public participation and interaction of duty bearers and right holders, as well as the establishment of various governance institutions, such as urban boards and citizen fora.

Applied within the spirit of the law, they guide and provide opportunities for urban governance and management that ensure that citizens have access to equitable and inclusive services and public goods while participating in the decision-making of urban areas, both at the local and national levels. Good governance, therefore, has the critical aim of promoting equity, increasing the quality of public service and fostering economic growth.

Assessment of the opportunities and challenges of good governance is limited to basic elements such as the rule of law, participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency, responsiveness and effectiveness. However, good governance does not necessarily equate to democratic governance, which is what the Just City advocates. “Smart cities” might be governed in an efficient and “good” manner, but very often they are not just. Democratic governance is needed to ensure a level playing field in which political, social and economic as well as environmental issues reflect the voices and needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Their voices must be heard in decisions regarding the allocation of public resources to improve

Democratic governance, therefore, has the critical aim of promoting equity, increasing the quality of public service and fostering economic growth

their well-being. Balanced involvement of key urban actors is crucial for good governance, while popular engagement of the vulnerable and poor is key to democratic governance. Therefore, key actors in urban governance in African cities must include all levels of government, political parties, and civil society organizations, including representatives of informal settlements, traditional leaders, trade unions and organizations of organized labour, private sector organizations and informal business organizations (such as trade organizations), as well as international agencies.

As an entry point for transformative governance that has the potential to make cities more just, the following intangible values are important:

- The value of urbanization should be inclusive of all groups that live in cities, embracing the heterogeneity and diversity in groups of people, and responding to value aspirations.
- Urban areas can enhance social inclusion and reduce poverty through transformative commitments in cities, such as embracing the framework for the “right to the city” that is embedded in equitable policies that allow low-income or disadvantaged groups to benefit from socio-economic growth.
- Strong civic and cultural institutions are crucial for the realization of sustainable urbanization governed through sound institutions, a constitution, laws, regulations, social norms, and customs and traditions that foster a sense of civic identity among urban residents.

Against this background, it is gratifying to note that the 9th Africities Summit (2022)⁷ is taking place in Kisumu, Kenya, an intermediary city that provides a platform to make a case that in the aftermath of Covid-19, it is critical for African intermediary cities to diversify and improve productive capacities, and create economic opportunities for small-scale producers. This includes:

- Adopting targeted policies that guarantee access to vital inputs for agriculture, such as finance, land and technology, and rethink resource management including water, which is in competition between extractive industries and agriculture.
- Taking measures to reduce emissions through policies that encourage the use of alternative sources of energy in order to curb rising GHG levels.
- Investing in energy-efficient buildings, low carbon public transport and encouraging cycling and walking as essential measures to cut down GHG emissions in cities.

4.2 Urban Management

Increasingly, the urban crisis in Africa is being tackled by what has been called the “urban management” approach” (Stren, 1991). This approach simply refers to a body of techniques, rules, and practices for the planning and organization of modern urban settlements. According to Stren (1991), it encompasses at least four important elements:

- (i) a concern to situate urban development projects in the context of city-wide and institutional considerations;
- (ii) a concern to pay more attention to sources of local finance for more decentralized municipal government;
- (iii) a concern to devise alternative means of organizing and financing urban services, such as water supply, public transport, electricity, sanitary services, and waste disposal; and

- (iv) a concern to seek and promote local community and participatory sources of support for urban services and infrastructure.

On the one hand, city-wide and institutional considerations combined with a localized approach are key to ensuring that city diversities are accommodated in an equitable manner to build local ownership, an important precursor for urban dignity, especially amongst the vulnerable. On the other hand, concerns addressed through innovative and alternative models for urban service delivery do not only address the rights to services, but call upon a responsible interface with such services. This is further strengthened through promotion of local community and participatory support for the urban services. These attributes draw an intersection between Stren’s concerns and the Just City principles.

Any management process has a political base. In African cities, it is vital that this base shifts away from central government to local government.

This shift strengthens the role of democratically elected authorities and civil society generally. An example is the devolved system of government adopted in Kenya through the constitutional order of 2010, which established county governments and urban governance institutions accompanied by a share of national resources and functions.

While this is an important step, it points to a need to capacitate and strengthen local autonomy and to tilt center-local relationships in favor of the local level.

7 Africities summit is the largest democratic gathering organised in Africa. It is the main platform for dialogue on decentralisation and local governance that brings together every three years; African ministers, Mayors, Leaders and Elected officials of local and regional governments, Civil Society Organisations, Traditional Authorities, representatives of the African diaspora, Economic Actors, Experts, Researchers and Academics, Financial Institutions, and Development Partners. Source <https://africities.org/>.

The key questions to ponder are:

- What is being managed?
- Who is being managed?
- Do they have a say?
- What is the formula for resource allocation and management?

These are critical and fundamental questions, and they have to be asked and answered in a holistic way. This is the challenge for urban management in Africa now and into the future.

The “**what**” question must consider the city beyond being a mere “container” for people but one that embraces the “soul” of the city, **which** is reflected in the quality of life of the citizens. The Just City principle of dignity envisages value, respect and ethical treatment of the individual and collective rights of the citizens. The “**who**” question is essentially about stakeholdership, which more often than not means relegating the majority to peripheral stakeholders on the basis of their socio-economic stake in the city.

Equity and diversity as espoused in the Just City principles envisages a city where benefits are shared fairly among the citizens with no discrimination on account of social, economic and cultural status. The question of having a say is best viewed as a concern over the rights as well as responsibilities of the citizenry, and that of resource allocation and management as a product of democratic decision-making processes. Put into perspective, city management regimes are just if they view these questions through the four Just City principles.

For example, in recent times, the use of information communications technology (ICT) to improve urban management, particularly

in efficiency of delivery of public goods and services, has been deployed by a number of African governments.

A **good illustration** is the Huduma program in Kenya. Launched in 2013 as part of Kenya Vision 2030, the program established a one-stop-shop network of service centers, called *Huduma*, to provide citizens with access to various public services and information. By grouping different government departments under one roof, it increased the ease and speed of service delivery, reduced costs, and provided better services. To integrate service delivery, the program established five “one-stop-shop” channels, namely Huduma centres, Huduma web portal, Huduma mobile platform, Huduma call/contact centers and Huduma payment gateway. Popular public opinion is that the centers have eased access to government services, reduced the cost of service delivery and increased compliance among the public.

However, accountability concerns remain.

For instance, in the recent drive to accelerate registration of voters in the run-up to the 2022 general elections in Kenya, the electoral body fell way short of meeting its target, ostensibly due to large number of uncollected national identity cards issued through these centers, bringing to question the efficiency of service delivery in these centers.⁸

The use of ICT to improve access to health services in remote areas and to save lives is another example.

Rwanda has partnered with the American startup Zipline to launch the world’s first commercial drone delivery system, which transports medical supplies to remote hospitals by air. Previously, preventable deaths occurred due to delays in receiving medical supplies, especially in far-flung hospitals that provide services to the poor. Since December 2016, more than 4,000 units of blood products have been dispatched to hospitals using this means and the system now serves 21 hospitals across western Rwanda. A second distribution center is planned to serve the eastern part of the country.

⁸ IEBC (2022)

In Côte d'Ivoire, a new Drone Academy set up in 2018 by the country's biggest power provider, Ivorian Electricity Company, is training pilots to inspect the electricity network. The aim is to train 20 drone pilots to slash the inspection times of the 25,000 kilometers of high-voltage lines across the country, as well as to lower the costs significantly. Before, all inspections were done by helicopter or by teams on the ground. While the cost of purchasing a helicopter is around \$620,000, with each one-hour flight costing around \$1,850, a drone costs less than \$2,500 to purchase and has low upkeep costs. This is likely to impact the power costs to the consumer, giving commensurate reductions in the unit cost of power equivalent to the savings.

A multi-level cooperative administrative approach to urban management and planning, based on democratization and participation and focused on greater local initiative and control, would provide a flexible strategy that would be responsive and adaptable to future uncertainties (El-Shakhs, n.d.).

An illustration of this approach is the Kenya urban management and planning model where the county government grants autonomy to the municipal board to undertake management and planning functions as a corporate entity, while providing planning guidance through an

overarching instrument, the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), that forms the basis for resource allocation. In all these processes, the centrality of citizen participation is embraced, and a formal space is guaranteed in law through the provision for citizens' forums with explicit legal mandate.

Such approaches would, at the same time, promote a more socially and environmentally sustainable development process.

In the Kenyan case, the approach has re-engineered the space of participation and value of citizens' engagement in planning and management of the affairs of the municipality. Participatory planning processes are embedded in law and policy instruments and, while adherence may vary, good practices are evident.

This approach, at least in theory, embraces the Just City principles, particularly in laying the ground for dignity that is founded on democratic processes and harnesses citizens' potential, all necessary ingredients for accelerating local action towards meeting the SDG targets.



Conclusions

05

This paper illustrates the integral value of the Just Cities principles in accelerating the realization of the value of urbanization as a catalyst for greater progress towards the SDG 11 targets.

It points to an increased role of intermediary cities as the immediate frontier for transformation of just Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Defined as cities with 50,000 to 1 million inhabitants that generally play a primary role in connecting important rural and urban areas to basic facilities, services and opportunities, these intermediary or secondary cities' increased role is based on their scale and spatial distribution, where they offer and decentralize housing, basic facilities and services more cost-efficiently than the metropolitan regions, capital cities and mega cities.

While current progress on SDG 11 suggests an unlikelihood to achieve the targets, a deliberate injection of the Just City principles in the governance, management and planning regimes of local government would present some hope during this decade of action. Additionally, focus on strengthening local government institutions is key to delivering on the commitments towards making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This is particularly important in the target areas of housing, basic services and slums (target 1), transport (target 2), inclusive urbanization (target 3) and environment (target 6).

The choice of the 9th Africities summit to focus on intermediary cities and their role in delivering towards the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 is an important entry point for embracing the Just City principles. These principles complement the inclusive and sustainable development agenda that is anchored on the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity. Under the Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance call, African intermediary cities will be at the forefront of shifting focus from the "struggle" to "inclusive social and economic development".

This paper has illustrated the value chain for the transformation to inclusive social and economic development through a combination of economic, environmental, social and intangible values, as well as democratic governance.

Focus on strengthening local government institutions is key to delivering on the commitments towards making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

On the **economic front**, examples that illustrate the value of transformations anchored in people-centered development, gender justice and youth empowerment principles in meeting the financial and human resource challenges in the management of intermediary cities are presented. In this case, structural and institutional transformations that change the relationship between governments and the people to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities are advanced.

The case of devolution in Kenya and the attendant establishment of new urban institutional architecture accompanied by structural transformations in government business through one-stop service centers is one such illustration. It is the conclusion of the paper that robustness of local government institutions ought to be anchored in an inclusive, participatory and open governance model that exercises high levels of transparency and accountability to build the trust and confidence of the citizenry.

On the **social front**, the paper acknowledges that the most recent progress report (UN-ECOSOC, 2021) on SDG 11 determined that the direct and indirect impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are making it even more unlikely that this goal will be achieved, with more people forced to live in slums, where the quality of life is deteriorating and vulnerability is increasing. The Covid-19 crisis pushes African intermediary cities to reflect on agricultural production, highlighting the urgent need to develop more sustainable food systems and more resilient family farming systems.

The paper suggests the adoption of targeted and inclusive policies that guarantee access to vital inputs for agriculture, such as finance, land and technology, and rethinking resource management, including water, which is in competition with the extractive industries and agriculture. The Urban

Economic Planning (UEP) model that is currently being implemented in Kenya by 12 intermediary municipalities under the Sustainable Urban Economic Development Programme (SUED)⁹ presents a typical case. The investments are based on agriculture value chains that are guided by the green – blue development – concept and climate proofed.

In addition, the space of ICT in extending services and supplies to remote locations is integral in promoting inclusive and ideally also affordable service provision. However, ICT applications in public goods and services delivery must not just focus only on efficiency, security and productivity, as proposed by the “Smart Cities” concept, but also on upholding citizens’ rights and democratic participation, as proposed by the Just City concept. A link between social and intangible values is drawn, noting that social value is only achievable where intangible values exist in the form of institutions that respect and uphold the rule of law, rights and democratic participatory governance.

Furthermore, to achieve dignity, recognition and respect ought to be granted to the diverse values inherent in the heterogeneous nature of urban occupation in the form of culture, traditions and norms. It is the conclusion of the paper that the rallying call of “leaving no one and no place behind” is apt to drive social value affirmative action for increased urban social value.

On the **environment front**, the paper argues that the development of intermediary cities is associated with high consumption patterns whose effects lead to the generation of high levels of greenhouse gases, thereby accelerating adverse climate change impacts. Coupled with this, intermediary cities have to cope with growing populations of urban poor inhabitants comprising about 60% of their population and occupants of fragile ecosystems and informal settlements.

⁹ <https://www.suedkenya.org/>

Climate impacts arising from air pollution, inefficient energy consumption patterns and loss of biodiversity tests the resilience capacity of the population in the intermediary cities and increases vulnerability of the urban poor. Illustrations presented through models for affordable housing in different countries of Africa suggest that inherent value of diversity reflected among the citizens is a basket for innovation that can be borrowed to accelerate the delivery of basic services and mitigate against climate impacts to dignify the lives of the poor and vulnerable majority.

On **intangible value**, the paper reasons that development outcomes can be transformative if decision-making systems and structures are broken loose and made responsive and accountable to a broad section of civil society, including the majority of city dwellers – the so-called “urban invisibles”. Cases reviewed show mixed patterns of governance responsiveness and accountability. Central though is a positive trend in the development of urban policies, with the recent SGD progress report (UN-Habitat, 2018) revealing that over 90 countries have formulated urban development policies as part of their commitment to the SDGs.

An example is offered through the National Urban Development Policy in Kenya. This policy has unlocked investment worth US\$ 300 million from the World Bank through the Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP) targeting institutional strengthening and improved service delivery. According to the mid-term review, (World Bank, 2020) the program has financed the construction of 230.25 kilometers of roads and non-motorized transport, 31.08 kilometers of storm water drainage, 11 recreational parks, 11 markets, 1,027 parking slots, 3 fire stations; and installation of over 1,189 street lights and 38 high masts in Kenya’s urban areas anchored in strengthened urban institutions.

On the **governance front**, transformation from devolution that is merely constitutionally obligated to one that is symbiotic and complementary and facilitates realization of rights is fundamental in this context. Governance has to be “good” but more importantly, it has to be democratic.

Kenya, having embraced a devolved government system in 2013 accompanied by a transition in local urban governance and management, exemplifies such transformation that is anchored in the supreme law of the country. Such trends are a useful point of departure in the conversation around Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. The platform offered through the Africities Summit is rich for knowledge and best practice exchange, as well as building networks among the like-minded.

As this paper has shown, urbanization has the potential to transform whole societies; it is an unstoppable force, especially in Africa. For this transformation to ultimately improve the living conditions of millions of Africans, cities not only have to be made inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (SDG 11), they also have to be made just. For urbanization to drive inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development, it clearly has to be more just. One cannot live in dignity in an unjust city. The intermediary cities numbering over 1,400 in Africa provide the best hope for actualizing this transformation due to their scale and spatial distribution, where they offer and decentralize housing, basic facilities and services more cost-efficiently than the metropolitan regions, capital cities and mega cities. These intermediary cities hold the promise for a more “inclusive, safe and resilient” urbanism, and the development of more balanced and sustainable urban systems, especially in rapidly urbanizing Africa.



References

06

- AfDB, (2012). *Urbanization in Africa*.
From <https://blogs.afdb.org/inclusive-growth/urbanization-africa-191>
- Bryceson, D., and Potts, D. (Eds.) (2006) *African Urban Economies: Viability, Vitality or Vitiation?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.
DOI: 10.1057/9780230523012
- Carrizosa, M. (2022). Urban informality, Working Paper. The New School, New York.
- Cities Alliance, (2003). Cities without slums. *CIVIS Shelter Finance for the Poor Series*, (4), https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/CIVIS_April03_ShelterFinanceSynthesis.pdf
- Cities Alliance, (2011). Cities without slums. *Housing the Poor in African Cities*, Nairobi: UN Habitat. https://www.mysup.org/library_files/downloads/Quick%20Guides%20for%20Policy%20Makers%20-%20Housing%20the%20Poor%20in%20African%20Cities%20-%20Urban%20Africa.pdf
- FES, (2020). *Towards the just city in Kenya*. Nairobi: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/19072.pdf>
- Förster, T. (2016). The formation of governance: The politics of governance and their theoretical dimensions. In L. Koechlin and T. Förster (Eds.), *The Politics of Governance: Actors and Articulations in Africa and Beyond*, pp. 197-218. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fox, S. (2012) Urbanization as a global historical process: theory and evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, *Population and Development Review*, 38(2), pp. 285-310, DOI: 10.1111/j.1728-4457.2012.00493.x
- Government of Kenya (2022); Kenya Position Paper to 9th Africities Summit (unpublished), Nairobi: Government of Kenya
- Huang, J. (2015). African Urbanization, Population Connection. Retrieved 19 July 2019. From: <https://www.populationconnection.org/african-urbanization/>
- IFC, (2022). Affordable Housing in Africa. From https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/news_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/news+and+events/news/trp_featurestory_africahousing
- IMF, (2019). Sub-Saharan Africa regional economic outlook: recovery amid elevated uncertainty. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2019/04/01/sreo0419>
- Myers, G. A. (2011) *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*. London: Zed Books.
DOI: 10.5040/9781350218123
- Omenya A. (2019). State of housing report 2019. Nairobi: Economic and Social Rights Centre
- Omenya, A. (2020): Rental controls and fair rental policy on affordable housing (Unpublished), Nairobi, Eco Build Africa
- Republic of Kenya (2016), Kenya Urbanization Review, Washington, DC: World Bank
- Stapleton, C. (2015). The migrant network effect: an empirical analysis of rural-to-urban migration in South Africa. Master's Dissertation. Cape Town: University of Cape Town. <http://hdl.handle.net/11427/13747>
- Smit, W. (2018) Urban Governance in Africa: An Overview (openedition.org) <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/2637>
- Stren, R. E. (1991). Old wine in new bottles? An overview of Africa's urban problems and the urban management approach to dealing with them. *Environment and Urbanization*, 3(1) pp 9-22.
- TU-Dresden, (2019). U_CODE Project. From https://tu-dresden.de/bu/architektur/wa/forschungsprojekte/u_code
- UCLG, (2020). Concept Note for 9th Africities Summit, Kisumu, Kenya
- UNCTAD, (2018). Economic development in Africa report. New York and Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldcafrica2018_en.pdf
- UN-ECOSOC, (2021). Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary-General. New York: United Nations Economic and Social Council. [https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/)

[UNDOC/GEN/N21/109/71/PDF/N2110971.pdf?OpenElement](#)

UN-Habitat, (2011). Public-private partnerships in housing and urban development. The Global Urban Economic Dialogue Series. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/Public-Private%20Partnership%20in%20Housing%20and%20Urban%20Development.pdf>

UN-Habitat (2016) Urbanization and development: emerging futures. World Cities Report 2016. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat, (2018). SDG 11 synthesis report. From <https://unhabitat.org/sdg-11-synthesis-report>

UN-Habitat, (2020). World Cities Report 2020: The value of sustainable urbanization. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/wcr_2020_report.pdf

UN-Habitat, (2021). Compendium of best practices for housing in Africa. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. https://www.habitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/compendium_best_cases_Africa.pdf

El-Shakhs, S. (n.d.) Towards appropriate urban development policy in emerging mega-cities in Africa. <https://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu26ue/uu26ue0z.htm#14%20towards%20appropriate%20urban%20development%20policy%20in%20emerging%20mega%20cities%20in%20africa>

World Bank, (2003) World Development Report 2004: Making services work for poor people. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank, (2015). Stocktaking of the housing sector in Sub-Saharan Africa: challenges and opportunities. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23358>

World Bank, (2020). Kenya Urban Support Program (P156777). <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/429471606925355130/pdf/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-Kenya-Urban-Support-Program-P156777-Sequence-No-07.pdf>

World Bank, (2021). Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP). 3rd Annual Appraisal. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P156777>

URBAN INFORMALITY AND THE MAKING OF AFRICAN CITIES

MARCH 2022

Author: Maria Carrizosa, PhD



URBAN INFORMALITY AND THE MAKING OF AFRICAN CITIES

MARCH 2022


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Maria Carrizosa, PhD (lead author)

Teddy Kisémbó and Hafisa Namuli (local researchers, Uganda)

Imma Kapinga (local researcher, Tanzania)

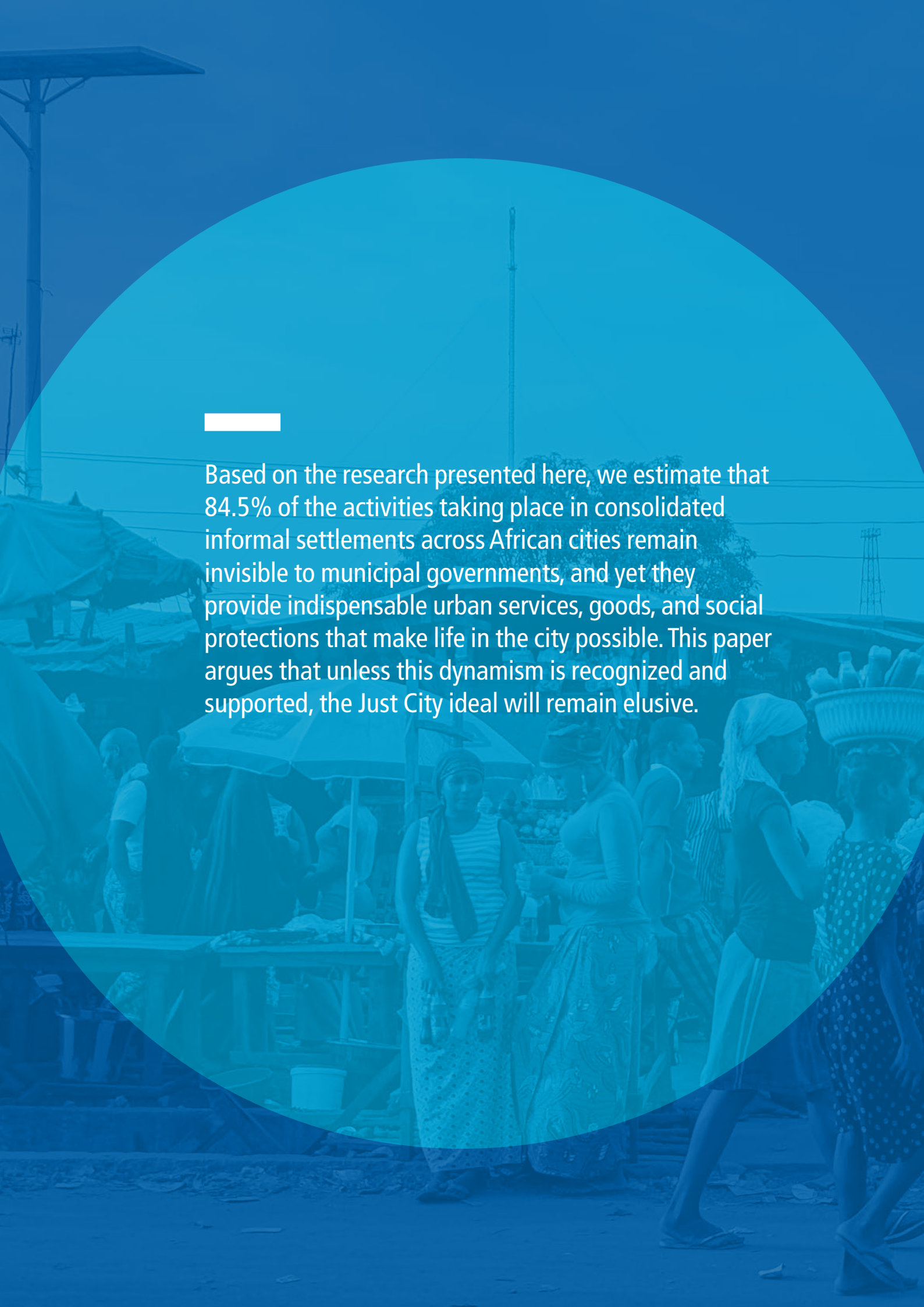
Amadou Ndiaye (local researcher, Senegal)



—

**“The city is all of us ...
we make the city.”**

Sara Nandudu,
Deputy Chair of Slum
Dwellers International



Based on the research presented here, we estimate that 84.5% of the activities taking place in consolidated informal settlements across African cities remain invisible to municipal governments, and yet they provide indispensable urban services, goods, and social protections that make life in the city possible. This paper argues that unless this dynamism is recognized and supported, the Just City ideal will remain elusive.

Approach
to Urban
Informality

01

Despite the many prejudices, it has become increasingly clear that urban informality is a defining feature of our world. Informality can no longer be thought of as synonymous with poverty or marginality (Roy, 2009), but as a feature of advanced capitalism (Sassen, 1994).

Furthermore, mounting evidence supports the theoretical and empirical fact that informality is today majoritarian and that it does not necessarily fade with economic growth (Jutting & Laiglesia, 2009), and that across the globe, both North and South, most people (61.5%) work informally, making informal employment the norm. Statistics are undeniable: informal employment in Africa accounts for 85.8% of all jobs (ILO, 2018), and for 78% of all new jobs (ILO, 2020). In terms of city-building, experts concur that urban informality accounts for at least 60% to 80% of the existing urban fabric of developing countries (Chen, Kihato & Skinner, 2018). Africa underwent its urban transition in 2015 and it is projected to have the fastest urban growth rate in the world over the next three decades, most of it unplanned (OECD, 2020). These simple facts are reason enough to firmly place urban informality at the core of any conversation about what the just city in Africa ought to be.

It is impossible to miss the vibrancy of informality in African cities: street vendors are central to food security, informal transport modes keep the city moving, home-based workers offer care services that ensure economic activity. This realization comes

in tandem with increasing statistical clarity about the scope of the urban informal economy, which is uncomfortably large, and its contribution to the continent's GDP. Informality is the main source of income for most people, and it is instrumental for the delivery of many urban services, so it is pivotal to the functioning of African cities. Informal service providers guarantee the flow of goods and services wherever formal conduits do not reach, and in this sense, informality helps cities function. Because African cities do function in a way that is not easily comprehensible and that is different from what planners assume and expect.

This paper defines urban informality as the predominant mode of city-making today, and as a range of activities that are essential for the progressive development of African cities. Despite its problems, informality helps cities function and raises people's well-being. In fact, without informal contributions in the form of income (informal employment), housing (informal housing and informal settlements or slums), and community services (informal care arrangements, informal water provision, informal waste recycling activities, and so on), people would be worse off.

Positive framings of informality in policy making are rather new. Only recently have governments adhered to supporting informality rather than to fighting it (ILO, 2015) (Kiaga et al, 2020). And despite these new approaches, prejudices against urban informality abound within governments, academia, and in the streets.

The specific focus of this paper is the overlap between informal housing and informal employment. This view has been conceptualized by some as “home-based enterprises” (Tipple, 2014) and (Chen, 2014) or as “urban livelihoods” (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002) and (Chen et al, 2016). In the current effort, attention is placed on understanding how space multitasks by detailing the granularity and range of informal activities happening within houses in informal settlements, and catering to the needs of its residents in terms of income, social protections, urban and community services.

This paper reveals that across the informal settlements studied in Uganda, Tanzania and Senegal, residential spaces host a wide range of economic activities and community services. Space-use intensity in consolidated informal settlements demonstrates that houses are much more than just houses, and that informal settlements are more than just residential areas; they are foremost economic sites of production. Here, housing

and employment cannot be differentiated (Carrizosa, 2021). These neighborhoods and their residents internalize the services they do not receive through formal channels. In other words, social protections and urban services are being co-produced by the citizens. People are contributing much more to making life in the city possible than their municipal governments. Rather than labeling this state of affairs as good or bad, the point here is to acknowledge the extent of these activities, so policy is able to fine-tune itself to these realities, and hence be more effective and more just.

Against this backdrop, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the world to recognize that residential space is an essential part of the public health infrastructure, and that homes are a fundamental component of the work infrastructure, during the crisis and possibly beyond. But let us acknowledge that, while working from home is a new experience for many, it has long been an indispensable strategy for those living in self-built homes in informal settlements. This means that learning about the way informal settlements offer income opportunities and services should be a worthwhile endeavor for any urban manager.

If urban informality is not a deviation from the norm but the norm itself, our understanding of it, and consequently, the way it is treated by policy, must radically transform. Unfortunately, when it comes to the design of locally relevant urban policy options, the scope of imagination is not only narrow, but dated prejudices about what informality is and how to curb it, persistently reemerge. Calls to rethink social protection measures and to enhance the productivity of the urban informal sector are only starting to be listened to and phrased (Guyen & Karlen, 2020). And, while it is increasingly clear that social protection measures ought to be tailored to the way urban informality operates (WIEGO, 2020), the way these measures actually look like is hardly progressive or innovative. More must be done to arrive at more fitting measures to support urban informality.



The specific focus of this paper is the overlap between informal housing and informal employment.



Most people (**61.5%**) work informally, making informal employment the norm.



Informal employment in Africa accounts for **85.8%** of all jobs (ILO, 2018), and for **78%** of all new jobs (ILO, 2020)

Schematic
Literature
Review

02

The term “informal economy” was coined and introduced to the international development sphere through the International Labour Organization (ILO)’s Comprehensive Employment Mission to Kenya in 1972 following the previous ethnographic work of Keith Hart in Accra, Ghana. Since then, informality has been understood in at least four main ways, each with a different definition of it, a different causal theory that explains why it exists, and consequently

different – and often opposing – policy recommendations. What follows is a schematic review of this rich and complex literature, following a framework suggested by the WIEGO network (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing) (Chen 2014, Chen et al 2016), and extended with a fifth approach representing the current theoretical atmosphere up until 2019, when the pandemic struck.

FIGURE 2.1
Schools of thought on urban informality from 1972 to 2019

| | DUALISM | STRUCTURALISM | LEGALISM | VOLUNTARISM | CONTINUUM |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| Definition of informality | Marginal activities not provided by the formal sector. Safety net for the poor | Outsourcing to microenterprises to increase competitiveness | Value not fixed as capital due to cumbersome regulations. Untapped capital of the poor. | Opportunity that seeks to avoid regulation and taxation (not always illicit products, but included) | Does not exist in pure form, grey zones, transactions, coproduction, local cooperative norms. |
| Relation formal-informal | Separated. Few linkages, Counter-cyclical, Substitutes | Integrated, complementary. Pro-cyclical | Formal regulations are hostile for the poor. The poor bypass them but miss tapping their own potential | Opt in or out. Counter-cyclical for self-employed, pro-cyclical for independent workers | Inevitable linkages, permanent movement along continuum. Formality wants clarity, informality resists |
| Causal theory | Population growth unmatched with industrial employment opportunities. Unemployment. Productivity differentials | Competitiveness. Capitalistic drive breeds informality | Hostile legal system. Excessive government regulation creates informality | Rational choice. People opt out after a cost benefit analysis. Opportunity and tradition | What works prevails. Incomplete formalization attempts. Structural changes in work, labor precarization. |
| Policy options | More formal jobs. More economic growth. Industrialization, modernization | More labor regulation, increased unionization. Broadened social protection | Titling properties (formalization), cutting tape, deregulating (firm and construction permits), and expanding microfinance | Lower costs of formality. Unbundle social protections. Facilitate formalization. Change culture of non compliance. | Adjust rules to realities so as not to crowd out cooperation. Universal basic income. Continuum of land rights. Service coproduction |
| Critiques | Growth and development did not shrink informality. Not marginal nor disconnected. If people maximize, labor supply stretches. | Marxist dogmatism and limited applicability. Welfarism disincentivizes entrepreneurship. Disregards role of institutions | Naturalization of entrepreneurship, false promises (Mitchell 2005). Disregards infrastructure and social policy (Madrick 2001) | Overlooks outsiders for whom the formal not an option but irrelevant. Overfocus on mandatory pension contributions | Over-focused on the South. Policy approached trapped in dualism. Methodological stiffness. |
| Authors | Lewis, 1954, Hart 1972, ILO 1972, Harris and Todaro 1970, Maloney 1979 | Moser 1978, Tokman 1992, Castells and Portes 1989; Sassen 2000 | De Soto, 1989, 2000. Collier 1999, Loayza 1997, ILO 1993, ILO 1993, ILO 2003, IFC 2017 | Maloney, 2004; Perry et al, 2007; Levy, 2012, Kanbur 2014 | Ostrom et al 2006, Fergusson 2007; Yitachel 2009; Meager 2013; ILO 2015 |



Dualism

The dualist view of informality shapes the conventional understanding of the phenomenon, fixed in the very word “in-formal” that denotes contraposition between what is formal, official, correct, according to modern norms, and what is not. In essence, all traditional schools of thought dualist because they see a categorical opposition between formal and informal. Dualism sees informality as a process of exclusion whereby goods and services do not reach the margins of the formal sector. In this view, informality is driven by population growth unmatched with industrial employment opportunities, a problem of unemployment, in short.

Dualist policies advocate for more economic growth, increased supply of formal jobs, industrialization, and modernization of the economy. Initially, it was believed that the modernization of the economy would naturally expand formal jobs, and that a steady provision of enough low-cost social housing alternatives, would suffice to curtail informality. But after decades of failure to see these changes, dualist policies embraced a more repressive approach, making the parallel between informal and illegal more relevant, and mandating more control and supervision over unregulated realms. The dualist idea that informality behaves counter-cyclically is challenged by evidence from countries in Southeast Asia and Latin America where economic development has not curbed but instead accentuated informality (Jutting & Laiglesia, 2009). It is also contested by the Marxist critiques of the structuralist approach.

Dualism sees informality as a process of exclusion whereby goods and services do not reach the margins of the formal sector. Informality is driven by population growth unmatched with industrial employment opportunities, a problem of unemployment, in short.



Structuralism

In strict opposition to the marginalist perspective of the standard dualism, structuralism sees the informal as essentially linked to the formal, and moreover necessary to enhance economic competitiveness. Prominent advocates of this school of thought are Moser (1978), Castells and Portes (1989), and Sassen (2002). In short, structuralism sees informality as an outsourcing practice of big firms to microenterprises in their drive for competitiveness. Notably, structuralism does not preclude informality to developing countries but sees it as a universal phenomenon and a byproduct of globalization. In the North, and especially amidst innovations driven by digital markets, the precarization of employment is rampant.

In contrast to dualism, for structuralists the informal sector behaves pro-cyclically, so more economic growth will only exacerbate informality. This means structuralist policies advocate for more labor regulation, unionization, and social protection. In sum, more welfare not more growth. Theoretically speaking, structuralism, like most neo-Marxist ideas, has not been displaced but rather silenced by the neoliberal practicalities of the legalist paradigm.

Structuralism sees informality as an outsourcing practice of big firms to microenterprises in their drive for competitiveness. Structuralism does not preclude informality to developing countries but sees it as a universal phenomenon and a byproduct of globalization.

Legalism defines informality as the consequence of red-tape and imperfect property rights systems: excessive and costly rules cause informality.



Legalism

The most outspoken representative of the legalist view is Hernando de Soto, a Peruvian economist who successfully deployed a theory of deregulation, de-bureaucratization, and privatization, as a means to prosper out of poverty. In a nutshell, legalism defines informality as the consequence of red-tape and imperfect property rights systems: excessive and costly rules cause informality. De Soto claims that through deregulation and titling programs, it is possible to unleash 9.3 trillion dollars of dead capital that is buried in the assets of the poor around the world (De Soto, 2000). This optimistic, pragmatic and clearly neoliberal approach was embraced by the Doing Business (DB) indicator developed by World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), leading to highly influential, yet controversial measurements of red-tape deterrents to entrepreneurialism of 190 cities across the world. The policy solutions of legalism are straightforward: land titling, labor flexibilization, e-services, and notably, microcredits. In sum, less and simpler rules should encourage formalization. In stark opposition to structuralist prescriptions, here the idea is not more but less government.

De Soto's thinking has had a profound impact across the world, in part because it resonated so well with the recipes of multilateral banking corporations: the structural adjustment programs of the 1990s and the public-private partnerships of the 2000s. But many deem legalism's popularity "politically placid" (Gilbert, 2002), (Varley, 2012), and (Davis,

2006). In fact, critiques of this view abound in the literature and are hard to disregard. The most salient critiques are: that statistics backing the analysis are spurious (Bromley, 2004:282), that the impact titling has on the mortgage market is overstated (Gilbert, 2002), and that concluding that the poor are naturally entrepreneurial is unfair (Roy, 2005).



Voluntarism

Not much different from a standard rational choice theory, the voluntarist school of thought on the informal economy comes mostly from literature and evidence from Latin America, a region of very high urban informality measures. The main idea of this theory is that people opt out of formality for convenience, and not necessarily because they are being excluded or marginalized out of the formal sector. Voluntarists like Maloney (2003), Hardill, Baines & Perry (2007), and Levy (2012), see fluid entry and exit movements between the formal and informal realms. This does not imply that people in informality are not poor nor that they are content with this status, but that it is unclear if they would be better off in a formal job for which they are qualified. Informality is often an optimal decision given specific circumstances, compared with the low level of formal sector productivity (Maloney, 2003). Preferring and remaining in informality, makes evident that market benefits from formal social protection schemes are narrow. More broadly, voluntarism denounces a lack of trust in the government.

The main idea of this theory is that people opt out of formality for convenience, and not necessarily because they are being excluded or marginalized out of the formal sector.

Voluntarist policies promote the transition and flexibility between formal and informal statuses throughout the life cycle of workers, and the unbundling or fractioning of social protections. Voluntarists generally assume that the movement between the formal and the informal ultimately favors formality, they hold that formalization policies are stronger than its countering informalization.

But this is simply not true. The informal economy is majoritarian and grows. Worse still, as neo-Marxists and structuralists would argue, the flexibilization of social protections contributes not to formalization but to precarization and further informalization.



Continuum

The current theoretical environment is one where thinkers share a disregard for the formal/informal discrete binary, and prefer to focus on the middle ground, the in-between realm, the gradual variations along a continuum. Authors talk about co-production (Joshi & Moore, 2004), continuum (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur & Ostrom, 2006), grey zones (Yiftachel, 2009), coral reefs (Fergusson, 2007), linkages (Meagher, 2010), fractures or hinges (Simone, 2010:45), and constellations (Barry, 2015), to name a few of the most recognized terms. Acknowledging the shades of grey, I deliberately embrace the “continuum” term, honoring the work of Elinor Ostrom on informality.

One of the most important conclusions of the continuum approach is that informality is not unstructured, disorganized, and chaotic. “Such an association is conceptually unsound, empirically weak, and has led to policy disasters.” (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur & Ostrom, 2006). Further still, Guha-Khasnobis et al conclude that good and bad do not rest at either end of the formal-informal spectrum, so that more formal is not always desired, and more informal is not always a bad thing.

What we are used to refer to as informal, are simply practices that exist because they work, and because they do, they must be learned from. Labeling informality as bad blocks our understanding of what is really happening on the ground and hinders our capacity to help it thrive.

Forcing formalization on informal structures often crowds out well-functioning arrangements. Instead, what is necessary is to obtain a more granular knowledge of “informal” phenomena, and policies that are not too far removed from the realities on the ground, but that “just right reach of government”. This approach highlights that the difference between a good policy and a bad one is the implementation capacity. Good measures, then, are those that “tailor intervention to the capacity of the structure” (Idem:13), rather than offer blanket solutions that must work everywhere because they worked somewhere. The continuum view does not favor grand policy interventions and argues that all too often “abstinence of the government is indeed a blessing in disguise” (Idem:5). Among the recommended principles for policy action are: subsidiarity (going as closer to the problem as possible, and that means starting at the community level before going to the local government), tailored packages of complementary interventions, and using “voting with feet” as an evaluation criterion for efficacy (Idem:15). Ultimately, the continuum approach requires a more granular knowledge of informal practices, so that policies can be smarter by getting closer to realities.

This paper argues that the continuum approach is a particularly promising one for African cities, because policies can leapfrog outdated paradigms, and also because with sound research and courageous leaders, it can help reconnect, validate, and legitimize what Africa has always been: the oldest continent, with a wealth of knowledge in what “living together” entails.



Making the “Urban
Invisibles” Visible:
Examples from
Kampala, Dar es
Salaam, and Dakar

03

This project believes that governments should do a better job of making their cities more just by supporting people living and working in informal settlements because they contribute more to the local economy and the community than what is acknowledged.

People often use their living space as working space, and also provide social and community services that are needed and not found publicly. For policy to get smarter at supporting people, experts need to recognize that a house in an informal settlement is much more than a place of residence. Houses are also economic and social assets. In houses people work, offer community services, maintain businesses, and save for the future. So, instead of penalizing or turning a blind eye to what people are doing, governments need to recognize these activities and support them with a range of programs and services that are fine-tuned to their actual capacities and needs. For example, home improvements like better construction materials, lighting, water, or ventilation can mean better child-care services and health conditions. Or training programs can be the difference between an unpaid mortgage and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Changing the narrative gear of conventional development documents, this section walks the reader into three houses in three capital cities, namely, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Dakar, telling a visual story of how houses are used. This is a rather intimate view into the lives of typical residents of consolidated

informal settlements, people that are not necessarily poor, nor rich, but whose way of using space speaks of how average citizens make urban life possible. “Consolidated informal settlements” are mostly self-built urban areas that used to be on the outskirts of the city, but that have developed gradually over time and are now part of the built-up fabric of the city. These old peripheries are more densely occupied, have better urban services and tenancy arrangements, and include middle-income areas (Ward, 2015).

Before delving into the house stories, a few comments are necessary about the conceptual and methodological approach guiding the field work data collection. Conceptually, this qualitative research is centered on the term “space-use intensity”, a concept that is inspired in time-use research that studies multitasking (Carrizosa, 2021). In particular, it draws on survey techniques that use photographs to aide interviewees offer more complete information about the activities they do on any given day (Gershuny et al., 2017). Following Jacobs’ (1969) ideas about mixed-use, “space-use intensity” addresses two key variables in spaces that multitask:

1. granularity (the internal parts within an observed unit) and

2. range (a variety of types of uses).

or, in simpler terms,

1. different users within a house (independent households or independent businesses) and

2. different uses within a house (residential, commercial, industrial / manufacturing, services, and 'green'— recycling or urban agriculture-).

The purpose of space-use intensity data is to document a detailed count of the discrete uses and users within the studied houses, a simple but comprehensive tally.

Now, in terms of the method, a few comments are important. The approach used is called "house interviews" as opposed to "resident interviews". The idea is to have a conversation with residents guided by a set of prepared questions and have them tour the interviewer through the house who takes impromptu photographs of every space. The

house interview methodology interrogates the space itself, and documents how spaces are put to work through nine steps. The first five (notebook jottings, photographs, field notes with sketches and quotes, and spatial diagrams) were done by the local researchers, the next three (reading photographs, second column notes, and visual record) were advanced in a debriefing meeting with the lead researcher, and final tally of the variables was consolidated last. Each local researcher selected the houses to interview based on two simple criteria. First, that houses were located in typical or average neighborhoods (not the poorest nor the richest, but middle-to-low income) in consolidated informal settlements, and second, ease of access (rapport guaranteed).

The nature of this research is qualitative, meaning it does not intend to provide generalizations but mere illustrations. The numbers that will be discussed in the last part of this section are to be taken as indications of the extent of intensity of use, not as statistical evidence that can be generalized to a larger population.

Agnes's house in Kampala



North of Lake Victoria sits Kampala, former seat of the Buganda Kingdom and capital of Uganda. The metropolitan area of roughly 200 square kilometers is home to 3.5 million people. Kampala spreads throughout 24 low flat-topped hills surrounded by wetland valleys that are mostly encroached upon. Administratively, it is divided into five divisions and a hundred parishes.



This is Agnes's house in Masanafu, Lubia parish, Rubaga division. She's been living here for over a decade with her three children and her father whom she takes care of. Agnes runs a loaning business and describes herself as a businesswoman. For the local government, hers is a residential unit. However, our research identified 11 additional uses happening alongside her living quarters.



Some uses in the front of Agnes's home: Vegetable and cooking stoves stall (left), shoe shop (center), and briquettes for sale (right)

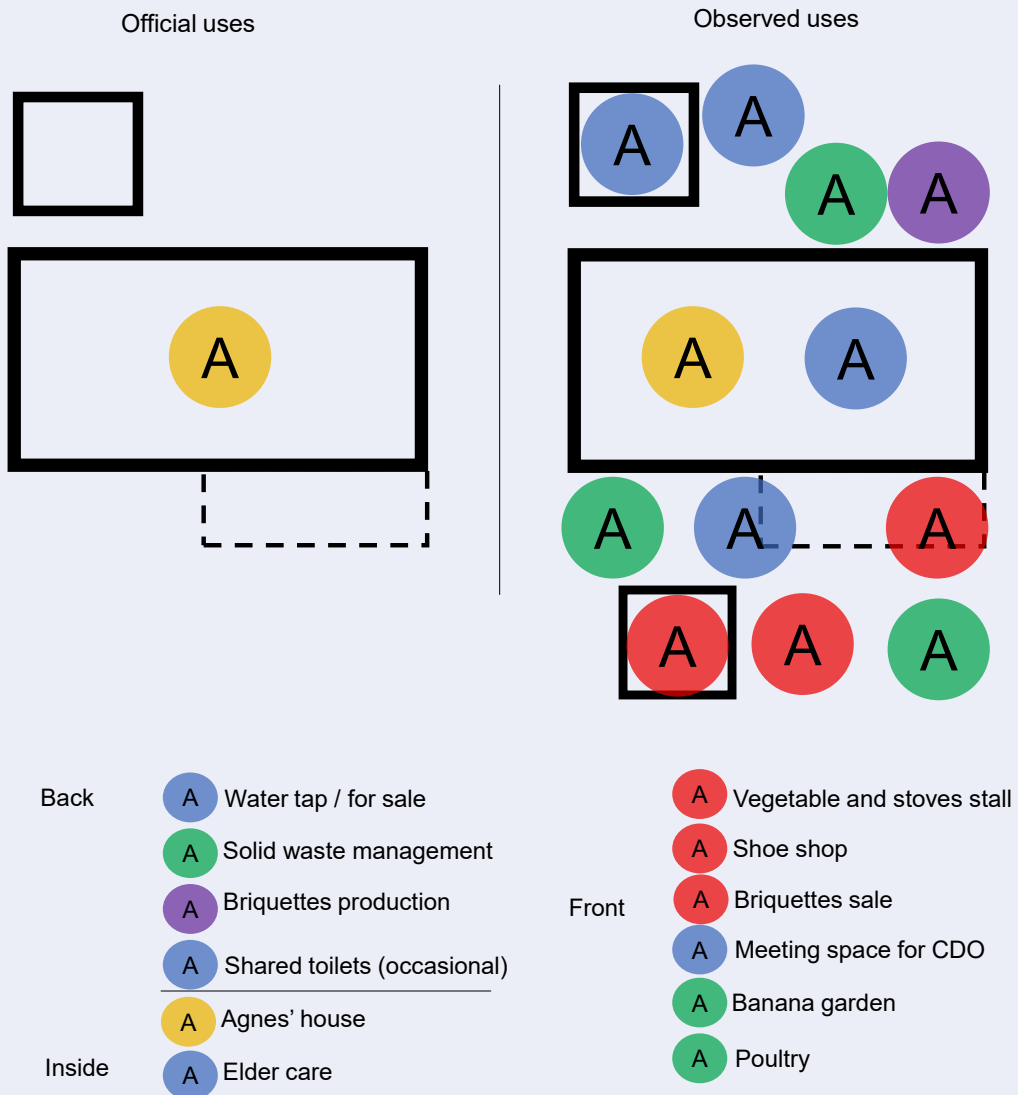
In front of her house facing the street there is a food stall, there are banana trees that she uses for her own consumption and also to sell in the stall. In the shaded veranda there is an open space, where her community group can meet. Agnes also has a shoe shop and exhibits different models here. In the front, she also has some chickens.



Some uses in the back: Briquettes machine (left), water tap (center), and toilet stalls (right)

At the back of her house, she has a water tap. In the past, she used to sell water to neighbors, but she argues that business is no longer good. She also has a space dedicated to store and dry solid waste, which is used in the production of briquettes. She stores the briquette machine at her place, so often community members gather at her place to produce them.

FIGURE 3.1
Visual record of observed uses in Agnes's house



Neema's house in Dar es Salaam



Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest and fastest growing city, is situated on the Swahili coast of the Indian Ocean. The metropolitan area of roughly 1,400 square kilometers is home today to 7 million people, three-quarters of whom live in informal settlements. Administratively, Dar es Salaam is divided into five districts subdivided into wards.

This is Neema's room in Ubungu district, where she shares the space with a friend. The house has five other rented rooms. Neema makes samosas and other pastries, mixes peppered spices, and makes soaps, which she sells on the streets. Neema also uses the space outside of her room in the backyard to host weekly traditional ceremonies and dances from her tribe in which the whole neighborhood gets involved. She receives some stipend for it.

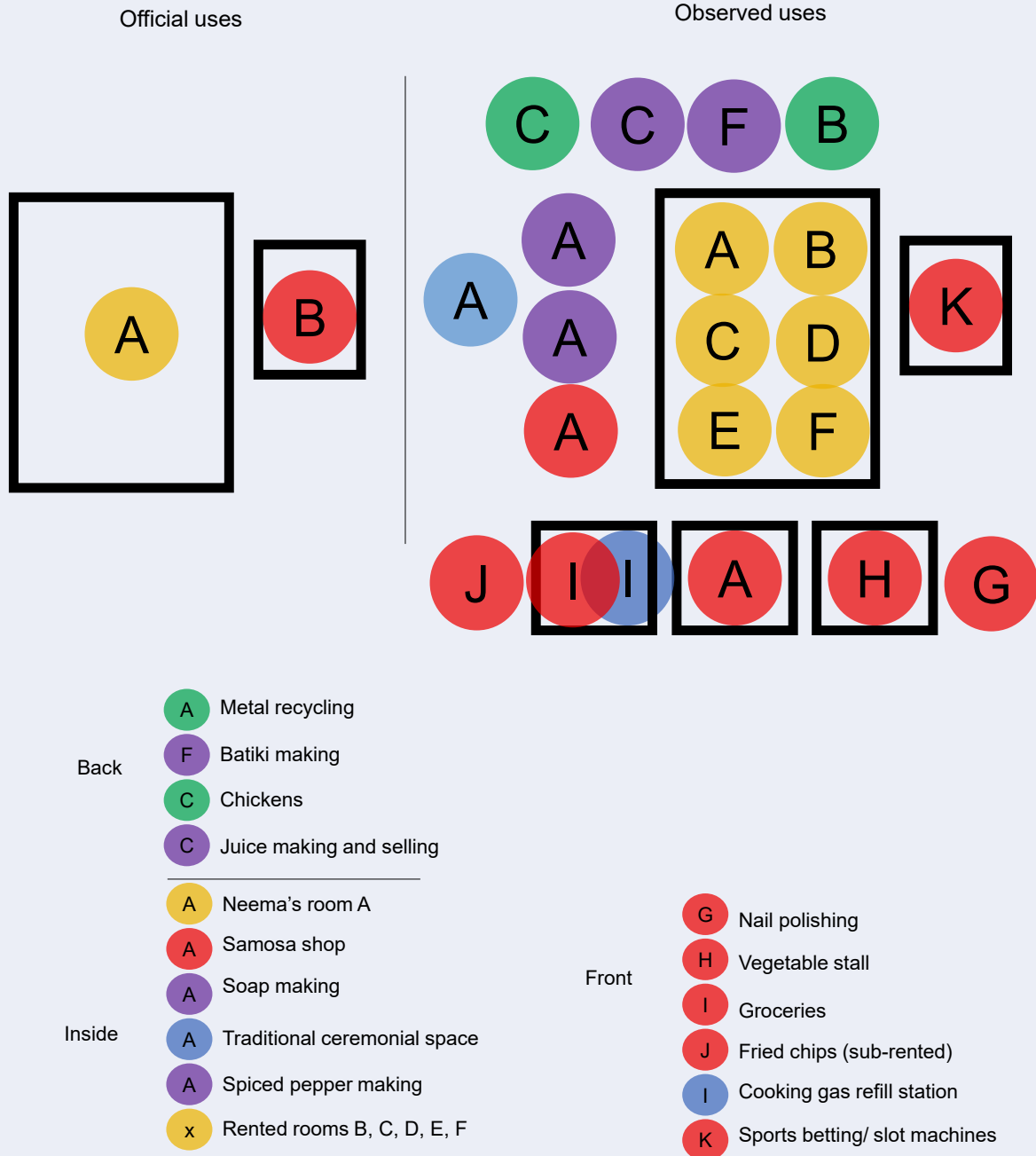


Neema making spices next to stored metal (left), shops from tenants (center), sports betting stall (right)

This is a corner house and facing each street there are commercial activities. Neema's samosa shop is next to one selling fried chips. There is also a vegetable stall, grocery shop, a cooking gas refill station, and a nail polishing shop. On the other street there is a sports betting shop with some slot machines. Other tenants of the house use the shared outside space to raise chickens, make batiki, recycle metal parts, and produce juice to sell.

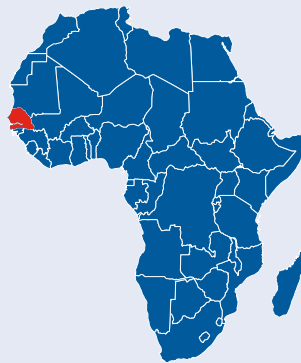
FIGURE 3.2

Visual record of observed uses in Neema's house



Traoré's house in Dakar

Senegal's capital Dakar is situated on the Cap-Vert peninsula on the Atlantic coast. The metropolitan area is roughly 550 square kilometers and is home to 4 million people, of which at least 40% live in informal settlements. Administratively, the department of Dakar is divided into four arrondissements and 19 communes d'arrondissements, composed of banlieues (suburbs).



This is Traoré's house in Grand Yoff commune d'arrondissement. Traoré is the third of four children. He and his siblings lost their father in 2005. Ten years ago, they began building on what were some barracks. Towards the street there are three shops and the entrance to the villa: a hairdressing salon, a multiservice shop and an imports shop selling second-hand appliances. The shops earn Traoré an income of US\$386. They have independent meters but share the bathroom inside the house.



Traoré's family room of four (left), the corridor / guesthouse (center), and the open-air stairs in the kitchen (right)

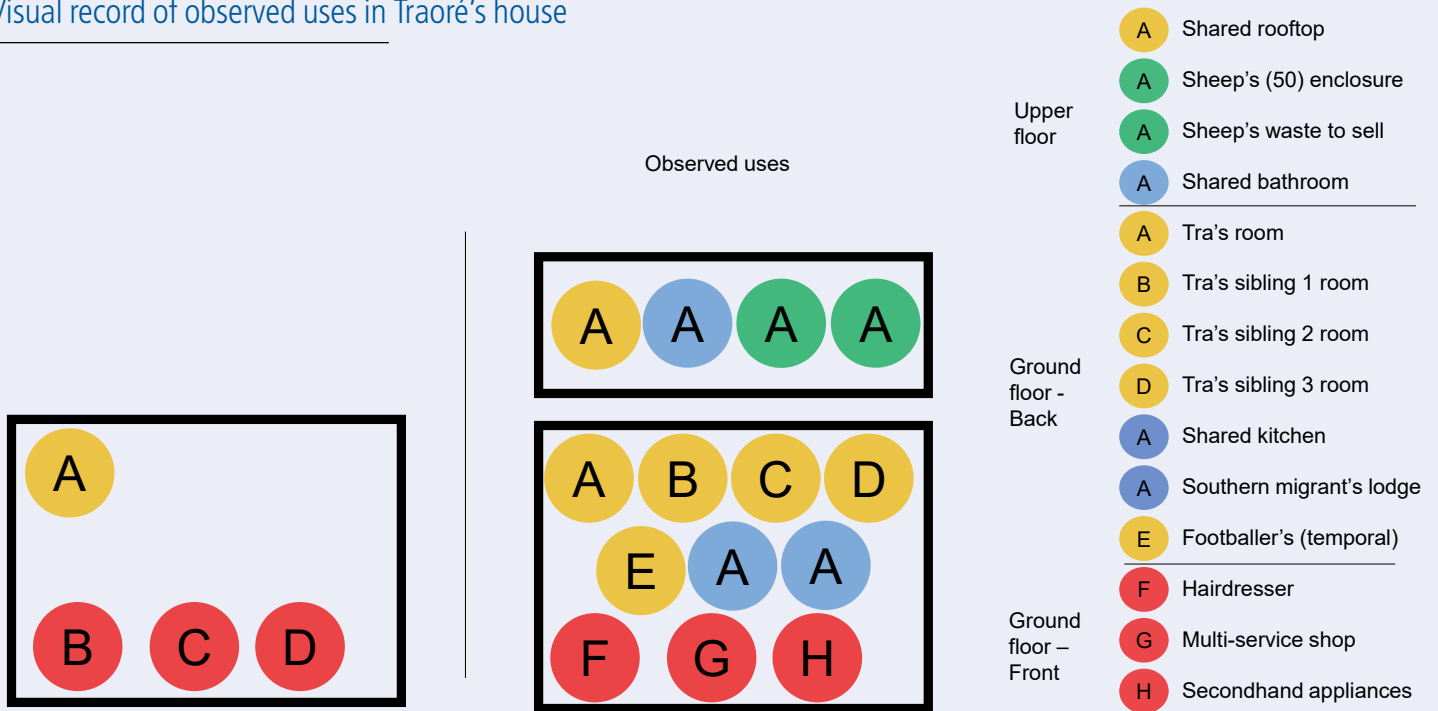
The house has four rooms, one for Traoré's family of four and the others for his brothers and their respective families. A total of 15 people live permanently in this house. The corridor connecting the rooms and the shared kitchen is used as a guesthouse for newcomer migrants from the south of Senegal, and is also used by a footballer, whenever he's in town. In this space guests boil tea and keep their belongings. The stairs to the upper floor are in the kitchen, which is problematic for it presents security issues, as they offer direct access to the most private part of the house.



Sheep enclosures (left), food containers and drying clothes (center), shee’s waste recycling (right)

The real business of the family is sheep farming. They own 50 pure-breeds and keep them in three enclosures at the rooftop. The sheep were given by the government to Traoré and his brothers after their father’s passing. This business brings in an average of US\$8,570 per year and is especially profitable during festivities. In fact, the family wishes to construct a third level to construct more sheep enclosures and expand the business. The rooftop is also used to dry clothes, keep the sheep’s food, and recycle their waste, which is sold as fertilizer.

FIGURE 3.3
Visual record of observed uses in Traoré’s house



Results from the house interviews

A visual summary was drawn for each of the 12 house interviews (Figure 3.4). These summaries are the basis for a complete list of space-use intensity variables (Table 3.1). All numbers in the table can be obtained by reading the visual diagrams, ultimately by counting the number of colors and letters detailed in the legends of each diagram. A more comprehensive analysis could engage with greater detail in area measurements, density calculations, visits at different schedules (Kapinga, 2021), and more precise official information on each site. For the current exercise, the two more important variables analyzed were: “use-units” that reflect granularity (number of independent households or business units per house, represented with letters) and “use-types” that reflect range (categories of uses often found on land use maps: residential, commercial, services, industrial, etc., represented with colors). Before getting into the analysis of these two variables, a few comments are pertinent about the methodology itself and the process interacting with the three groups of local researchers in Uganda, Tanzania, and Senegal.

→ **First**, it is fair to conclude that the methodology deployed was successfully adapted and applied across different contexts. Local researchers, all of whom were experienced, explicitly mentioned that they found it a useful, engaging, and novel way of looking into these settings. Notably, because the emphasis is placed on the house rather than on a single interviewee, researchers can collect data from neighbors and different family members for a more rounded and thorough perspective (Kisembo, 2021). More importantly, the input from local researchers strengthened the process, because in clarifying and supporting each data point in a group debriefing meeting, implicit bias can be identified and corrected via a collegial triangulation.

→ The **second** comment on the methodology is that it revealed that the very idea of what is a house varies widely. Of course; as a unit of analysis, a house is universal, and is never devoid of meaning. But what a house entails in each context may differ considerably. To some, a house is a single room rented out within a larger structure. To others, it is a structure with several partitions and no windows, kitchen, or bathroom. It can also be a larger building with several rooms for members of various nuclear families and even guests, in other cases, it is a plot with ample spaces for crops and livestock. In this exercise, local researchers exercised their discretion selecting the houses to be surveyed, within two firm criteria for selection. The first criterion was ease of access, that is, that enough rapport with the interviewee was assured within the tight timeline of the project. The second was that houses were reflective of a “typical” living arrangement in their city, not poor not rich, not fully formal nor fully informal. In other words, “consolidated informal settlements” (Ward, 2015), where the shades of grey between the formal and informal could be appreciated.

→ The **third** conclusion about the methodology is that the use categories (residential, commercial, services, industrial, and green) were relatively straightforward to identify. Two specific points could be revised to fit better the type of evidence that this data contributes. One, “storage” uses should be recorded, as often warehousing areas are indispensable for carrying out businesses elsewhere (the methodology only records those linked to recycling). The other point of improvement is a more precise definition of what the “services” entails.

It is important to differentiate service uses that are commercial (for example, an office that sells micro insurance) from services that offer public goods (be their facilities or amenities) to the community (for example toilets, water, spaces for community meetings). This distinction could be crucial for urban planning purposes and should be improved upon on future iterations of this research.

FIGURE 3.4
Visual summary of all house interviews

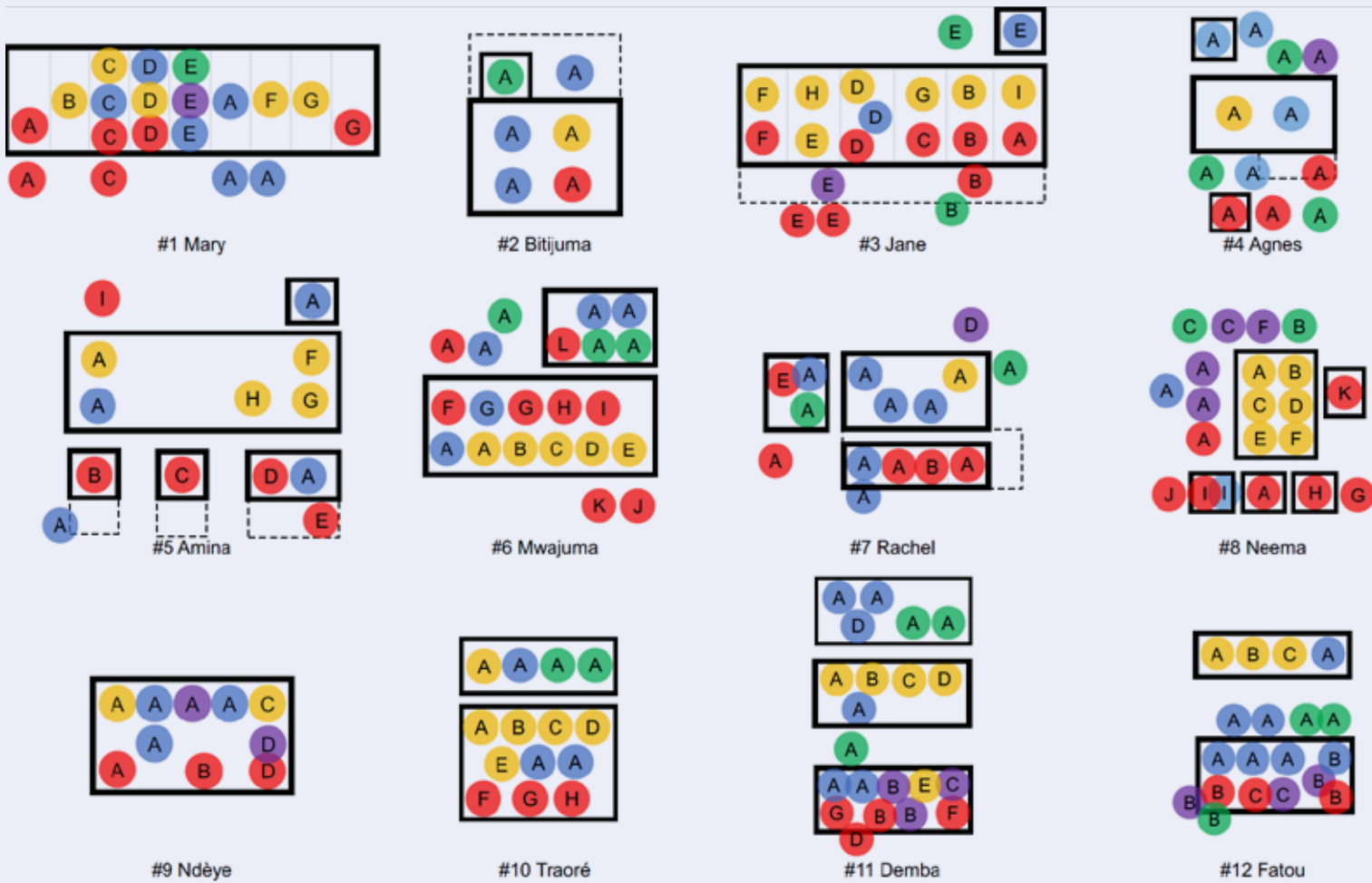


TABLE 3.1

Complete list of space-use intensity variables in the sample

| Interview # | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Average |
|---------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
| Name | Mary | Bitijuma | Jane | Agnes | Amina | Mwajuma | Rachel | Neema | Ndèye | Traoré | Demba | Fatou | |
| City | Kampala | Kampala | Kampala | Kampala | Dar | Dar | Dar | Dar | Dakar | Dakar | Dakar | Dakar | |
| Observed use units (letters) | 7 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 12 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 6.42 |
| Observed uses (colors) | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.50 |
| Total count of uses observed | 20 | 6 | 20 | 12 | 14 | 19 | 15 | 20 | 10 | 14 | 21 | 18 | 15.75 |
| Residential | 5 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 3.92 |
| Services | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 4.17 |
| Non-economic | 11 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 8.08 |
| Commercial | 6 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4.67 |
| Industrial | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1.33 |
| Green | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1.92 |
| Economic | 8 | 2 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 7.92 |
| % Residential | 25.0% | 16.7% | 35.0% | 8.3% | 35.7% | 26.3% | 6.7% | 30.0% | 20.0% | 42.9% | 23.8% | 16.7% | 23.9% |
| % Economic | 40.0% | 33.3% | 60.0% | 58.3% | 35.7% | 57.9% | 53.3% | 65.0% | 50.0% | 35.7% | 47.6% | 50.0% | 48.9% |
| % Services | 30.0% | 50.0% | 10.0% | 33.3% | 28.6% | 26.3% | 40.0% | 10.0% | 30.0% | 21.4% | 28.6% | 33.3% | 28.5% |
| Total count of recognized uses* | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2.42 |
| Invisible uses | 16 | 5 | 16 | 11 | 13 | 17 | 13 | 18 | 8 | 10 | 18 | 15 | 13.33 |
| % Visible | 20% | 17% | 20% | 8% | 7% | 11% | 13% | 10% | 20% | 29% | 14% | 17% | 15.5% |
| % Invisible | 80.0% | 83.3% | 80.0% | 91.7% | 92.9% | 89.5% | 86.7% | 90.0% | 80.0% | 71.4% | 85.7% | 83.3% | 84.5% |

* Estimates based on: # of business licenses and independent meters (per interviews) and OpenStreet Maps Humanitarian Open Database of Buildings in Dar es Salaam (2021) `

Lastly, having the same type of data from previous research in Bogota, Colombia (Carrizosa, 2021), allowed for interesting comparisons. A crucial one is that the diagrams used to map the uses visually had to be plan views rather than cross-sections, due to the fact that urban development in these African cities is less dense and more sprawled (Bhanjee & Zhan, 2018). This fact speaks of a potential for vertical development in African cities that is yet to be tapped (Baziwe, 2021). Consolidated urban areas are in general less compact, and hence they hold more potential than their Latin American counterparts for densification. Another interesting comparative insight is that less vertical consolidation is associated with more granularity (a larger number of use-units cohabitating within the same building or property).

TABLE 3.2

Comparative summary of averages of space-use intensity variables from all house interviews

| Variable | Kampala average n=4 | Dar es Salaam average n=4 | Dakar average n=4 | TOTAL average n=12 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Observed use units (letters) | 4.5 | 9.25 | 5.5 | 6.42 |
| Observed uses (colors) | 4.5 | 4.25 | 4.75 | 4.50 |
| Total count of uses observed | 14.5 | 17 | 15.75 | 15.75 |
| Residential | 3.5 | 4.25 | 4 | 3.92 |
| Services | 3.75 | 4.25 | 4.5 | 4.17 |
| Commercial | 4.5 | 6.25 | 3.25 | 4.67 |
| Industrial | 0.75 | 1.25 | 2 | 1.33 |
| Green | 2 | 1.75 | 2 | 1.92 |
| % Residential | 21.3% | 24.7% | 25.8% | 23.9% |
| % Economic (ind, comm., green) | 47.9% | 53.0% | 45.8% | 48.9% |
| % Services | 30.8% | 26.2% | 28.3% | 28.5% |
| Total count of recognized uses* | 2.5 | 1.75 | 3 | 2.42 |
| Total count of invisible uses | 12 | 15.25 | 12.75 | 13.33 |
| % Visible | 16.3% | 10.3% | 19.9% | 15.5% |
| % Invisible | 83.8% | 89.7% | 80.1% | 84.5% |

*Data on officially recognized uses was estimated using multiple sources. For Tanzania, the Humanitarian OpenStreetMaps database of buildings was consulted. For Senegal, interview data on business permits was considered, as was on Uganda, where the latest approved Land Use map was consulted (KCCA, 2012)

As shown in the table above, houses hold much more than one single household, and much more than residential uses alone. In fact, residential uses in the described houses are less than 24% of the total uses observed. In other words, the residential use is merely a quarter of what is happening in these houses. The economic uses within the houses, that is, either commercial, manufacturing of any kind, recycling and urban agriculture, represent more half of what happens inside these houses: 50.3%. Finally, services, meaning community areas, urban services like water or sanitation, or commercial services like repair shops, account for 28.8% of the uses within these houses. This is a high percentage compared to previous findings from houses in consolidated informal settlements in Bogota, Colombia, where services only account for 3%.

These findings reveal that informal settlements cannot be thought of as residential areas, because doing so would render invisible too much work, services, capacities, challenges, and possibilities. For policy to be smarter at dealing with urban informality and support it better, a more detailed knowledge of what happens in informal settlements is indispensable.

This exercise is also useful for going beyond the claim that the just city should include the "urban invisibles" (FES, 2020). With this small sample, which is not statistically representative but qualitatively, we are able to estimate the extent of what local governments are ignoring. Based on our research in these three cities, we estimate that 84.5% of the activities are being ignored. In other words, one could say that 84% of African cities are yet to be recognized, understood, and supported.

FIGURE 3.5

Space-use intensity data from house interviews in Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Dakar Source: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung-The New School, 2021

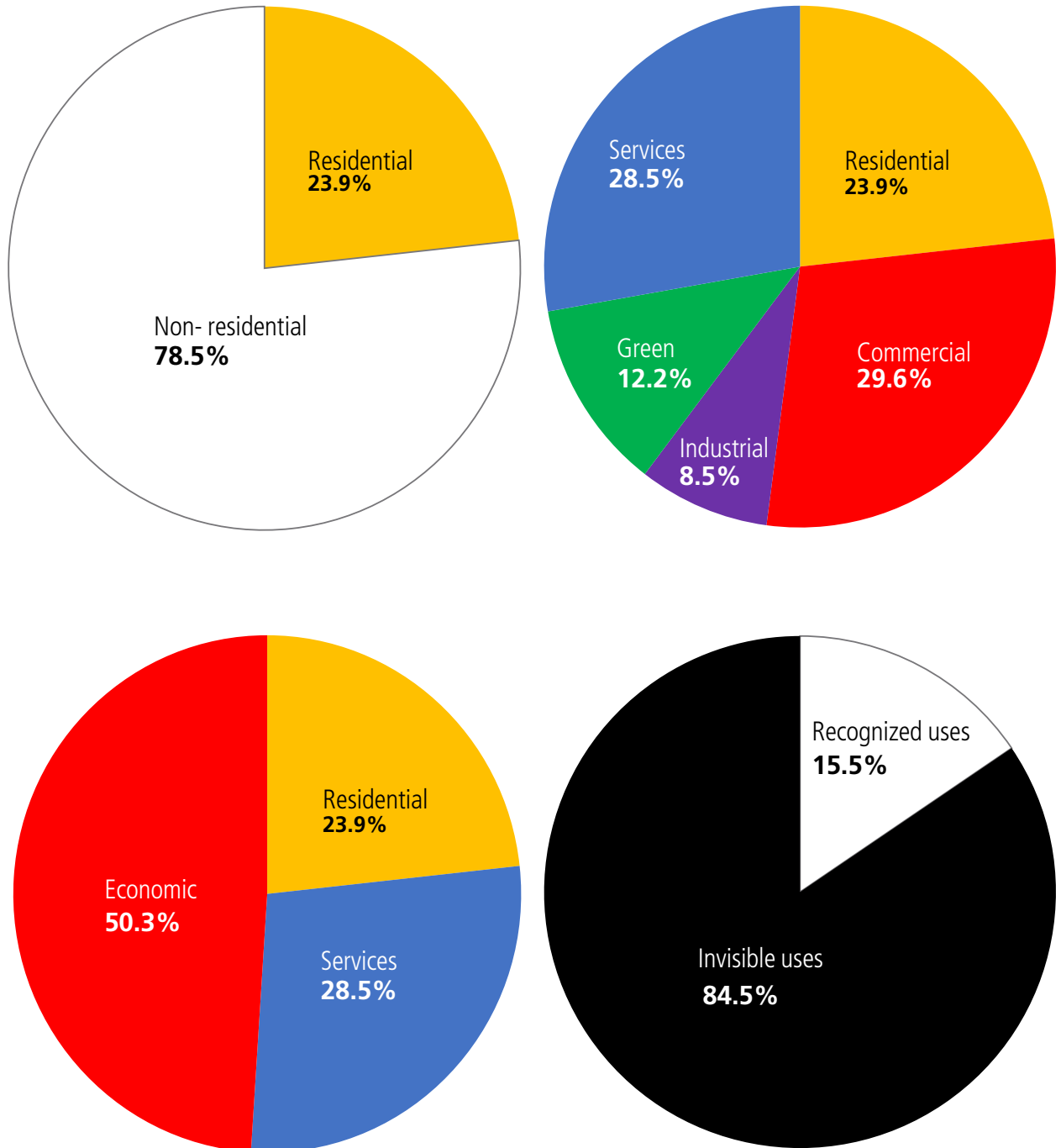


Figure 3.5 makes it quite evident that informal settlements are much more than what they are believed to be by urban regulations. The charts show that only 23.9%, or less than one-fourth, of the space in the houses is used as a residential area; slightly more than half of the space is used for economic activities. So, these houses are not just places where residents live; they are also places where residents work and earn a living.

Urban life entails more than just having a place to sleep. The houses also serve as service providers. In consolidated informal settlements, residents provide for themselves and their communities whatever is not

provided for them by the city governments. This shows that consolidated informal settlements are first and foremost sites of economic activity. Secondly, they offer a cadre of urban and community services that are needed to make life in the city viable, livable, as well as socially and economically sustainable. They are not just neighborhood residential areas. The intense use of space in these houses is a lesson in city-making by the people to the policymakers. The message is clear: *City-making is a localized practice that entails a balanced interaction between housing, urban services, and economic activities.*



DSTV
EASILY INSTALLED
R649
1706 1854
DSTV
SERVICES
08 560 9680

DSTV
OWNED
www.dstv.com
071 963 4211

SEED MARKET

Siyabonga



ALL AIRTIME HERE
PREPAID ELECTRICITY

ALL AIRTIME HERE
REPAID ELECTRICITY

CURT ST

Local Experts'
Perspectives
on Urban
Formalization

04

This final section channels the voices of some African experts from Uganda, Tanzania, and Senegal, as collected in online interviews between November and December 2021¹

The conversations gathered the views of public officials, community leaders, and academics actively involved in formalization policies, both urban (that is, of housing and settlements) as well as of businesses (be they shops, rentals, trades, or manufacturing of any kind) in their cities. The African experts' perspectives are presented below in three blocks. First are comments that define the problem, second explanations about how to better frame the problem, and third ideas about how to solve the problem.

Defining the problem

INFORMALITY IS NOT THE OPPOSITE OF FORMALITY – BOTH ARE PART OF A GRADIENT, A MIX

Many experts acknowledge that informality does not exist in direct opposition to, nor is isolated from, formality. Informality has long been “a victim of excessive dichotomy”, states Cissé, who insists dualism should be replaced with “trialism”, discriminating two types of informality (Cissé, Gueye & Sy, 2005), one more beneficial than the other. He takes this argument further, stating not only that there

are types of informality but also grades of formality. For this Senegalese expert, urban formality is informalizing, it is changing so that: “the formal is becoming less formal” (Cissé, 2021). Nnyka also recognizes this formal-informal mixture in Dar es Salaam:

“Our settlements are unique in the sense that they accommodate all classes. There is more spatial mixture between different incomes, and between formal and informal, which do not look that different ... informal settlements are not settlements for the poor. Formal ones have better services, but they also have informal services. (Nnyka, 2021)

This experienced public officer and academic goes further and asserts that this “mixture actually helps regularization policy” (Nnyka, 2021).

¹ The experts interviewed are: Oumar Cissé, Executive Director, Institut Africain de Gestion Urbaine and Chair of the African Network of Urban Management Institutions (ANUMI) in Senegal; Gaston Kikuki, Director of VIBINDO Association of informal traders of Tanzania; Tumsifu Jonas Nnyka, Former Director of Housing, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, retired professor Ardhi University in Tanzania; Albert Nyiti, Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute of Human Settlements Studies (IHSS), Ardhi University, and housing specialist from The Just City Working Group in Tanzania; Dave Khayangayanga, Acting Director of Housing, Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development of Uganda; Sarah Nandudu, Vice-Chairperson of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda; Amin Tamale Kiggundu, Head of Department of Architecture and Physical Planning, Makerere University in Uganda; and Dorothy Baziwe, Executive Director, Shelters and Settlements Alternatives (SSA) Uganda Human settlements Network. Their personal interviews will be cited in the text using their last name and italics, to differentiate from other sources. The details of each interview are listed as part of the bibliography

To have mixed-income settlements accelerates formalization efforts and helps provide more diverse economic environments, as higher income neighborhoods demand locally available products and services that can be offered by lower income residents, thus creating and energizing local markets. On the same topic and with incisive precision Nandudu, a seasoned Ugandan community leader, explains this same phenomenon in Kampala:

“We have big developments, but they also need cleaners. These cleaners cannot afford to go there from very far. This is why we need the informal in the formal. We need housing typologies that can accommodate different categories of people as we transit from informality to the formal. (Nandudu, 2021)

She calls this type of mixture “inclusive formality”, and explains that without it, “people will just sell what they have made in the city and go back to the village. This is bad, this means people would lose it all.” (Nandudu, 2021).

Strongly committed to Southern knowledge-production, Nyiti, a young scholar based at Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam, is also observant of the informality in the formal, and the numerous gradients and mixtures between the two:

“In the interphase between the formal and the informal there are a lot of layers and interaction between these layers that are easy to miss, unless one is very careful. There are so many forms

of informality in the formal. This complicates the way we should be labeling them, because many unplanned settlements are not informal settlements any longer as they’ve been regularized. And many formal settlements develop informally so they become unplanned. (Nyiti, 2021)

Nyiti details three types of urbanization:

- 1 “formal but unplanned” (formal with informal origin),
- 2 “informal but regularized” (informal formalized), and
- 3 “planned but informalized” (formal but informalized). Navigating these mixtures is crucial, and sadly, it does not happen enough: “

These layers, these realities, are not documented, so we are indeed missing a lot” (Nyiti, 2021). The lack of documentation, clarity, visibility, and legibility about these realities is problematic. It is a kind of blindness, as will be explained below.

BLINDNESS THAT GOES BOTH WAYS

In his 2007 book, *Why Planning Does Not Work*, Nnkya denounces the “professional blindness” of planners. In this ethnography land-use planning (or anti-planning) he argues that planners fail to see the opportunities for inclusive planning that become available with community input. He contrasts this blindness with the job of land surveyors, who walk the land and see more, and make an effort to translate into lines in paper what they see on the ground. The book shows how it was a residents’ regularization plan that was executed (thanks to a court ruling) while the local government sat, irrelevant, in their office (Nnkya, 2007). This “fable” of planning blindness and assumed irrelevance is, sadly, widespread. It should be a call to open eyes.

The extent of professional blindness to what happens in the city is widespread. Professional or technical knowledge is restricted to the small percentage of the city that is not informal, which at most is 30% of the city (Nnkya, 2014) (Cissé, 2005). Accordingly, the rules are designed for that meager 30%, and outside of it, they have no impact. For instance, in Uganda, the Registration of Titles Act (amended in 2020), the Building Control Act (2013), and Condominium Property Act (2001), exist only for the formal real estate (Baziwe, 2021). The rules overlook (and are overlooked) by informal urban developers. Nandudu believes urban regulations should never disregard those that in effect are making the city – the people themselves. In terms of businesses, it is the same: “Rules are designed for formal employment, they have no meaning in the informal sector” (Kikuwi, 2021). This is why Kikuwi argues that rules should be designed by those who know the issue at stake best; and adds: “Business people know their trade better than everyone. And people who spend their time reading and writing do not.” (Kikuwi, 2021). Even those in the government acknowledge that: “We need to use different lenses to understand these realities” (Khayangayanga, 2021).

To be fair, the blindness goes both ways. People living and working in informal systems know very little of about formal systems. As explained, this partly has to do with the fact that formal and informal are so mixed, so that “those living in it do not see the difference between formal and informal” (Nnkya, 2021).

At the same time, a more disconcerting idea was raised by long-time Makerere academic Kiggundu:



All we see here is informality, informality, informality. We need to see something different at work. We need model cities within the

developing world. Like the small green city of Putrajaya in Malaysia, funded in the 70s. We need to see how a functioning city looks like. (Kiggundu, 2021)

It is important to confront directly and seriously this kind of “worldling” impulse (Ong, 2011). How does one respond to African aspirations that emulate global models of sustainable cities? Disregarding these impulses can surely lead to the irrelevance of Just City campaigns, relegated to only persuade those who are already convinced.

THE SPEED OF FORMALIZATION – THE TIME OF EACH SPACE

When thinking about formalization, that is, about “changing the informal into the formal” (Nandudu, 2021), the speed of change expected can be the difference between success and failure. Khayangayanga, the Director of Housing at the Ugandan Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development, assured is that: “More attention should be put to the pace of formalization. If you move too fast, you can kill nascent businesses” (Khayangayanga, 2021). Ostrom et al described in this common governance problem and guarded against the “crowding out” of functional informal systems by enforced regulations from above which fail to pace themselves and adapt to the realities on the ground (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur & Ostrom, 2006).

Formalization is, and needs to be, a long path, so it can give time to settlements, businesses, and buildings to accommodate change. “Some of these steps have to be gradual and some need to have limits” (Nandudu, 2021). Nandudu argues that it is crucial that formalization policies do not expect complete changes suddenly but gradually. She thinks each formalization step needs ceilings for different business sizes and capacities.



Baziwe, the Executive Director of SSA, a Ugandan human settlements inter-stakeholder network, gives an example of this when she explains why SSA advocates for occupational permits to be granted after 75% of the construction has been completed (Baziwe, 2021). This is less than 100% (which would be expected if fully formal), but still high, in order to ensure more security and stability of dwelling constructions. Embracing of gradual progressive changes is not necessarily a lowering down of expectations altogether, but an understanding that many areas are made in time, little by little. “Planners [and regulators] need to understand that informality has no clear solution, there is no other way but to work progressively, gradually” (Kiggundu, 2021).

The pace of formalization is one aspect of understanding the time of each space. Another aspect is the more literal way in which cities operate at more than beyond a single schedule. How they remain functional during the day, at different days of the week, and at night.

“In Belgium, you cannot buy toothpaste at 11pm. Here in Kampala, you can, there are shops everywhere [and anytime]. So why say our cities don’t work? Night markets are a concept that could be more innovatively explored... One could close a street from 6-10pm so that farmers can set up stalls and sell, provided that the government offers public lighting. People are used to bring produce to roads, this is how they perceive roads are for. What if this is accepted at some times? (Kiggundu, 2021)

Thinking of space in terms of time is something that “progressive development” has long done across Africa and the South. But “progressive development” theories, practices, and policies have been recurrently overlooked or forgotten, as will be described below.

Framing the problem better

MISSED INNOVATIONS, EITHER FORGOTTEN OR OVERLOOKED

Urban informality has long been in the face of the governments, academics, and the people in Africa. Plenty of innovations – theoretical, practical, and legislative – have been deployed. Sadly, the topic seems to suffer from a Sisyphean fate, inventing and reinventing innovations that get forgotten or erased by prejudices, or by incomplete understandings. For instance, half a century ago:

“In 1972, Tanzania issued a national law recognizing progressive development. It acknowledged that informal settlements are there because of our policy failures, failures of the system to deliver housing and services. 1972, that is even before ILO coined the term informal sector, even before Vancouver, before UN-Habitat existed, Tanzania recognized these settlements and argued they should not be eradicated but supported. (Nnkya, 2021)

Nnkya explains that this 1972 policy meant a paradigm shift, reversing the more punitive 1960s law that advocated for slum clearance. With it, Tanzania understood informal settlements as valuable investments; the 1972 policy meant political recognition of informal settlements. In 1978, it also inspired the architecture and planning programs at Ardhi University to gear its curriculum to respond to this law. Ardhi incorporated lessons on upgrading and taught students how to physically improve the settlements. Even though the curriculum did not expose planners and architects to business and tenure topics (which were only reflected in urban laws in 1995), this was completely innovative at the time (Nnkya, 2021). This disciplinary focus is still innovative, and sadly, uncommon.

Another example of missed innovations or potential is the one mentioned by Kiggundu, the head of the Architecture and Physical Planning Department at Makerere University. He critiques the way decision makers not only misunderstand informality but also forget and scorn African traditional values, simply because they do not conform with Western paradigms. Kiggundu argues that it is nonsensical for local governments to disregard the contributions to maintain urban infrastructure of communities, inspired in traditional practices. An example is Kiganda's "bulungi bwansi" practice of "community service", that instills in people a love to care for their place, their nation, and their kingdom. Bulungi bwansi encourages communities get together to fix a pothole in a road, or clear the bushes, and these types of activities. However, the local government does not allow it. "The KCCA [Kampala Capital City Authority] argues citizens cannot construct nor fix roads, because they do not know how to do it well. Denying this impulse to collaborate, denying people's dynamism is absurd, when in fact the government does not have the capacity to respond everywhere." (Kiggundu, 2021).

In a similar vein, Ndezi and others highlight the theoretical potential of the maisha bora" or "good life" principle, which they compare to to UN-Habitat's Prosperity Index. Maisha bora is indeed quite powerful as a more rooted theoretical construct that can synthesize and efficiently communicate complex and interrelated urban topics. Interestingly, Ndezi's research has shown that maisha bora prioritizes livelihoods, among the many issues (Ndezi, et al, 2020). Taking traditional concepts more seriously could help in making policies that adequately address the most daring challenges, like designing workable urban financing models. "We need to be more imaginative and more inclusive. Informality needs to be thought of as an opportunity for city revenue" (Kiggundu, 2021). A scholarly and pragmatic attitude that does not overlook but incorporates traditional knowledge, values, and everyday practices, is a more sensible approach. Recognizing the inputs,

and not just the drawbacks of informality, is simply a more reasonable baseline for public action.

Incorporating grounded types of knowledge has proven difficult. On this point Nandudu explained the hurdles faced by Slum Dwellers International (SDI) self-enumeration data collected from more than 7,700 slums worldwide. "We have done a lot of enumerations but local governments are taking a lot of time to accept them. Their bureaucratic systems do not recognize ours...they feel community data is not authentic" (Nandudu, 2021) Khayangayanga confirms this and explains that at first "local governments claimed the data was informal, not standardized. But then there was a process with the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank, after which there is some appreciation for this data, especially since SDI collects data more regularly than what the governments are able to do" (Khayangayanga, 2021). However, despite some acceptance gained, the actual use of this data by the local government is very narrow. "Now it is mainly used to identify local community projects (Khayangayanga, 2021), this is a gross underutilization of a highly detailed and actionable data resource.

MINDSET ISSUES

Urban informality has stigma attached to it that obstructs learning from it. The idea of taking advantage of it, of making the most of its potential, remains problematic for both technicians and welfarists alike. There is much learning, and some unlearning to be done. Kiggundu advocates for the "need to introduce short courses on slum upgrading and informality to benefit city managers, planners, private sector and NGOs ... [we need to] train new change agents and leaders in city planning and management... even at the parliament, because it is them who decide on the national budget" (Kiggundu, 2021). In a similar vein, Kikuwi explained that: "the biggest challenge to recognition is the mindset from the authorities.

They see informality as a nuisance, as stubborn. They can't think outside the box, they don't see there is no box! 97% of businesses in Tanzania are informal" (Kikuwi, 2021).

Kiggundu goes further to claim that:

"We need new types of leaders... more imaginative, more talented, more flexible" (Kiggundu, 2021). But he is not confident this is easy, because: "Schools have not changed much in the last 60 years. Teachers are mostly trained in Europe, and they come back wanting to implement what they learned there here, which is impossible... what people like me studied in Western schools does not work here" (Idem: 2021). "The things that matter in African cities are not prioritized in Western schools... the conventional planning system does not recognize informality, yet the reality is mostly informal" (Idem, 2021). Southern urban planning, while active and promising (AAPS, 2021), is not seen as mature enough, not even within the continent. Knowledge production and theory building remain anchored in colonial structures that see Africa as an immense repository of data to be cropped and extracted from, at best, with assistance from local universities (Pieterse, 2015).

WHEN THE PROBLEM IS NOT INFORMALITY BUT FORMALITY

Tanzania's former Director of Housing and Urban Development Ministry and retired professor bluntly claims: "Our interventions in informal settlements do not work" (Nnkya, 2021). Indeed, stories about formalization projects, programs, or policies that, while well-intentioned, betray their own purpose abound. Even though their unjust outcomes get engraved in the minds and hearts of those aware or old enough to remember, the same type of initiatives resurge again later, with slightly different guises.

The Namuwongo slum upgrading project in Kampala is well remembered by many. Initially it was deemed a success for being able to erect 135 new houses in a former slum. But

the residents found themselves incapable of adjusting to the requirements of a formal settlement, like paying utility bills, garbage fees, and the like, so most sold their rights and went back to encroaching someplace else, creating a new slum elsewhere (Baziwe, 2021). Kiggundu sees this as an example of how formalization that includes only physical upgrading and overlooks local economic development, ends up being "planned eviction" (Kiggundu, 2021). Leader of local, national, and international community savings groups (BAMU, NSDFU, and SDI), Sara Nandudu explains: "if there's no affordability, we are simply doing a very polite eviction ... if houses are too expensive, people cannot afford to live there and this leads to automatic self-eviction" (Nandudu, 2021). Cases like this abound; hard-fought and well-intentioned but incomplete, and hence destined for failure. Clearly, if the urban invisibles are not understood and seen, planning, even if well-meaning and sound, will bypass them.

Similar experiences have happened in business formalization. For example, Kikuwi got involved with VIBINDO in 1998, when Dar, "as a result of its new city master plan, started persecuting informal traders, beating harassing, confiscating their goods" (Kikuwi, 2021). The informal business people got organized, not so much to fight back, but to guarantee representation. Twenty years later, the government issued the Blueprint law (GoT, 2018), removing 200 regulations to facilitate formalization: e-registration of businesses, national e-card, and the like. However, "its impact is very minimum ... worse than that, de-formalization is what they actually do. The government is encouraging more informality" (Kikuwi, 2021). Not the outcome these De Soto advocates expected.

Reflecting on the history of housing policy in Tanzania, Nyiti is not optimistic. He explains that the first independence policies of the 60s strove to help the poor and to make housing central. While good-intentioned, resources were scarce, so the state-led housing provision efforts resulted in few houses being built and much slum clearance (Nyiti, 2021).

URBAN INFORMALITY AND THE MAKING OF AFRICAN CITIES

Later, the housing policy shifted to embrace sites and services projects where the government provided land and access roads, but people built their own houses: “We were told you need to own your own house” (Nyiti, 2021). While this might have provided a solution to the scarcity of resources and weak government capacity, it had an excessive emphasis on home ownership that only works for some. He concludes: “The government is not being fully responsible for the mess they’ve created: the government is not helping the people get from point A to point B” (Idem, 2021).

Another example of the problems with formality is when formal businesses

deliberately informalize recently formalized areas. Baziwe sees this frequently happening in open areas or public spaces in upgraded informal settlements that fought to get schools and community spaces, but which are taken up by corrupt private investors, entrenching new cycles of urban informality. Speculators see some of these areas as development opportunities and purchase the land from those who do not own it, so they can claim ownership (Baziwe, 2021). This sort of ill-intentioned, perverse re-informalization is bound to happen more in settlements and communities that are more consolidated, and which have struggled for their urban services the most.



Solving the problem

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FORMALIZATION?

This question was the centerpiece of conversations had for this paper with public officials, civil society leaders, and academics in Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Senegal. As a rule, experts initially gave a single straightforward answer: “To widen the tax base, that’s it, nothing else” (Kikuwi, 2021). All of them had much more to say about this, and to many, it was very clear that formalization has different purposes for different stakeholders.

Baziwe was most thorough in addressing the multiplicity of perspectives. She detailed six perspectives. “For the city government, formalization means order,” she said. For the slum dwellers, formalization means paying taxes that they don’t want “because they don’t feel taxes tie back to a way of supporting their businesses grow ... [taxes are not] being reflected in the development that they are getting” (Baziwe, 2021). For civil society organizations, formalization means having more services for the community. For policymakers, it means having “functional investments”, that is, safeguarding the investments done by and for the high-income urban development areas, while guaranteeing the small-scale businesses that service them. For real estate private developers, formalization works the most, because it attracts more middle- and high-income businesses to an area. But for informal real estate actors, formalization is the worse, because it closes their scope, as their business thrives in unclear tenure systems (Baziwe, 2021).

Nyiti concurred with this faceted view, saying that for the government, formalization’s purpose “is to have an accountable central system, to be able to know what there is” (Nyiti, 2021). For slum dwellers, he added, formalization is the way to have security of tenure, which is a positive thing for them,

since it enables accessing a “bundle of rights.” He said that for academics, formalization is missed opportunity. “It means we are not curing the problem. Because as we regularize, more people move to the outskirts” (Nyiti, 2021). He’s not only concerned with uncontrolled urban sprawl, but with the fact that urban planning is not done from a Southern perspective, giving tools directly to the people who are really making the city.

Nyiti also explained that for the local government guaranteeing access roads is an important requirement for formalization. He argued that the “regularization project, the *Urasimaji Wa Makazi Holela*² is some sort of *baptism* where town planners [give existence to these houses on the maps] while land surveyors [do it with beacons on the ground]” (Nyiti, 2021).

With two decades of experience as a Ugandan housing policy officer, Khayangayanga argues there are three main purposes of formalization from the government’s perspective. With regards to business, to widen the tax bracket (curiously, he did not mention this in relation to property taxes (Mirondo, 2021)). With regards to housing and settlements’ formalization, to provide urban infrastructure. Lastly, another purpose is to combat urban crime better. Here, he mentioned that the National Identification System helps tracking down unlawful activities (Khayangayanga, 2021).

From Kiggundu’s perspective, there are at least three types of purposes.

-
- One is **physical upgrading or modernization**. He regards upgrading as beneficial because public investments (be they new roads, or modern markets) are followed by people’s voluntary improvements.

² *Urasimaji Wa Makazi Holela*, the Swahili name for Dar es Salaam’s most important regularization policy (geared towards road accessibility) is automatically translated as “Arbitrary Settlement Bureaucracy” (Google Translate, 2021), a sort of omen for its uselessness.

→ The second type are **simply organizational mergers** like the associations of matatus and boda boda drivers promoted recently by the Ministry of Transport (a model to be followed in other urban sub-sectors) (Kiggundu, 2021).

→ The last type mentioned were the **updates to urban physical standards**. Kiggundu gave the example of the re-zoning of the upscale neighborhood of Kololo to reflect recent small-scale commercial developments. Tellingly, the example shows that if this can be done for higher-income areas, it can be done in of lower-income areas as well.

Sara Nandudu concluded that there was nothing wrong about the policies, especially since she's appreciative of the fact that KCCA officers have expressed interest in partnering with communities to improve the settlements. "I think this purpose is good, however the question is how is it going to be done. We may have to do away with the slums or informality, but the people must not be done away with. The how is the question" (Nandudu, 2021). Insights like this make it evident that there was more agreement on what the policies should do, but less clarity and consistency in how to put them to work. And, as was mentioned before, how not to betray formalization's very purpose when enacting the specific policies.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE PURPOSE OF FORMALIZATION?

Many experts concur with the realization that formalization should not be a purpose in and of itself, and that as a policy intention, it is simply wrong. Furthermore, the idea that the goal of formalization is integration is incomplete. As many experts have noted, integration alone, and legibility of informality into government structures, is far from a desired endpoint.

Cissé, who is not only a wide-ranging expert on urban informality (with research in solid

waste management, urban agriculture, and flooding in informal settlements, among other issues) but is also recently interested in Senegalese city politics, explained:

“The issue is not to formalize; this is not the way to produce the city. The formal production is failing to produce a system with equity and diversity. Informal actors have the capacity and have proven to be successful providers of sustainable solutions. If you formalize, the risk is that you'll lose this capacity; and governments do not have capacity to spare, their capacity is already very limited... There is simply too much opportunity here to ignore. (Cissé, 2021)

One of the most detailed statements about what should be the purpose of formalization policy came from Kikuwi, leader of the VIBINDO Society, a member-based organization of informal manufacturers, traders, and service providers. Kikuwi argued that "the purpose of formalization should not be to formalize, the purpose should be transformation ... transformation from informal to formal" (Kikuwi, 2021). "There are two components to transformation" he stated.

"One is **recognition**. We need to understand better who workers and businesses are in terms of gender, age, sector, and why they work in what they do...

the second component is **incentives**: conducive working spaces, finance, social protection, skills' training, appropriate technologies, and marketing" (Kikuwi, 2021).

Such a two-pronged approach to formalization, with recognition and supportive components, is fundamental. Cissé concurred with this when he stated: “Recognition might not be enough: the objective should also be to support” (Cissé, 2021). Khayangayanga talked about a “supportive infrastructure”, that goes beyond physical and legal support, and also considers information systems that can be useful for regular citizens.

Indeed, to see formalization simply as integration of informal activities into the official structures will hardly ever be regarded by citizens as beneficial. Many authors have discussed the evils of “pernicious assimilation” that drains the livelihoods out of informal practices, and gives little back (Kamete, 2018). In other words, “there is no right without an obligation ... the government has no right without servicing its people” (Kikuwi, 2021).

From Nandudu’s perspective, the link between housing and livelihoods is what makes formalization work well. “Housing makes formalization affordable,” she stated, adding: “Housing determines the type of informality you have. Housing is key to transform formality into formality. [Formal] housing should respond to economic factors that can allow people to have a business at home. This is important because it’s important that people can afford moving from informality to formality” (Nandudu, 2021). Her perspective goes to the core of the problem with formalization and hence to determining what working formalization policies should be like. If formalizing and remaining formal has a cost, then it should envision a way by which people can afford these costs and thus reap the mutual benefits of transformation. Formalization without incentives, without a supportive structure, is nothing else than a mirage.

CO-PRODUCTION OF URBAN SERVICES, GOODS, AND SOCIAL PROTECTIONS

As was made visually evident through the house interviews, informal settlements, with their associated informal employment and informal businesses, act as providers of urban

services and goods that would not exist otherwise, and that benefit its residents and the city as a whole. These include accessible and affordable housing options, water, day care for children, community meeting spaces, and many others. Acknowledging informal dynamics is a necessary starting point for a more effective municipal action. The urban challenges and deficits are broad, deep, and growing fast, so it makes no sense not to take advantage of existing efforts and support informal provision of urban goods and services, so they raise their quality and extend their reach.

A co-production approach to urban goods, services, and social protections reconceptualizes public provision not as a matter of “the-state-does-it-all” or “the-private-sector-does-it-best”, but one that welcomes inputs from more stakeholders, especially those who are majoritarian subjects and objects of government action. “Wicked problems like informality, and in fact, like most African problems, cannot be solved without collaboration” (Kiggundu, 2021). Numerous examples of synergistic collaboration between public and informal stakeholders to improve service provision have been documented across different sectors (Meagher, 2013), such as waste management (Nzeadibe, 2013) (Parra, 2020), water and sanitation (Ahlers et al, 2014), housing and urban planning (Watson, 2014), social protection (Tokman, 2007) (Steiler, 2018), to mention a few.

Understanding informal housing arrangements as playing social protection roles is for many a simple fact of life. Houses with intense uses, especially economic uses, offer protection for their residents in times of need, acting exactly as social insurance (as a source of life insurance in times of death, severance or unemployment payments, and the like). It does take some degree of intellectual flexibility to understand that social protections can take many forms, and that some of those forms can be spatialized, even photographed, if one dares to look close enough. In fact, the concept of social protection is one that for laypeople is not straightforward: “Sometimes there are challenges just explaining to informal workers what formalization is.

For example, simply grasping the meaning of social protection is hard for many. It is an empty idea, too abstract" (Kikuwi, 2021). But at the same time, using their spaces as social protection is just a natural way of getting by in the city.

Spatialized forms of informal provision of social protection were made most evident in the conversation with residents of the house interviews in Senegal.

For example, Demba confided that the 300,000 francs (USD\$510) per month he gets from leasing the two stores at the front of his house was a great support after his mother passed away. "Without this money we would not have been able to get by because our income was not substantial at the time," he said. (Ndiaye, 2021). In another interview (#9), Ndèye confided that without the informal activities related to leasing her house, it would be almost impossible for her and her small children to survive after the death of her husband. Today, apart from the food store run by her eldest son, Ndèye's main income comes from the activities that take place in her home. The same applies to Fatou [house interview #12], a widow interviewed in the Medina district. (Ndiaye, 2021). This is far from unique across geographical and social spectrums: "Informal houses of older persons are being used to support their pension" (Cissé, 2021). In other words, "housing is the pension of the poor" (Torres in Carrizosa, 2021).

For Nandudu, not only houses, but also social networks can act as informal social protection. She referred to the role of "welfare committees" in informal settlements. She explained that well-knit communities are

"what makes them to be a family and they stay united. So, if one has a problem, others can come in and help. For example, if one member lost a child, other members will come in and support her or him" (Nandudu, 2021). For Nandudu, these social support structures are connected to both the economic and psychological health of neighborhoods: "These networks can cost people's lives" (Nandudu, 2021) she said, highlighting their vital role.

MAKING CO-PRODUCED URBAN PROVISION JUST

Co-production understands, pragmatically, that when addressing joint state and market failures, partnerships are the key to achieve effective, on the ground, scalable success. This is one of the reasons why for local governments it is indispensable to recognize informal activities – not to erase informality, but to lay the true baseline from which to build a more just system, to lay bare people's assets, however fragile, fractioned, or seemingly disorganized they look on the surface.

The intense economic and urban services activities happening in consolidated informal settlements should not only be recognized but also supported. Without support, co-production can become exploitative (Miraftab, 2004), and hence an opportunity for redistribution is missed (Chen, 2006). Without a creative, spatialized, and unbridled support structure to help informal service provision of goods, services, and social protections to perform better, there is little hope of attaining the Just City we want.



Bibliography and References

05

- AAPS— African Association of Planning Schools, (2021). Urban Africa in the 21st Century: current issues and future prospects of urban governance and planning, 5th AAPS-Conference, November 18-20, 2021.
- Ahlers, R., Cleaver, F., Rusca, M. & Schwartz, K. (2014). Informal space in the urban waterscape: Disaggregation and co-production of water services. *Water Alternatives* 7(1) pp 1-14
- Barry, M. (2015). Property theory, methods, and the continuum of land rights, Nairobi: UN Habitat
- Baziwe, D. (2021). The just city in Africa. Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, November 17, 2021. Online.
- Bhanjee, S. and Zhan, C. H. (2018). Mapping latest patterns of urban sprawl in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, *Papers in Applied Geography*, 4(3), pp 292-304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23754931.2018.1471413>
- Bromley, R. (2004). Power, property and poverty: Why De Sot's "Mystery of Capita" cannot be solved. *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, Chapter 14. Berkeley: Lexington Books
- Carrizosa, M. (2021). Working Homes: Space-use intensity and urban informality in Bogota, Doctoral Dissertation, Publication # 28498120, The New School, New York.
- Castells, M. & Portes, A. (1989). World underneath: the origins, dynamics and effects of the informal economy. In Castells, M., Portes, A., & Benton, L. A. *The informal economy: studies in advanced and less developed countries*. Pp 11-41. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Chen, M. A. (2006). Rethinking the informal economy: linkages with the formal economy and the formal regulatory environment. In Guha-Khasnobis, B., Kanbur, R. and Ostrom, E. (Eds.) *Linking the formal and informal economy: concepts and policies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI:10.1093/0199204764.003.0005.
- Chen, M. A. (2014), Informal economy monitoring study sector report: Home-based workers, Cambridge, MA: WIEGO.
- Chen, M. A., Roeber, S., & Skinner, C. (2016). Urban livelihoods: reviewing the evidence in support of the new urban agenda. Editorial in *Environment and Urbanization Brief- 34* International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), pp 1-12. London: Russell Press.
- Chen, M. A., Kihato, C. W., & Skinner, C. (2018) Inclusive public spaces for informal livelihoods: a discussion paper for urban planners and policy makers. Prepared by WIEGO for the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme for Equitable Economic Growth in Cities. p 17. Manchester: WIEGO Limited.
- Cissé, O., Gueye, N. F. D., and Sy, M. (2005). Institutional and legal aspects of urban agriculture in French speaking West Africa: from marginalization to legitimization, *Environment and Urbanization*, 17(1), pp 143-154.
- Cissé, O. (2021). The just city in Africa. Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, November 8, 2021. Online.
- Davis, Mike (2006), *The Planet of Slums*, Verso, London
- De Soto, H. (2000). *The mystery of capital: Why capitalism triumphs in the west and fails everywhere else*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Fergusson, J. (2007). Formalities of poverty: Thinking about social assistance in neoliberal South Africa, *African Studies Review*, 50 (2), pp. 71-96.
- FES, (2020). Towards the just city in Kenya, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Kenya, Nairobi, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/17107.pdf>
- Gershuny et al. (2017). CAPTURE24: Testing self-report time-use diaries against objective instruments in real time, Center for Time Use Research, Oxford: University of Oxford

- Gilbert, A. (2002). On the mystery of capital and the myths of Hernando De Soto: What difference does legal title make? *International Development Planning Review*, 24(1), pp 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.24.1.1>.
- Government of Tanzania - GoT. (2018). *Blueprint for regulatory reforms to improve the business environment*, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment. Dodoma: Government of Tanzania.
- Guha-Khasnobis, B., Kanbur, R. & Ostrom, E. (2006). Beyond formality and informality. Linking the formal and informal economy: concepts and policies. DOI:10.1093/01992047 64.003.0001.
- Guyen, M. & Karlen, R. (2020). Supporting Africa's urban informal sector: coordinated policies with social protection at the core. *Africa Can End Poverty*, World Bank Blog. Retrieved (October 29, 2021), from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/supporting-africas-urban-informal-sector-coordinated-policies-social-protection-core>.
- Perry, G. et al. (2007). *Informality: Exit and Exclusion*. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- ILO, (2015). *Transition from the informal to the formal economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)* Geneva: International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:P12100_ILO_CODE:R204.
- ILO, (2018). *Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture*, (3rd ed.), p 24. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- ILO, (2020). *Report on employment in Africa (Re-Africa) Tackling the youth employment challenge*. pp 1-2. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- Jacobs, J. (1969). *The economy of cities*. New York: Random House. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ncr.4100580916>.
- Joshi, A. & Moore, M. (2004). Institutionalised co-production: unorthodox public service delivery in challenging environments. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 40(4), Pp 31-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380410001673184>.
- Jutting, J., & Laiglesia, J. R. (2009). *Employment, poverty reduction and development: What's new? Is informal normal? Towards more and better jobs in developing countries*. (pp 17-26). Paris: OECD Development Centre. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264059245-en>
- Kamete, A. Y. (2018). Pernicious assimilation: reframing the integration of the urban informal economy in Southern Africa, *Urban Geography*, 39 (2), pp 167-189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2017.1298219>.
- KCCA, (2012). *Updating Kampala structure plan and upgrading the Kampala GIS Unit, Draft Final Report*, Kampala: Kampala Capital City Authority.
- Khayangayanga, D. (2021). *The just city in Africa*, Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, December 8, 2021. Online
- Kapinga, I. (2021). *Debriefing meeting with local researchers, Urban informality and the just city in Africa*, FES -TNS, December 3, 2021. Online
- Kiaga, A. & Leung, V. (2020). *The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy in Africa*, *Global Employment Policy Review Background Paper #2*, International Labor Organization (ILO), Geneva.
- Kiggundu, A. T. (2021). *The just city in Africa*, Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, November 17, 2021. Online
- Kikuwi, G. (2021). *The just city in Africa*, Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, November 9, 2021. Online.

- Kisekka, C. (2019). Buganda Subjects Urged to Promote Community Service among Youngster, Uganda Radio Network, <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/buganda-subjects-urged-to-promote-community-service-among-youngsters->
- Kisembo, T. (2021). Debriefing meeting with local researchers. Urban informality and the just city in Africa, FES -TNS, December 3, 2021. Online.
- Levy, et al. (2012), "(In) Formal and (Un) Productive: The Productivity Costs of Excessive Informality in Mexico", IDB Working Paper Series 34, Washington
- Maloney, W. F. (2003). Informality revisited. Policy, Research working paper series, 2965. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19181>.
- Meagher, K. (2013). Unlocking the informal economy: A Literature review on linkages between formal and informal economies in developing countries. WIEGO Working Paper #27, April 2013
- Miraftab, F. (2004). Neoliberalism and the casualization of public sector services: The case of waste collection services in Cape Town, South Africa. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 8(4), pp. 874-92.
- Mirondo, R. (2021). TRA starts collecting property tax via Luku today, *The Citizen News*.
- Moser, C. O. N. (1978). Informal sector or petty commodity production: dualism or dependence in urban development? *World Development*, 6(9-10), pp 1041-1064. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(78\)90062-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(78)90062-1)
- Nandudu, S. (2021). The just city in Africa, Working paper on urban informality, Personal interview, November 24, 2021. Online
- Ndezi, T., Woodcraft, S., Osuteye, E., Makoba, F. D. (2020). Pathways to the 'Good Life': Co-producing prosperity research in informal settlements in Tanzania. *Urban Planning*, 5(3), pp 288–302.
- Ndiaye, A. (2021). Final report from house interviews in Dakar, Urban Informality and the Just City in Africa, FES -TNS, December 6, 2021. Online.
- Nnkya, T. J. (2007). Why planning does not work: land use planning and residents' rights in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam: Mkuki Na Nyota Publishers.
- Nnkya, T. J. (2014). Financing affordable housing in Tanzania: policy, initiatives, challenges and opportunities, Presentation to the 6th Global Housing Finance Conference, Washington, DC. May 29, 2014, http://center4affordablehousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Session6.2_TumfisuNnkya.pdf.
- Nnkya, T. J. (2021). The just city in Africa, Working Paper on Urban Informality, Personal interview, November 10, 2021. Online.
- Nyiti, A. (2021). The just city in Africa, Working Paper on Urban Informality, Personal interview, November 29, 2021. Online.
- Nzeadibe, T.C. (2013). Informal Waste Management in Africa: Perspectives and Lessons from Nigerian Garbage Geographies. *Geography Compass*, 7, 729-744.
- OECD, (2020). Africa's urbanisation dynamics 2020: Africapolis, mapping a new urban geography. *West African Studies*. p 4. Paris: OECD. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/africa-s-urbanisation-dynamics-2020_b6bccb81-en.
- Ong, A. (2011). Introducing worlding cities, or the art of being global. In Roy and Ong (Eds.), *Worlding cities: Asian experiments and the art of being global*, (pp 1-28). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Parra, F. (2020). The struggle of waste pickers in Colombia: From being considered trash, to being recognised as workers. *Anti-Trafficking Review*, (15), pp 122-136. <https://doi.org/10.14197/atr.201220157>

- Pieterse, E. (2015). Epistemological practices of southern urbanism. In Ding, W., Graafland, G. and Lu, A. (Eds) *Cities in Transition II* Power, Environment, Society, pp. 311-325. Rotterdam: Nai010 Publishers.
- Rakodi, C. & Lloyd-Jones, T. (2002), *Urban livelihoods: a people-centred approach to reducing poverty*. p3. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- Republic of Uganda - RoU. (2001). Condominium Property Act, Uganda Gazette, 12:904. February 23, 2001, UPPC, Entebbe.
- Republic of Uganda- RoU. (2013). Building Control Act, October 2, 2013.
- Republic of Uganda- RoU. (2020). Physical Planning Amendment Act, January 10, 2020.
- Roy, A. (2005). Urban Informality: Toward an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71(2), pp 147-158. Chicago, IL: American Planning Association.
- Roy, A. (2009). Why India cannot plan its cities: informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), pp 76-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099299>.
- Sassen, S. (1994). The informal economy: between new developments and old regulations. *Yale Law Journal*, 103 (8), 2289-2304.
- Sassen, S. (2002). Global cities and diasporic networks: Microsites in global civil society. *Global Civil Society 2002*. Chap. 9, pp 217-238. London: Oxford University Press.
- Simone, A.M. (2010). *City life from Dakar to Jakarta*. New York: Routledge
- I. (2018). What's in a word? The conceptual politics of 'informal' street trade in Dar es Salaam. *Journal of Urban Research*, pp 17-18. <https://doi.org/10.4000/articulo.3376>
- Tipple, G. (2004), Settlement upgrading and home-based enterprises: discussions from empirical data, *Cities*, 21 (5), 371–379.
- Tokman, Victor E. (2007). *Modernizing the informal sector*. DESA Working Paper No 42. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Varley, Ann. (2012). "Postcolonialising Informality?" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, University City London, Print
- Vanek, Joan, (1974), "Time Spent in House Work", *Scientific American*, November 1974
- Ward, P. (2015). Housing rehab for consolidated informal settlements: A new policy agenda for 2016 UN-Habitat III. *Habitat International*, 50 (2), pp 337-384. DOI:10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.08.021.
- Watson, V. (2014). Co-production and collaboration in planning – The difference. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15(1), 62–76. doi:10.1080/14649357.2013.866266
- WIEGO. (2021). Social Protection Glossary. Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing, <https://www.wiego.org/resources/social-protection-glossary>
- Yiftachel, O. (2009). Critical theory and 'gray space': Mobilization of the colonized. *City*, 13(2-3), pp 246-263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982227>.

URBAN INVISIBLES: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN AFRICA'S RAPIDLY GROWING CITIES

MARCH 2022

Author: Dr. Beryl Adongo Oranga



URBAN INVISIBLES: Poverty and Inequality in Africa's Rapidly Growing Cities

DR. BERYL ADONGO ORANGA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank Lydia Caldana of The New School for her enormous help with the literature review and transcription of the interviews. In addition, the author would like to thank the following people for their invaluable input, knowledge, and kindness: Dr. Abdoul Alpha DIA, Dr. Cherif Salif SY, Cheikh Ahmed Bamba Diagne, Djimingue Nanasta, Dan Owalla, Lavender Namdiero, Ezekiel Oeri, and Ken Njiru. Lastly, the author would like to express her appreciation to the FES country offices in Kenya and Senegal for all their support throughout the study.



Background
and
Justification

01

“The dire poverty of some is not an affliction which impacts only on those who are deprived. It reverberates across the globe and ineluctably impacts negatively on the whole of humanity, including those who live in conditions of comfort and plenty.” Nelson Mandela

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) promotes a transition towards the just city in Africa, guided by four main pillars: dignity,¹ equity and diversity,² rights and responsibilities,³ and democracy.⁴ Aiming to contribute to this knowledge base, this working paper will focus on residents who are key recipients of injustices with no means of escaping it, also known as the “*Urban Invisibles*.”

WHO ARE URBAN INVISIBLES?

The majority of urban residents in African cities live a life of shattered dreams as city designs and policies continue to favour the minority middle- and high-income groups. These “Urban Invisibles”, including the urban poor, children, youth, women, and persons with disabilities, remain unrepresented in city plans and programs, and are often only considered through tokenistic approaches. They also remain invisible in the mainstream media. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung defines them as “key recipients of injustice with no means of escaping it”.

Despite various provisions in new urban institutions for people’s participation, there remain many Urban Invisibles whose views are never heard, and who are shut out of decision-making spaces. They include:

- Demographic Invisibles (residents of informal settlements and informal sector workers who are ignored by service providers and policymakers);

- Digital Invisibles (netizens who are digitally connected but who are only visible to each other, not to policymakers);
- Mobility Invisibles (those, including children, pregnant women, and people living with disabilities, who find it difficult or impossible to use urban modes of public transport);
- Media Invisibles (those ignored by the mainstream media, which tends to focus on news that is sensational rather than news that highlights the many challenges facing the majority of urban poor residents).

Inclusion of Urban Invisibles in cities’ decision-making processes, and reflecting their needs in urban infrastructure and planning, would go a long way in engendering “just cities” in Africa.

Source: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office, 2020

1 “This is the right of an individual or a group to be valued, respected, and treated ethically. It is to recognise the worthiness of a human individual or a group. It implies respect of the individual or a group regardless of their perceived socio-economic or political status” (FES, 2020, p.10)

2 “An equitable city is one where the city and its benefits are shared equitably among the citizens. A city of diversity is a city where there is an understanding that democratic processes may result in the exclusion of others (especially minorities) so measures are put in place to ensure justice for all, including minorities and visitors” (ibid.).

3 “A city where the rights of all citizens and visitors are observed. These rights are counter-balanced by citizens taking responsibility in the affairs of the city and in developing their city” (ibid.).

4 “A city where citizens make collective decisions based on informed majoritarianism, but in a manner that respects the dignity of all and that considers equity and diversity” (ibid.).

The focus on Urban Invisibles is especially critical because the number of people in poverty in Africa continues to grow despite the interventions in place. That is, while there was a reduction in the share of people living in poverty, the pace of this reduction relative to population growth has been too slow. Also, despite the reduction, there are 490 million people in poverty today compared to 284 million in 1990 (World Bank, 2020: Development Aid, 2021). In addition, it is estimated that 60% of the total urban population in African countries resides in slums or informal settlements (UNICEF, 2020).

The problem of poverty is further exacerbated by high urbanization rates. Currently, while Africa is the least urbanized region in the world, the rate at which the region is urbanizing is higher than other regions, at 3.99%, compared to the world, at 1.83%.⁵ With these high rates of urbanization, the African population is expected to double by 2050. Approximately 70% of this population will be living in urban areas. While urbanization has led to high economic growth in other regions, growth has not been adequate in the region to improve human well-being.⁶ The combination of high rates of urbanization, high informality, and low economic growth call for a more inclusive approach to development in the region.

An inclusive approach to development is critical in the context of high inequality rates seen in the region. These data about inequality need to be considered within a wider framework of intra-urban inequality as well as urban-rural inequality. While the data on poverty is amply visible to statisticians, its broader meaning can only be understood in relation to the distribution of income, assets, and opportunities within urban areas as a whole. It should be stressed that intra-urban inequality is not only a consequence of income-earning opportunities and how individuals make their way through urban labor markets, but also how national and local government policies themselves contribute

to different forms of inequality.⁷ For instance, fiscal policy, both on expenditures and the revenue, can significantly contribute to inequality.

While economic growth is vital for improving human well-being, policies that target the poor to reduce inequality and poverty can have a significant influence on well-being (Oranga, 2020). This is particularly important because the poor lack basic necessities such as access to water, food, health, and education facilities, and decent housing and sanitation, among others. Also, several countries show that urban premium⁸ is eroding. These gaps highlight the need to devise inclusive and just policies to ensure that urban services are inclusive and accessible, including to the Urban Invisibles. Thus, this working paper seeks to understand the trends and drivers of poverty and inequality. In addition, using access to basic education as a case study, the paper also seeks to understand if the provision of public goods is just and how it can be improved.

The working paper is structured as follows: Section Two offers the methodology, Section Three investigates the nexus between urbanization, economic growth, and inequality. More specifically, this section provides an overview of the relationship between urbanization and economic growth in Africa, with cases from Kenya and Senegal. The section also shows trends in poverty, inequality, and human development, and then discusses the manifestations and drivers of inequality. Lastly, the section reviews the effect of Covid-19 on the economy and population at large. Section Four investigates how just is the provision of education as a public good in Nairobi and Dakar and focuses on three key lenses: affordability, accessibility, and adequacy. Section Five discusses and summarizes the findings in light of the reviewed literature. Finally, Section Six provides key pathways to reducing inequalities and ensuring *Urban Invisibles* benefit from urbanization and the provision of public goods.

5 World Bank (2020). Annual Population Growth rate. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=ZG-1W>

6 Brookings. (2020). Prerequisite to Getting Africa's Urbanization "Right." <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/01/21/prerequisites-to-getting-africas-urbanization-right/>

7 A study of the role of local public expenditures in Buenos Aires showed that 11.5% of the population received 68% of expenditure, see Michael Cohen and Dario Debowicz, "The Five Cities of Buenos Aires, (UNESCO, 2004)

8 "Urban premium encapsulated the idea that well-structured cities generate high level of economic and social outcomes," (Turok, 2016, p. 235).



Methodology

02

This paper used a mixed-method approach, where, first, existing literature was reviewed to understand the extent of poverty and inequality in Kenya and Senegal, with a focus on cities. In addition, data from World Bank's World Development Indicators and Human Development reports by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were used to conduct a descriptive analysis to complete the literature review. Lastly, interview guides were developed and administered to key informants. The guides focused on access to education as a case study within cities.

The main objective was to understand the extent to which education, as a public good, is accessible to the general population, focusing on Urban Invisibles, and how this access can be made just. The conceptualization of education as a just public good relies on a framework that uses three lenses: affordability (nonexcludable), physical accessibility (nonrival), and adequacy (good quality) of education to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles (see section 4.1 for more details of the just framework). Based on the findings and available literature, a discussion took place, which then informed the study's recommendations.



The conceptualization of education as a just public good relies on a framework that uses three lenses: affordability (nonexcludable), physical accessibility (nonrival), and adequacy (good quality) of education to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles

Urbanization,
Economic Growth,
and Inequality
Nexus

03

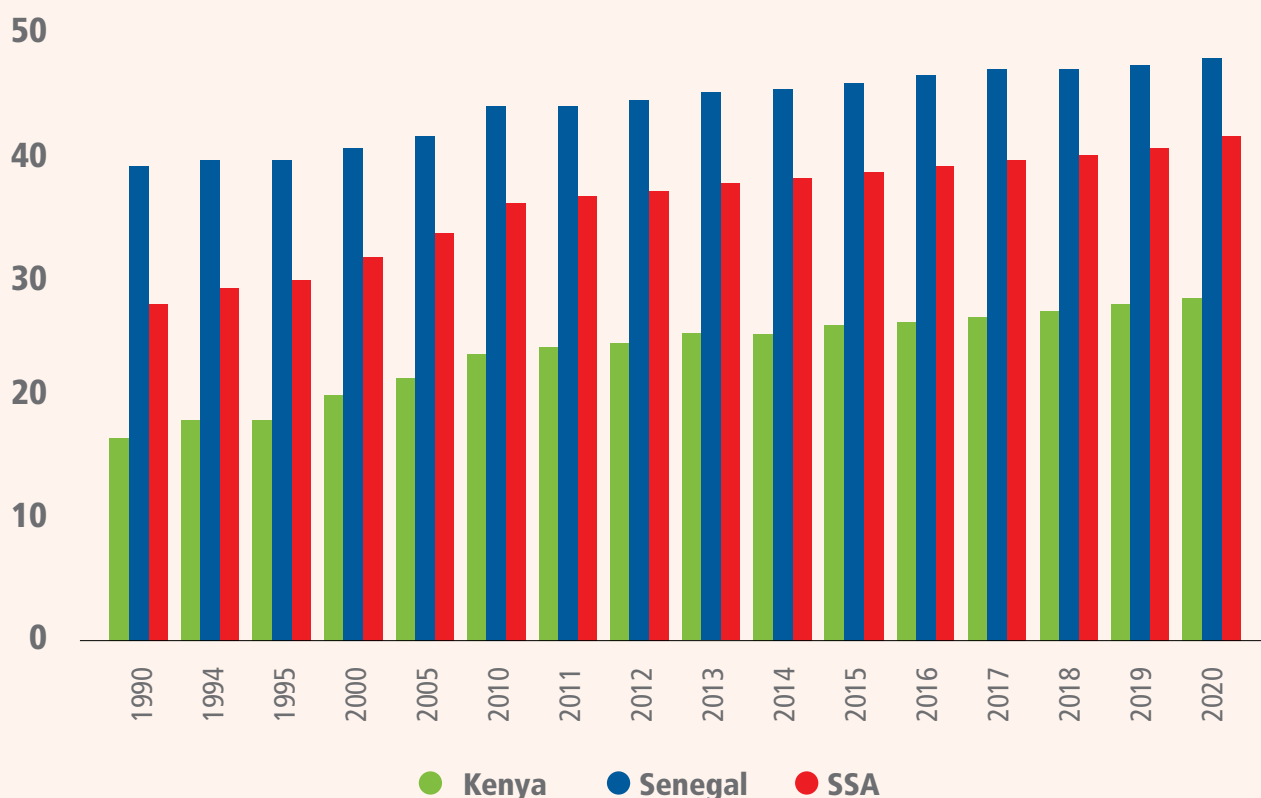
3.1 Urbanization and Economic Growth in SSA

African countries are experiencing high levels of urbanization, and while urbanization presents opportunities, it could be problematic if not well managed. On the one hand, urbanization can offer opportunities for economic development and, thus, reduce poverty and improve human development. On the other hand, it can cause high inequality and poverty, thus lowering human development.

Demographic approximations by the National Agency of Statistics and the World Bank

estimate that in 2020 the population of Senegal was 16.7 million,⁹ and almost half of this population lived in urban areas (48%). In Kenya, the total population is estimated at 47,564,296,¹⁰ and 28% of the country's population lives in urban areas (see Figure 1).¹¹ Despite the low level of urbanization in Kenya, studies show that the rate at which Kenya is urbanizing is at 4.01% annually, which is higher than the average for the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (approximately 3.99%) and Senegal (3.69%).

FIGURE 1:
Percent Urbanized: Kenya and Senegal
Source: World Development Indicators



9 World Bank. (2021). Population, Total, Senegal. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SN>

10 KNBS. (2019). Kenya Population and Housing Census. Volume II: Distribution of Population by Administrative Units.

11 This percent is 31% according to Kenyan census report.

12 World Bank. (2021). Urban Population Growth (Annual %) World. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=1W>

In 2020 the population of Senegal was **16.7 million**, and almost half of this population lived in urban areas (**48%**). In Kenya, the total population is estimated at approximately **47.6 Million**, and **28%** of the country's population lives in urban areas.



The urbanizing rates in Kenya and Senegal are well above the world rate of 1.82%, showing the need to ensure that the process is well managed to cater for the growing population. In Senegal, the capital city Dakar, with a population of 3.9 million, hosts approximately 25% of the total population, despite occupying only 0.3% of the land.¹³ This suggests that Dakar alone hosts almost half of the total urbanized population in the country. In Kenya, however, despite Nairobi only hosting 9.2% of the total population, or approximately 4.4 million people, the country is urbanizing at a higher rate than SSA. In fact, literature shows that in Nairobi, 60% of the population lives in informal settlements, which occupy only 10% of the total land in the city (FES, 2020). This shows the urgency in addressing the urbanization process to ensure it is well-managed.

It has been argued that countries that have high economic growth have experienced high levels of urbanization and that cities drive economic development. That is, on the one hand, development encourages urbanization as people move from rural to urban areas for various opportunities, including employment, health, and education.¹⁴ On the other hand, urbanization causes economic growth due to “economies of scale in infrastructure, capital, labor, and managerial resources” (Liddle, 2017, p.5). However, this argument has been contested because recent research has shown that not all countries experience economic growth during high levels of urbanization (Turok & McGranahan, 2013, Jedwab & Vollrath, 2015). In fact, while many economists agree that urbanization and economic growth are closely related, they caution that rapid population growth does not necessarily imply accelerated economic growth and that urbanization and industrialization do not necessarily occur concurrently (Ibid.).

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa seem to be experiencing rapid urbanization without subsequent economic growth, thus contributing to an economic and social crisis that plagues the continent. This crisis is worsened by poor governance in several African countries, which hinders inclusive economic growth and further disenfranchises the poor, including the *Urban Invisibles* (Mbaku, 2021). Kenya, for instance, is yet to leverage the urbanization process to transform its economy.¹⁵



Dakar hosts half of the urbanized population, despite occupying **0.3%** of the land.



Nairobi hosts **9.2%** of the total population of Kenya, but **60%** of its residents live in informal settlements, which occupy only **10%** of the city's land.

13 World Bank. (2021). The World Bank in Senegal: Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/senegal/overview#1>

14 A survey by the FES in Kenya showed that 54% of the residents who move to urban areas, do so for better opportunities. FES (2022). Towards the Just City in Kenya. Just City Series -Kenya Survey. Manuscript in preparation.

15 World Bank. (2016). Republic of Kenya: Kenya Urbanization Review. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/639231468043512906/pdf/AUS8099-WP-P148360-PUBLIC-KE-Urbanization-ACS.pdf>

And while Kenya has been experiencing economic growth, it has seen very little structural transformation, where the urban economy is concentrated in the informal sector, estimated to constitute approximately 84% of total employment (KNBS, 2019). A similar situation is seen in Senegal, where the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) estimates that 97% of the businesses are concentrated in the informal sector. Unfortunately, these high shares of informal employment suggest that both countries do not experience high economic growth—studies have shown that the informal and services sectors usually experience lower productivity compared to the formal manufacturing industry, hence hindering adequate economic growth (Rodrik, 2016). As such, such sectors are not associated with lower rates of poverty and inequality (Dodman et al., 2017).

A large proportion of goods and services in African cities are non-tradable, as opposed to manufacturing. For instance, approximately more than 40% of goods in both Nairobi and Dakar are non-tradable, which indicates a lack of functioning markets that close both cities, and the countries at large, to global economies (Lall, et al. 2017). This is especially problematic because the economic advantages of cities emanate from economies of scale, which functions within firms and between firms (the agglomeration of economies). This agglomeration of economies has various benefits, typically characterized as the clustering of different sectors of economic activities (urbanization of economies) and clustering of the same sector of economic activities (localization of economies) (UNECA, 2017).

For advantages of agglomeration to occur optimally, cities have to create an enabling environment that allows companies to communicate clearly and effortlessly, that strives to diversify the economy and attract foreign investment, that supports industrialization and regional integration, and above all, that provides adequate public infrastructure to enable firms to function efficiently (Collier, 2016, UNECA, 2017). Urban form, thus, plays a critical role in promoting economic growth and people's well-being. More specifically, it is advisable that cities are well-designed to be connected and compact in a way that supports a variety of uses and is well integrated with public transport (OECD, 2007).

In addition, good and inclusive governance will play an important role in accelerating cities' economic growth and social development. Many African countries do not have functional reforms that tackle corruption and political elitism. In turn, this leads to the misappropriation of public resources that are critical to service delivery, such as access to education, health, and other basic needs.¹⁶ In fact, "elites are usually not incentivized to implement pro-poor economic programs that enhance the ability of the poor to participate productively and gainfully in economic growth."¹⁷ Yet, studies show that good governance is essential to effective policies that manage social and economic resources, leading to inclusive growth (Anas, 2017). As such, it is critical that cities, and countries at large, strive to enhance good governance and design and implement policies that encourage peace and economic growth while addressing inequality and poverty and ensuring the participation of all citizens, including the *Urban Invisibles*.



40% of goods in both Dakar and Nairobi are non-tradable, and both cities have high shares of informal and services sectors, hence do not experience adequate growth to reduce poverty and inequality.

16 A survey by FES showed that residents believe that access to public services is tied to who is in power. This suggests that service delivery will be negatively impacted if a country is characterized by high elitism and corruption, showing the importance of inclusive governance for efficiency in service delivery. FES (2022). Towards the Just City in Kenya. Just City Series -Kenya Survey. Manuscript in preparation.

17 Mbaku, J. (2021). Pp26. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ForesightAfrica2020_Chapter2_20200110.pdf

Thus, as efforts are made to support economic growth, it is vital that the growth and its accompanying development are inclusive, where they benefit the *Urban Invisibles*. The lack of inclusive growth would further widen the inequality gaps, leading to high poverty rates. Inclusive growth and development are vital as countries experience high urbanization rates to ensure that all benefit from this process. As such, as countries focus on economic growth, they should also implement distributional policies that focus on the poor to improve their circumstances (Oranga, 2020).

3.2 Poverty, Inequality, and Human Development

3.2.1 POVERTY AND INEQUALITY TRENDS

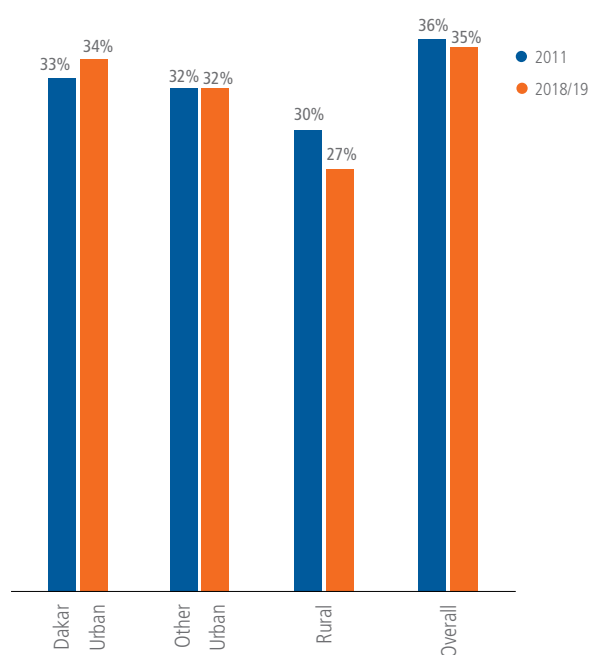
Poverty rates in all its forms are high in both countries, at approximately 53% of the population who are multi-dimensionally poor.¹⁸ Compared to monetary measures, studies show that one in three people experience monetary poverty in both countries—in Kenya, the overall poverty rate translates to 36%, and in Senegal to 37.8% of the total population.^{19,20} The multi-dimensional measure reveals that 16% more people are in poverty than the monetary poverty measure. This suggests that the money metric measure does not capture the full intensity of poverty, which is more than just income. Poverty in all its forms affects all aspects of life, including education, health, shelter, among other basic needs, which would further exacerbate the quality of life.

These high rates of poverty have further been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the World Bank, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the poverty reduction process in Kenya, leading to an additional two million people falling into poverty as jobs and incomes were impacted by the lockdowns (World Bank, 2020b). In Senegal, it is anticipated that the pandemic is likely to lead to up to a loss of 12.6% of monthly GDP

to households, thus, increasing the poverty rate to 72.3% in the worst-case scenario (Seck, 2020). This raises the question of whether these countries have the capacity to ensure that the poor and the most vulnerable, including the *Urban Invisibles*, are protected from the negative effects of the shocks. Devising policies or initiatives to protect the vulnerable will be critical to the well-being and development of the countries as urbanization occurs.

Regional analysis shows that poverty rates are lower in urban areas than in rural areas, suggesting a rural-urban divide. In Kenya, poverty incidence appears higher in rural areas (40.1%) than in urban areas (29.1%) (KNBS, 2020). Similarly, in Senegal, this rate is lower in cities, at 19.8%, compared to rural areas at 53.6% (ANSD, 2021). The significance of these findings suggests that even if conditions may not be good in urban areas, they are better than in rural areas. Thus, even in such contexts of high urbanization levels, “urban growth is a channel that lets people vote with their feet to improve their conditions (Oranga, 2020).”

FIGURE 2:
Inequality Trends in Senegal



18 According to the comprehensive report on Poverty, this rate is at 53% in Kenya, while according to HDR report, this rate is at 53.2% in Senegal. See Senegal: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/SEN.pdf>

19 KNBS. (2020). Kenya Comprehensive Poverty Analysis: Children, Youth, and Women in Focus.

20 ANSD. (2021). Enquête harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (EHCVM) au Sénégal. Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie.

In addition, available data shows higher poverty rates in secondary cities compared to major cities. The inter-urban analysis also shows similarities in both countries where, in Senegal's urban landscape, the poverty rate is currently lower in Dakar (8.7%), compared to other urban areas, at 29.9% (ANDS, 2021). Similarly, in Nairobi and Mombasa, this rate was lower, at 14% in the pre-pandemic period, compared to 31.6% in other urban areas, and at 38.6% during the pandemic in Nairobi and Mombasa compared to 49.9% in other areas (Nafula et al., 2020). This suggests inter-urban inequality where poverty reduction efforts are focused in major cities at the detriment of smaller cities.

Overall, these high rates of poverty in Kenya and Senegal are also exacerbated by high inequality rates. Studies show that while growth can play a role in reducing poverty, high inequality might limit the extent to which poverty would reduce (UNDP, 2017, Bourguignon, 2003, Datt et al., 2016). Overall, in Senegal between 2011 and 2018-19, inequality measured by Gini has decreased by 0.5 % points, at approximately 35% currently (see Figure 2).²¹ Similarly, Kenya has witnessed a decline, where inequality measured by Gini decreased from 0.47 in 2005/6 to 0.404 in 2015/16, and inequality measured by the Palma ratio also declined from 2.9 in 2005/6 to 2.0 in 2015/2016 (KNBS, 2020).²²

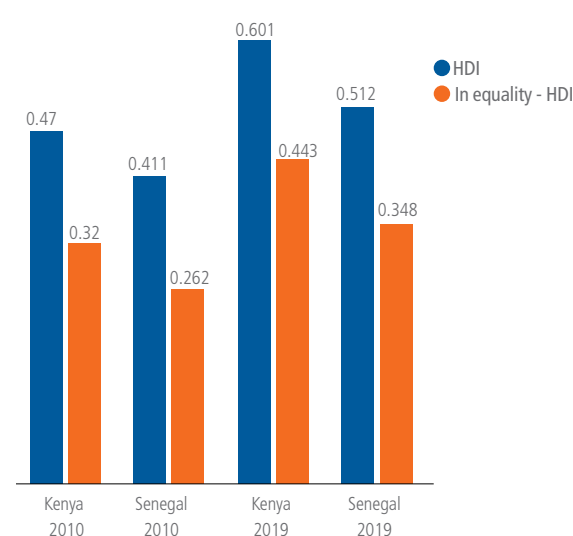
Despite both countries witnessing a decline in inequality overall, inequality rates remain higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In fact, regionally, Gini increased in Dakar by 1.5 percentage points, at 34% currently, while inequality reduced in other regions. In Kenya, while the decline was more pronounced in urban areas (in 2015/6, Gini was at 0.363 from 0.447 in 2005/06) than rural areas (0.38 in 2005 to 0.347 in 2015/6), the figures remain higher in urban areas, suggesting that moderate growth experienced in the country only benefits a few individuals, and while there is a lot of drive towards high growth, there are no concrete measures on how to address inequality.²³ To

address high inequality, it is imperative that growth is inclusive and that there is equality of opportunity that would increase access for the most vulnerable, thus creating an avenue for poverty reduction and human well-being.

3.2.2 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Human development as an aspect of overall well-being is critical because it puts people's needs first, as opposed to economic growth. While this perspective also acknowledges that economic growth is vital, it does so through the lens of human capabilities. That is, "what people are able to do and be" – what might be called people's real freedoms. In this view, a healthy economy is one which enables people to enjoy a long healthy life, a good education, a decent job, family life, [and] democratic debate, [amongst others]" (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009, p.1). By using the human capability lens, human development focuses on improving human life by looking at the different aspects that affect the quality of life, beyond income, thereby creating an environment where people can live fulfilling lives (Anand & Sen, 1997; Alkire & Deneulin, 2009).

FIGURE 3:
Human Development Index Trends



²¹ ANSD. (2021).

²² KNBS. (2020). Inequality Trends and Diagnostics in Kenya 2020.

²³ Ibid.

While acknowledging that economic growth is vital for development, it is critical to focus on human development to ensure that the disenfranchised, such as the Urban Invisibles, have access to opportunities. Observing human development trends via the Human Development Index (HDI),²⁴ the reports show that currently, Senegal is ranked at 168th out of 189 countries, with a score of 0.512, while Kenya is ranked 143rd with a score of 0.601.²⁵ In addition, analysis by gender shows that females are performing much worse than males in both countries—in Senegal, the males' HDI was 0.546 compared to 0.475 for females, and in Kenya, males' HDI was 0.62 compared to 0.581 for females. Although both countries have improved across the years, as shown in Figure 3 below, the rankings are still poor, especially for Senegal, which is classified as a low human development country, compared to Kenya (classified under medium development).

When the HDI is adjusted for inequality, both countries witness a decrease in the HDI rating, suggesting that the poor are further marginalized from a multidimensional angle. In 2019, Kenya lost 26.3 percentage points, while Senegal lost 32 percentage points. This loss suggests that when poverty and development are observed from a multidimensional angle, it is evident that the most in need, including the Urban Invisibles, are further disenfranchised, and this is a key component of development that is missed when most analyses are based on economic growth. Inequality and poverty, thus, need to be addressed within a broader framework of not only income but also access to opportunities and services that would contribute to the general well-being of everyone. As such, policies should focus on not only inclusive economic growth but also key priorities for inclusive development as there are various drivers of inequality beyond income.

3.3 Drivers and Manifestations of Poverty and Inequality in Dakar and Nairobi

Economic growth that is accompanied by high inequality results in lower growth-poverty elasticity.²⁶ Meaning, if economic growth is unequal, thereby producing high income inequality, its effect on poverty reduction will be lower. Also, it takes longer to reduce income inequality during growth than it takes to reduce poverty within the same circumstances (Bhorat, 2015).²⁷ Inequality is worse in African countries because many people already live in poverty, and these high rates of inequality are driven by various factors. The section below discusses some of the drivers and manifestations of inequality in African cities.

Structural factors that have been in existence since colonialism play a significant role in exacerbating inequality. Colonialism in Africa was characterized by marginalization and exploitation of the majority African population. Land alienation played a significant part in creating apartheid-like conditions, which were even reflected in how cities were designed, with segregated spaces for different races (FES, 2020). Such factors “capture historical processes that defined political and economic relations, determined ownership of productive assets, and shaped institutions for decades” (Shimeles & Nabassaga, 2017, p. 9). For instance, the dualistic nature of the African economy, which has persisted from colonial times until today, affects inequality rates. This dual economy is characterized by one economy that produces the majority of the country's wealth and is linked to the global economy, and the other, which employs the majority of the population, but has lower productivity, is disconnected from the global economy, and does not contribute as much to the country's economic growth (Bojabotseha, 2011).

24 “The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.” <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

25 The rankings are published in UNDP. (2020). Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking>

26 Growth-poverty elasticity is defined as “sensitivity of poverty reduction to a rise in economic growth” (Bhorat, 2015).

27 Bhorat, H. (2015). Inequality in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals. More information can be found at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2015/09/22/inequality-in-africa-implications-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

For instance, over the years, a significant proportion of labour has moved out of rural agriculture into low paying informal sectors in urban areas. Even though agriculture accounts for about 34% of the country's GDP (KNBS, 2019), there is a noticeable shift of low-skilled rural labour to the urban informal sector. This has led to high inequality and poverty rates due to the wage gaps between informal and formal workers—"workers with similar skills tend to earn less in the informal sector than their formal sector peers."²⁸

The informal sector accounts for the majority of the economy in Nairobi and Dakar, but unfortunately, the sector does not provide enough resources to improve the lifestyles of its dependents.

In Dakar, the share of informal employment is 80%, while in Kenyan cities, over three out of four urban jobs are informal, and overall, the share of informal employment is 84% countrywide (Page, et. al., 2020, Timmis, 2018, KNBS, 2019). And while the majority of employment in these cities is in the informal sector, the productivity of the sector is very low compared to manufacturing. In addition, the earnings from the informal sector are very low, especially for those operating smaller businesses, whose incomes tend to be below the minimum wage (FKE, 2021). The working conditions of informal workers are also poor, characterized by a lack of basic services such as sanitation (Page, et. al.2020). At the same time, workers lack social protection coverage compared to their peers in the formal sector, reflecting higher levels of vulnerability (Abizaid, 2019). This indicates that Dakar and Nairobi have large numbers of vulnerable groups which the cities do not cater for.

The employment landscape in Dakar and Nairobi perpetuates inequality, where although the informal sector employs the majority of the population, this population remains most vulnerable.

Housing segregation and intra-urban discrimination also perpetuate higher levels of inequality and poverty in Dakar and Nairobi. For instance, housing segregation – where the rich and poor inhabit different parts of the city, with the rich having better and more access to services – affects poor households and individuals negatively. According to the OECD report on “Divided Cities,” this type of segregation based on income may lead to intergenerational poverty because of the social distance between the wealthy and the poor. Such distance is reflected through housing prices, making it hard for the poor to live in better neighborhoods. On the individual level, poor neighbourhoods can lead to “negatives effects on educational and work outcomes” (Moreno-Monroy & Veneri, 2018, p.13, Cohen & Debowicz, 2004). Studies show that “children growing up in poverty areas will experience negative neighborhood effects on their income and employment opportunities, limiting their option as adults.” This is partly because such neighborhoods lack access to good quality schools that put the poor at a disadvantage as adults (OECD, 2018, p.143).

Intra-urban discrimination is present in the urban landscape of both countries.

An example of intra-urban discrimination occurs when informal settlements located within cities have little to no access to healthcare, education, sanitation, and other services—partly due to a lack of adequate financial resources and policies to facilitate change, among other factors—while wealthy neighborhoods have access to most facilities. The Kibera slum in Nairobi is one such settlement, where despite its central location within the Nairobi city, its residents still lack some of the very basic services such as water and sanitation. In Senegal, key informants stated that the government has failed to address the challenges of low-income neighborhoods. As in Nairobi, such neighborhoods lack adequate living facilities and access to basic services.

²⁸ Deléchat, C & Medina, M. (2020). What is the Informal Economy? IMF. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/12/what-is-the-informal-economy-basics.htm>

Housing segregation in Nairobi

Source: Unequal Scenes



Nairobi and Dakar are also primate cities that contribute to high levels of inequality and poverty.

Primacy is a situation where one city is much larger than the other cities in the country, and dominates in terms of its impact on the economy, owing to agglomeration of economies, which, in turn, leads to a higher population in the dominating city. For instance, Dakar hosts half of the urbanized population of Senegal, and yet it occupies only 0.3% of the land. Also, Key informants stated that Dakar concentrates most of the commercial sector, public universities, and healthcare facilities, which forces people to go to Dakar to seek these services and/or look for opportunities. Similarly, although Nairobi hosts about 33%²⁹ of the urban population in Kenya, it is also a city with the highest population density in Kenya, at 6,247 per square kilometer (KNBS, 2019). According to a publication by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2020), the city will likely remain the most important urban center for decades, despite a devolved system of governance in Kenya that was established in 2013. Unfortunately, high primacy can lead to regional imbalances and urban inequality, especially in the presence of political corruption and instability, which would privilege certain people (Kim, 2009).

Thus, the quality of urbanization will play a critical role in reducing inequality and poverty in both cities by ensuring that *Urban Invisibles* are seen.

If urbanization is well managed, it can lead to numerous benefits, such as shorter commute times due to better transport facilities; better provision of public services (e.g., water and sanitation) that are affordable to the majority of the population; and improved lifestyle of the residents due to easier access to better quality food, housing, healthcare, and education

Quality of urbanization in cities will play a significant role in ensuring cities are just.

(Wan, 2012). The provision of infrastructure is particularly important because it affects different aspects of a well-functioning city. In addition, infrastructure can be beneficial to people as it can promote inclusive growth, lower inequality rates, and alleviate poverty. Such benefits occur by generating more jobs, connecting markets, and lowering production and transportation costs, among others (AfDB, 2018).

Sustainable urbanization must, thus, account for infrastructure that is developed within a broader comprehensive network accompanied by effective service delivery targeting those who need it the most, especially the *Urban Invisibles*.

In other words, sustainable infrastructure development requires “an understanding of how communities and societies evolve and the role of people and citizens within them.”³⁰ In turn, this will ensure that citizens have a voice and actively participate in exercising their rights in the planning process, resulting in investments that are of greater quality, affordable, and accessible to all. In turn, this will result in inclusive growth, lower inequality rates, and poverty reduction. Above all, political will is critical to reducing inequality, as studies have shown that “where there is political will to pursue progressive reforms, countries are able to reverse even stubborn inequality trends and build more equal societies.”³¹

Sustainable infrastructure development requires “an understanding of how communities and societies evolve and the role of people and citizens within them.”

29 According to the 2019 Census, Nairobi's population was estimated at approximately 4.4 million, while the total urban population estimated at 14.7 million. KNBS (2019)

30 Saghir, J. (2017). Pp.4

31 Oxfam. (2019). Pp.13



EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Both countries were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially their cities.

Both Kenya and Senegal had witnessed robust economic growth before the pandemic. For instance, in Kenya, the economic growth expanded by 6.5% in 2018 and 5.8% in 2019 and was projected to continue growing (KNBS, 2020c).³² Similarly, Senegal witnessed more than 6% growth between 2014 and 2018, and in 2019, the economic growth was at 5.3% (BMZ, 2021). However, with the restriction of movements, especially in Dakar and Thies' regions (Senegal) and Nairobi and Mombasa (Kenya), there was a significant drop in economic growth (Onsomu, 2021). For instance, Dakar dropped from roughly 6% annually in the last five years to 1.3% in 2020, and Kenya's economy contracted to 1.1% in the third quarter of 2020 (BMZ, 2021, KNBS, 2020c). In general, urban areas were the worst hit, as the government restricted movements which negatively affected the population as many people lost their jobs.

The pandemic has had a severe socio-economic impact on the poor, further exacerbating inequalities.

In Kenya, the rate of inequality in Nairobi and Mombasa before the pandemic increased from 0.33 pre-crisis to 0.49 after the pandemic, indicating that the poor, including the Urban Invisibles, were further disenfranchised (Nafula, 2020). Further, it is estimated that 50% of the households in Nairobi and Mombasa lost their income (Ibid.). Both countries show that those in informal employment were impacted the most because the informal sector offers low wages with no social security; subsequently, this increases inequality as informal workers have no means to cater to their day-to-day needs (FKE, 2021; Balde et al, 2020). In addition, closure of various places, including markets, led to shortages of goods and affected nutrition, where the number of meals households took reduced (UNDP, 2020; World Bank 2021). Additional challenges included lack of access to healthcare facilities—3 in 10 households reported less access to healthcare than before March 2020

(World Bank, 2020) as well as educational facilities (further discussed in section 4).

To curb the effect of Covid-19, both the government of Senegal and Kenya implemented measures, such as financial stimulus and tax breaks to cushion businesses.

While these measures have been instrumental, they only focused on the formal sector, leaving behind the informal sector, which accounts for a higher share of employment in Dakar and Nairobi and the country as a whole (Balde et al, 2020; FKE, 2021). In Kenya, it is estimated that approximately 83% of the informal sector workers did not receive the financial stimulus, and yet the highest share (about 59%) of them lost their livelihoods (FKE, 2021). Similarly, in Senegal, the informal sector, despite comprising a higher share of workers, also did not benefit from the stimulus, and yet 42% of these workers lost their jobs, compared to only 8% in the formal sector (Balde et al. 2020).

Therefore, while these measures had good intentions, they further exacerbated inequalities.

These policies did not benefit the most vulnerable who needed them the most. In turn, this exacerbated poverty and inequality in these countries, particularly in cities. Such policies and their implementation are not just, because they are not accessible to those who are most in need. Thus, it is vital that the cities and countries, in general, ensure that the poor are better targeted in order to reduce inequality and that the *Urban Invisibles* have similar opportunities as everyone else. Only by doing so will there be an avenue to ensuring that cities are just.

Targeted policies addressing the needs of the most vulnerable are critical to curbing inequalities and ensuring that cities are just.

³² KNBS (2020). Quarterly Gross Domestic Product Report. Third Quarter, 2020. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpo=quarterly-gross-domestic-product-report-third-quarter-2020>



Case Study: Access
to Basic Education
as a Public Good

04

4.1 Conceptual Framework

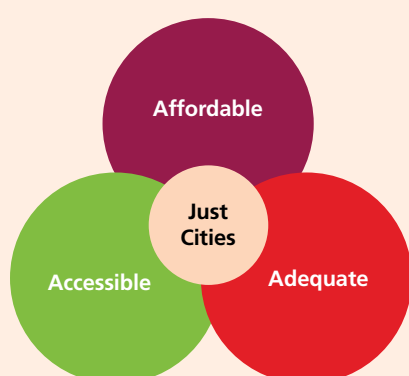
A good is considered public is if it meets two main conditions

- 1) It is nonexcludable and
- 2) Nonrivalrous.³³

Education can be termed a public good as it meets both conditions, where a community can use the good without directly paying for it, such as the case where citizens pay taxes, which serves to fund the good and thus, it can be enjoyed by everyone (nonexcludable), and when one person consumes the good, it does not diminish the ability of another person to consume it (nonrival).

Both Kenya and Senegal have laws and policies in place that theoretically place basic education as a public good, where everyone has a right to compulsory free basic education, making the good nonrival and nonexcludable. However, in practice, access to education is not free. With this consideration of the local context and using the official definition of a public good, this section investigates access to education using three lenses: is the access to education affordable (nonexcludable), physically accessible (nonrival), and adequate (good quality) to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles. This third lens of adequacy (quality) is critical because the fulfillment of the other two conditions (nonrival and nonexcludable) does not imply that the quality of education as a public good is acceptable and truly beneficial to everyone. More specifically, Figure 4 below shows the conceptual framework to be used for the analysis of education as a public good.³⁴

FIGURE 4:
The Three A Inclusive Framework



Access to education as a case study is being studied within the *three A's inclusive framework*,³⁵ which includes **Accessibility, Affordability, and Adequacy (quality)**. Within this framework, public goods that are physically accessible, affordable, and adequate in terms of good quality are termed as Just. The relationship between the 3A's can be visualized upside down, where only a few urban citizens can experience all the three A attributes, while most urban residents cannot experience all the three As. In most cases, urban residents can physically access these services, but the services are neither affordable nor of acceptable quality, and this is termed as being unjust.

This "three A inclusive" framework will be used as a basis for the analysis of education as a public good, with a focus on the Urban Invisibles, who are defined as "key recipients of injustice with no means of escaping from it" (FES, 2020). If the provision of education does not meet these conditions on the merit of the three lenses, then its provision is not Just. For instance, the private sector would be one such avenue that excludes Urban Invisibles, as such a good is usually not affordable nor physically accessible to all citizens.

³³ Paul A. Samuelson, "The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 36, no. 4 (1954): 387–89.

³⁴ This paper does not analyze the different curriculums offered by the schools. Instead, it analyzes the provision of basic education in terms of the three pillars of just city highlighted above.

³⁵ This framework was developed by Aroyyo-Aroyyo, F (2021). *Connecting the Dots: People, Jobs, and Social Services*. The World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35719/9781464816765.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

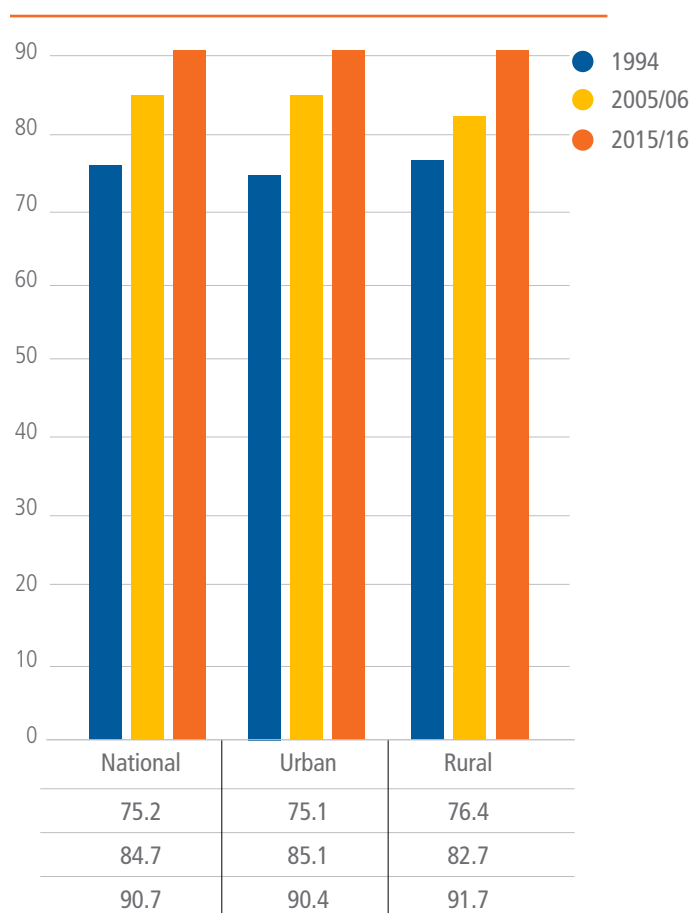
4.2 Findings

Access to education is key to reducing poverty and inequality and improving human development. Studies have shown that access to education can lead to higher productivity, which, in turn, increases social mobility, promotes healthy lives, and gives people more choices, which in turn improves their well-being (World Bank, 2018). Both Kenya and Senegal recognize this fact and have policies and legislations in place to offer free basic education. In Kenya, for instance, the "free primary education program" was introduced in 2003 to boost literacy levels and encourage high enrollment; this was followed by the incorporation of free secondary education in 2008. Also, article 43 (f) of the Kenyan constitution states that "every person has a right to education," and Article 53 states that "every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education." In addition, the Basic Education Act of 2013 also provides a legal framework for operationalizing the law to ensure every Kenyan can access basic education (Mulinya & Orodho (2015)).³⁶ Similarly, Senegal has constituted a law on education (Article 3 of Law N° 2004-37 (43), which allows all children up to 16 years of age to attend school free of charge.³⁷

The introduction of these laws has been instrumental in increasing enrolment rates in schools. As of 2015, Senegal witnessed an 18% increase in gross enrolment from 2000 at 69.3% to 2015 at approximately 85%, and Kenya witnessed an increase of 10% within the same time period.³⁸ Regionally, in Kenya, the attendance is highest in rural areas at 91.7% compared to urban areas at 90.4%, while in 2005, the rate was highest in urban areas (Figure 5). Unfortunately, nonattendance is higher among the poor, with an attendance rate of 87.2% compared to non-poor at 93.4% in 2015/16 (KNBS, 2020).

FIGURE 5:

Proportion of individuals attending school at national and regional levels (ages 6-18), Kenya
Source: *Inequality trends and diagnostic in Kenya (2020)*



In Senegal, the enrolment rates have been highest in urban areas compared to rural areas, but these rates are not optimal. Despite education being compulsory, the net attendance rate in primary school stands at 53% overall. Attendance is higher in urban areas, at approximately 70%, compared to rural areas, at 42%. In secondary school, this rate is even lower, at approximately 32% overall, where urban areas account for 43.4% and rural areas for 22% (ANSD, 2021).

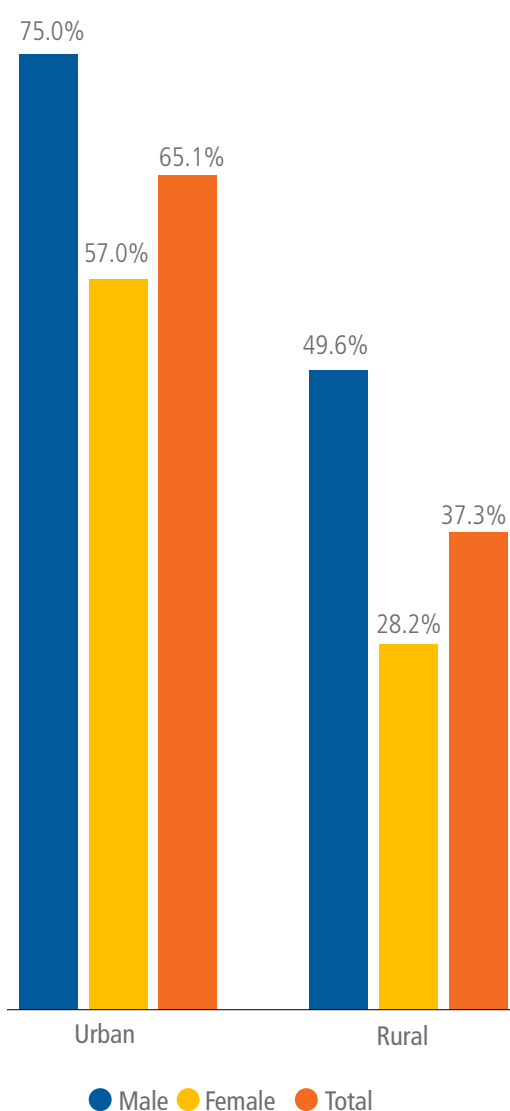
³⁶ This paper does not analyze the different curriculums offered by the schools. Instead, it analyzes the provision of basic education in terms of the three pillars of just city highlighted above.

³⁷ US Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs. (2014).

³⁸ Data is from the World Bank Indicators. Kenya was at 93% in 2000 compared to 103.7% in 2015.

In addition, the census data shows that the literacy rate is at 51.8% for the country. Literacy rates are higher in urban areas, at 65.1%, compared to 37.3% in rural areas (Figure 6). Also, males have a higher literacy rate both in urban and rural areas, with males at 75% in urban areas compared to females at 57%. Even among urban areas, regional differences exist, with the capital Dakar having the highest literacy rate of 72.3%, compared to other urban regions (Ibid.).

FIGURE 6
Literacy rates in Senegal



4.2.1 AFFORDABILITY

While these laws and regulations have been commendable in increasing enrolment rates in cities, their operationalization has been impacted by challenges. Interviews with key informants, as well as review of existing literature, suggest that even though education is termed as free, in practice, it is not affordable, especially to the poor in Nairobi and Dakar, where fees are set up by schools, thus increasing costs. These fees are not always regulated by the government as such, and tend to be hefty for low-income earners. This notion is corroborated by the census reports in both countries. In Kenya, lack of finances was the most common reason for dropouts, followed by illness and lack of interest (KNBS, 2020b), while in Senegal, lack of interest and financial reasons were also the leading reason for dropouts in primary schools, while for secondary school, the main reason was failing exams, and work, followed by a lack of interest.

These laws have also led to the proliferation of private schools, especially in Kenyan urban slums, further exacerbating inequalities. Since the introduction of Free Primary Education, public schools have been struggling to keep up with the demand—for example, there are only four public primary schools in the Kibera informal settlement in Nairobi, despite the high population in the area³⁹—and as a result, low-cost private schools have mushroomed (Malenya, 2020).

“Even though education is termed as free, in practice, it is not affordable, especially to the poor in Nairobi and Dakar.”

39 There is a total of 147 primary schools in Kibera, out of which only four are public, translating to 63 students per teacher. http://openschoolskenya.org/static/blog-images/kibera_schools_a1_final.pdf

The schools promise to offer better facilities, where the public schools have fallen short. In turn, this has led to approximately 60% of the urban slum children attending these schools with the hope for a better future.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, this proliferation by the private sector is unplanned and not well-regulated as most are not registered with the government. The lack of registration of these schools suggests that their operations are closed out, and they do not receive funding from the Free Primary Education policy. In fact, studies have shown that these pro-poor-low-cost schools charge approximately double the fee charged by so-called free primary schools (Malenya, 2020).

The proliferation of private schools has further exacerbated urban inequalities.

While private schools in Kenya were meant to release more resources for public schools, such schools tend to be very expensive and exclude the poor. In addition, the low-cost private schools in the urban informal settlements are further creating more inequalities even within these settlements. First, the fees posed by these schools are relatively high, and the parents have to struggle to pay the fees, denying them and their children the basic necessities such as good nutrition, which is key to the development of a child. In addition, the fact that most of these schools are not registered means that the schools cannot benefit from the funding of the Free Primary Education policy. As such, the children who are sent to these schools are excluded from receiving these funds, and yet these children are the most in need. In this case, Free Primary Education as a policy is failing to meet its promises to the poor. For instance, a key informant stated that investment for education is always for the elite, as education has been privatized.

“Education...there is the public system. Most students today are in private schools in Dakar. Public schools used to be the best... There's been the privatization of education...Public policies are still linked to colonialism. The system is unequal. All the investment is for the elite. All Senegalese who have enough resources go to private schools” (Key informant, Dakar).

Parents' inability to pay school fees usually leads to missed classes and further discrimination within the classes for the urban poor.

In addition to lack of fees, if parents are unable to buy school uniforms in Nairobi's informal settlements, their children are usually asked to sit at the back of the class, which could host 100 students, or sometimes sent home to get the fees and uniform. In fact, an analysis of the Kenyan education sector in urban areas shows that the sector has been plagued by many challenges, including the lack of adequate resources, which make school impose levies on parents to cushion themselves. The result is that learners are sent home until they are able to pay the required fees and levies (usually for extracurricular activities or maintenance of school infrastructure) and, as such, have no recourse as the government does not impose any penalties on schools that do so. In turn, this means that the poor suffer the most. Discussions with a key informant who has deeper insights into the school systems revealed that the Kenyan government allocates approximately KSH. 1000 (approx. US\$10) for each student in school per year. This is barely enough to cater for schools' needs, including paying teachers. In turn, this forces the school to charge extra fees in order to keep up with the demand to provide quality education.

40 APHRC. (2015). It is Time the Ministry Included Slum Children in the Free Education Bonanza. <https://aphrc.org/blogarticle/its-time-ministry-included-slum-children-in-the-free-education-bonanza/>

4.2.2 ADEQUATE: QUALITY

“The Government allowed the private sector to dominate. We have more private institutions, and the private sector is doing better than the Government schools. The Government is supposed to set the standard, but they do not; they have no monitoring mechanism to check the quality of education.” (Key Informant, Nairobi).

The lack of adequate resources and congestion calls to question the quality of education offered by public institutions in Dakar and Nairobi. Literature shows that understaffing and overcrowding are major issues for urban schools in Kenya, where classes meant to hold 80 students have doubled, with the same teachers handling this expansion (Oranga, et al., 2020). In turn, the quality of education is compromised. The key informants expressed disappointment in the government, stating that it has no political will to improve education and has failed to set up monitoring mechanisms that would help improve the quality of education.

Overcrowding coupled with many strikes in public schools create the perception that private schools offer a better quality of education. In Dakar, in addition to overcrowding of classes at approximately 90 students, key Informants mentioned that there are many strikes in public schools, which has also led parents into believing that education in private schools is better. In fact, many youth do not see the need to go to school, as they do not see any prospects of getting jobs in the future, so they see education as a waste of money and time. This notion is also corroborated in the report by the National Agency for Statistics, which states that the working population is made up of uneducated people, at 52.7%. Regionally, the share is higher in rural areas, at 72.5%, of the uneducated, compared to urban areas, at 45.5%.

In Dakar, the share of the uneducated working population is 24.6%. In Kenya, there have been cases of school children burning down schools because they feel that their grievances are not being addressed.⁴¹ Unfortunately, these schools usually cater to the poor as the wealthy take their children to private schools with more resources.


“People don’t believe the quality of public schools is good. People take their kids to private schools, and also, there are a lot of strikes in public schools. Also, people don’t have perspectives for future employment. They don’t believe in schools; they think it is a waste of time and money.” (Key informant, Senegal).

The lack of resources and overcrowding have led to many parents pulling their children from public to private schools, yet they can barely afford them, and the quality of these schools is unclear. A Friedrich Ebert Stiftung survey in 2021 in Kenya showed that urban residents believe that the private sector is key to service provision (FES, 2022). While this belief is generally true, reflected in the proliferation of private schools, some of the pro-poor low-cost schools only meet the minimum certification requirements and still charge much more than the public schools in Nairobi. It is estimated that some parents can pay up to 40% of their income to these schools.⁴² This trend suggests that the policies put in place by the Kenyan government to offer Free Primary Education policy is leading to further inequalities between the poor and the wealthy.

“Understaffing and overcrowding are major challenges for schools in Nairobi, while overcrowding and strikes in public schools plague Dakar.”

41 Cooper, E. (2021). Kenyan Students Keep Setting their schools on Fire. Where's the Alarm. African Arguments. <https://africanarguments.org/2021/12/kenyan-students-keep-setting-their-schools-on-fire-where-s-the-alarm/>

42 Shiundu, A. (2019). Dissatisfaction with “Free” Primary Education. <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/kenya-even-poor-parents-send-their-kids-private-schools>



"Private schools do not always offer quality education yet charge high fees, further disenfranchising the Urban Invisibles"

In Senegal, a similar situation is seen where private schooling has led to more urban inequalities, where only the wealthy have access to good quality education, suggesting that free basic education does not benefit the Urban Invisibles (Grysole, 2018). Key informants also highlighted these problems by stating that the very wealthy individuals are able to send their children to well-resourced schools, while the poor do not have many opportunities within the public school systems due to the challenges of inadequate funds to run the schools. In this case, the wealthy receive a very good quality education compared to their poor counterparts, which is not just.

4.2.3 PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

“Sometimes they build shelter for children to study in. Issue in accessibility – rainy season inundated. Some schools cannot be assessable because of the floods or water on the way. Also, water and toilets are shared between boys and girls and is a problem for girls to access.” (Key informant, Senegal).

Physical accessibility of schools can be challenging depending on where families live in urban areas. In Nairobi, some key informants stated that informal settlements in Nairobi have many private schools provided by NGOs, but do not have many public schools. In fact, a search of schools in Kibera shows that out of over 147 primary schools in the area, only four have been classified as public schools.⁴³ And, as earlier indicated, these private schools charge more than the public schools, making them unaffordable as families have to struggle to pay the fees. In Senegal, physical access is sometimes impacted by the weather.

For instance, heavy rains in Dakar usually prevent students from physically accessing schools, and as such, these students can potentially fall behind during the rainy seasons. In addition, the physical infrastructure in schools is limiting, where bathrooms are shared between girls and boys, which potentially makes it hard for girls to attend school during their monthly menses due to fear of being ridiculed by the opposite gender.

Most of the public schools do not cater to the physically disabled. Many schools are not designed to cater to the physically disabled, making their access to educational facilities a major challenge. In addition, while the education policies have focused on income inequality and the rural-urban divide, policies on children with disabilities are lacking. Yet education for these children is key to their development and future livelihood success (Moyi, 2017). The lack of physical accessibility leads to low enrollment rates for these children. Some disabled children cannot access schools because of lack of wheelchairs, and the schools cannot accommodate them due to a lack of infrastructure facilities that cater to the disabilities. Also, only very few teachers have been trained to cater for children with disabilities (Battle, 2020). The combination of these factors that lead to inequalities based on physical attributes makes most schools unjust.

There is also a rural-urban divide, where schools in urban areas have more access compared to rural areas. Research has shown that while the majority of the students live in rural areas, as Kenya is yet to fully urbanize, these schools lack adequate funds. In turn, they experience shortages in school supplies such as books. In addition, rural children often have to walk several kilometers to access schools (Ibid.).

“Heavy rains prevent physical access to schools in Dakar.”

⁴³ Open school. http://openschoolskenya.org/static/blog-images/kibera_schools_a1_final.pdf

In Senegal, key informants state that most education centres are located in Dakar, even though most people still live in rural areas. As such, to access some of these schools, such as higher education, many have to travel to Dakar and leave their families behind. This causes a strain for the family as they have to find accommodation for their children and provide for them as they attend school, yet most of the families are already struggling to provide for the families.

4.2.4 EFFECT OF COVID-19

In addition to these existing challenges, Covid-19 has further increased inequality in access to education. Both the Senegalese and the Kenyan governments tried to offer lessons online or through broadcasting. Unfortunately, due to high rates of poverty, many students were unable to access these services. In Kenya, key informants stated that the wealthy in Nairobi were able to hire private tutors, something the poor couldn't afford. A Kenyan Economic Update (2020) publication shows that only one in ten households had access to their teacher during the pandemic, with the highest share in urban areas, at 21%, compared to rural areas, at 7%.

While the Ministry of Education provided many platforms for home learning, most of these platforms were not successful, with only radio reaching 9% of students in rural areas and 10% of students in urban areas. This limited access to education and teachers has lasting effects that can hinder the growth of human capital. In addition, now that school is back in session and to curb the spread of Covid-19, students have to sit outside of class in the slums and are not allowed to share textbooks, something which used to happen pre-Covid-19. In turn, children without textbooks are lost in class with no reference points, which exacerbates inequality.

“Wealthy parents could either hire private tutors or have resources for the children to access online classes, while the urban poor could not, and as such, their children were left behind.”

Similarly, in Senegal, the government tried to air lessons through television, but not all children had access. However, private schools had online classes, and the parents of such students were able to afford the resources to ensure they did not fall behind. As such, these students were more privileged. A publication on the effect of Covid-19 shows that only 4.5% of the students had contact with their teachers during the closure of schools in Senegal. In turn, this led to many repetitions as most students were unable to pass their exams to proceed to the next grade. Unsurprisingly, repeaters have not increased much in private schools, suggesting these schools managed the pandemic well (Mbaye, 2021).

“Private schools had online programs but not public schools. The government tried to do some programs on TV, but if you did not have a TV, you could not access it. So, children in private school are more privileged.” Key Informant Senegal.

4.2.5 SUMMARY

This section has shown that access to education is not “just” in both Nairobi and Dakar, both of which characterized by the lack of affordability, accessibility, and adequacy. These challenges show the need to have reforms to ensure that education is truly accessible to all, including the Urban Invisibles. Now, more than ever, the pandemic has shown the extent to which poverty and inequality can disenfranchise the poor and the need for inclusive policies, political will, and implementing mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind. Access to education is particularly important because it determines how productive a city can be. More educated citizens would have access to more secure jobs, increasing productivity and overall economic development and human well-being in these cities.

What are good or inclusive policies if they cannot be adequately implemented? Institutional capacity, political will, and well-defined implementation mechanisms can contribute towards just cities.



One such reform is the need to provide adequate budgeting to ensure public schools have the necessary resources to operate effectively. There is a need to ensure more resources in the government-owned public schools to ensure all children benefit from the Free Primary Education policies. The resources include providing books and other physical attributes such as desks, offering proper training to teachers, including how to address disabilities, and offering adequate salaries, among others. This would improve both the adequacy and affordability of schools, in turn preparing the children, especially the urban poor, to be responsible citizens without further pushing their families into poverty.

In addition, there is a need to regulate the mushrooming of private sector schools, as some have turned into profit-making

schemes that exploit the Urban Invisibles.

The lack of regulation has led to manipulation of the citizens by the so-called low-cost private schools as their quality of education is not well monitored or assessed. In fact, research shows that some of these schools aim to maintain the "status quo of the informal settlements, including the fact that these areas are hard-to-reach, in terms of provision of education, owing to the fact that they live in unplanned settlements or because of their insecurity."⁴⁴ Regulations would also ensure that the private sector doesn't manipulate the poor and that private education is of good quality, accessible, and affordable to the poor. Above all, there is a need to develop adequate implementation mechanisms for Free Basic Education policies to ensure that these policies are well implemented and that everyone benefits, making cities just.



Discussion:
Summary of
Findings

05

There are several key overarching challenges and bottlenecks that need to be addressed to improve service delivery of public services and reduce the inequality that perpetuates poverty. These overarching challenges are discussed below.

Failing to plan for urbanization is planning to fail, which will further exacerbate the situation of the urban poor. As discussed above, both cities are urbanizing at a high rate, and while the share of urban population is lower in Nairobi compared to Dakar,⁴⁵ the city hosts most of its population in informal settlements. In addition, urbanization in both cities is characterized by rural exodus and not urban pull, suggesting that these cities have not witnessed the structural transformation characterized by high productivity. Instead, the cities are characterized by high informality and the services sector, which tend to have lower productivity. In turn, such cities cannot witness adequate growth to reduce poverty. In addition, the moderate growth experienced by the cities only benefits a few individuals, further widening the inequality gap. Within this backdrop, both cities are also characterized by a young population who are uneducated and lack access to basic services, such as healthcare and sanitation. The combination of all these factors paints a very dire situation that needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency.

The lack of investment in the youth will ultimately minimize the opportunities for these cities to achieve demographic dividends from a demographic transition. In Senegal, the youth population that is not in “education, employment, or training” is at approximately 33% of the total population, while in Kenya, this population is at 20%.⁴⁶ In addition, in Kenya, the youth account for 29%, while those who are below 15 years old (youth of tomorrow) account for 39% of the population,⁴⁷ and in Senegal, the population between ages 15 and 34 years account for approximately 34% of the total population.⁴⁸ While the two countries have a high share of young people, their governments are not ensuring that this population has adequate education, and yet education has the ability to reduce multigenerational poverty and improve people’s well-being.

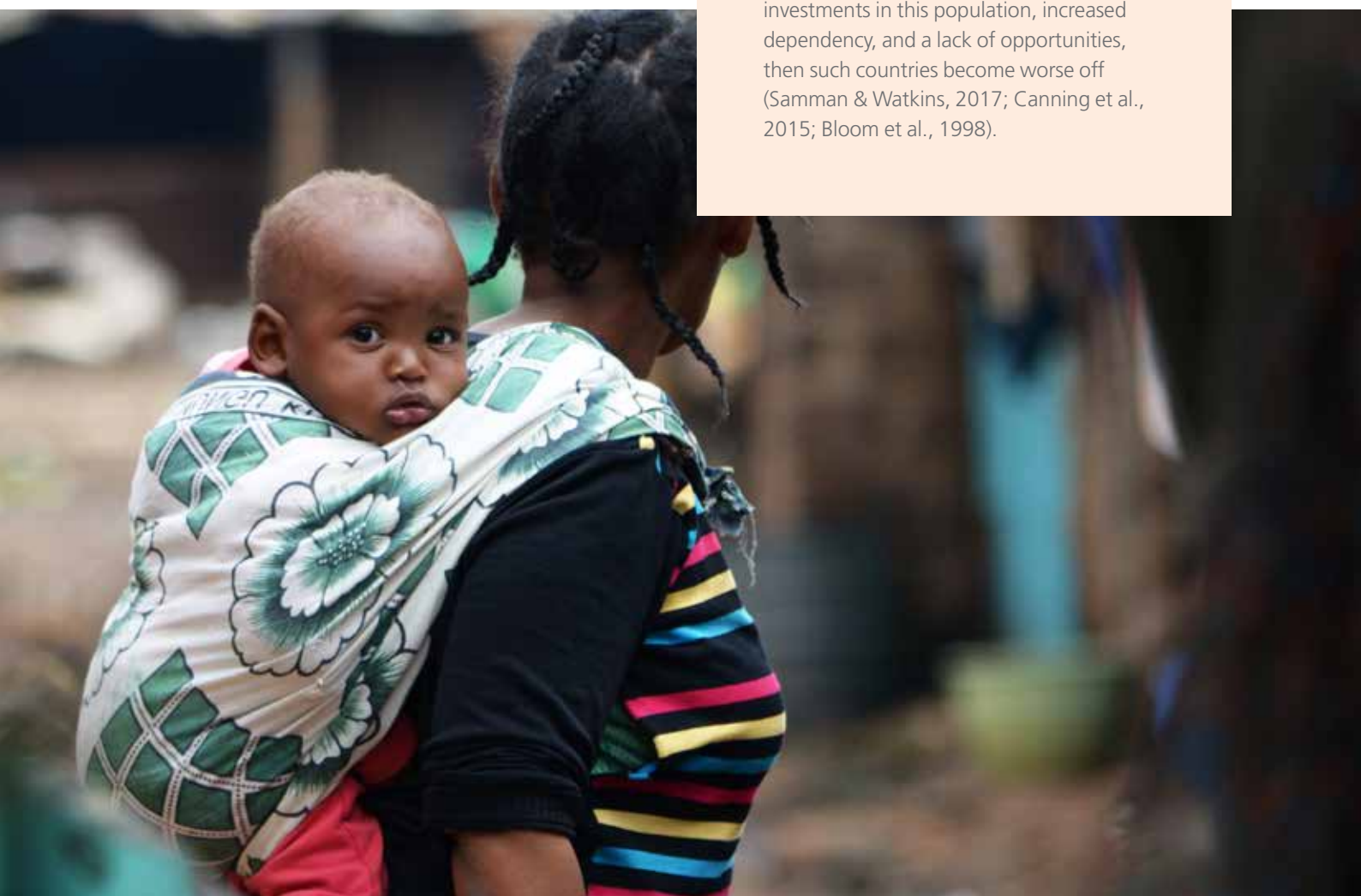
Fighting inequality is a generational battle, and the young play a significant role in this fight, especially in cities that would drive a demographic transition.

⁴⁵ As indicated in the above section, Nairobi hosts approximately 33% of the total urban population in Kenya, while Dakar hosts approximately 50% of the total urban population in Senegal.

⁴⁶ The World Bank (2022). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SU.UEM.NEET.ZS?locations=SN-KE>

Catering for this population and ensuring they are well educated will help make these cities and countries more just. Above all, as the cities and countries invest in this population, it is also paramount that it creates opportunities for the population by ensuring that the cities can drive economic growth and have enough job creation opportunities for the youth to contribute to. These cities can witness a demographic transition with high urbanization rates, higher human capital, and opportunities. In turn, this will help make the cities just by giving all children and youth equal opportunities and ensuring they are well-prepared for the future.

A **demographic transition** occurs when both fertility and mortality rates decrease as a country develops, which generates a shift from high to low dependency ratios, which then accelerates human development (Samman & Watkins, 2017). As child mortality declines, followed by low fertility rates, a youth bulge is created, with fewer dependents. This then creates an opportunity for "demographic dividends" or a "demographic bomb." The dividends occur when policymakers invest in this population where there are opportunities to absorb this population, thereby boosting productivity and economic growth. Conversely, if there are inadequate investments in this population, increased dependency, and a lack of opportunities, then such countries become worse off (Samman & Watkins, 2017; Canning et al., 2015; Bloom et al., 1998).



47 NCPD. (2020).

48 According to projections by ANSD (2020), the total population stands at 16.7 million, and the population between the ages 15 to 34 stands at approximately 5.6 million. https://investinsenegal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport-sur-la-Population-du-Sngal-2020_03022021-1.pdf

The lack of resources in education service provision disproportionately affects the urban poor and creates unjust cities. Key stakeholders in both countries have expressed the challenge of understaffing in schools, lack of books and other physical attributes such as desks, lack of skills among teachers, and a lack of adequate salaries among teachers. For instance, in Kenya, the educational facilities lack basic items such as textbooks, especially within the schools in urban slums. Also, all schools ask parents to pay some fees to help run the schools and pay salaries. This further disenfranchises the poor who cannot afford the fees charged or textbooks. In Senegal, similarly, there are not enough resources in schools to provide quality education, so most graduates are unemployable. In turn, many people do not see the need to pursue an education as they cannot quantify the value of education. It is, therefore, prudent that students are well-counseled and prepared to attend school while at the same time providing resources to ensure these schools provide quality services.

The lack of adequate resources goes hand in hand with a lack of adequate budget allocation. Many key stakeholders in Kenya expressed concern about the lack of adequate budget allocation to the devolved⁴⁹ county governments, despite the implementation of devolved governments. It is argued that most of the budget remains at the central levels, paralyzing the county governments as they are unable to cater to their populations. This lack of budgeting is characterized by the lack of adequate public schools and their inability to manage the intake due to the implementation of the laws and policies of free basic education in both countries. This, in turn, leads to mushrooming of private schools, some of which further exploit the Urban Invisibles, leading to unjust cities.

While the private sector has been instrumental in complementing the public sector, there is a lack of oversight, especially in poor urban areas, perpetuating intra-urban inequalities. In the education sector, there is an influx of the private sector, which complements services provided by the government. Usually, this sector is not accessible to the poor, as they charge hefty fees for their services—in both cities, the private sector, which offers better education facilities, is unaffordable to the urban poor. However, as discussed above, those that are affordable are not well-regulated and are manipulating the poor in some cases. In turn, this further perpetuates inequality, leaving the *Urban Invisibles* with no recourse and leading to unjust cities.

A lack of political will was also raised as a major challenge in the provision of services. This is especially visible in budgeting, policy oversight, and procurement processes. Free primary education was implemented to ensure everyone has a right to compulsory and good quality education; however, this has not been the case, mainly due to the failures by the government to offer oversight and ensure that the policy is well implemented. For instance, the government has allowed the proliferation of low-cost private schools in poor urban settlements. The private schools have incentives such as tax breaks and low interest start loans meant to help allocate more resources to the public schools, which is not the experience observed (Malenya, 2020). Instead, this lack of oversight has further expanded the gap between the wealthy and the *Urban Invisibles*.

49 The constitution of Kenya (2010) established 47 counties as lower-level government in charge of service provision, including education.



Is free basic education a failed promise?

The failure to adequately translate the policy into an implementation framework that would benefit everyone, including the Urban Invisibles, shows a lack of political will.



The pandemic has further increased inequality between the wealthy and the urban poor. The lack of resources for most children, especially those from a disadvantaged background, to access education due to the pandemic has further worsened the gap between the haves and the have-nots, such as the Urban Invisibles. In addition, the reviewed literature showed that although the informal sector employs the majority of the population, the government failed to cushion them during the pandemic, yet focused on the formal sector, which only employs a small portion of the population. In this case, how can cities be termed as just when they cannot cater to all their citizens? How can a city progress when some of its population is left behind? And how can cities be prepared to ensure that they are planned to cater to everyone?

Addressing these challenges will be key to ensuring that the countries, especially cities, can cater to the growing population and that people's well-being improves.

As discussed above, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the poverty reduction process in both countries, especially in the cities. This shows the need to protect the most vulnerable and ensure that they are cushioned from the negative impact of the shocks. With high urbanization rates, it is more prudent to address these challenges adequately. More specially, the lack of education facilities has a big impact on people's well-being and the capacity of these cities and countries to cater to the population, and in turn, reduce poverty and inequality.

How can a city be classified as being just when it cannot cater for its entire population, including the Urban Invisibles?



Pathway to Just
Cities

06

Urbanization is a force that cannot be stopped and everyone has a role to play to ensure the process is well managed.

Plan for urbanization to ensure cities have the capacity to cater for their populations, including the *Urban Invisibles*. As shown above, the presence of high urbanization and low levels of economic growth and productivity, and lack of resources, lead to high inequality rates, especially in cities, that further perpetuate poverty. Urbanization is a force that cannot be stopped. As such, it is paramount that everyone, including the national and county governments and the citizens, plays a role to ensure that this process would indeed benefit the people. Also, while the focus on economic growth is important, it is not adequate to reduce poverty and inequality; as such, more focused interventions on the Urban Invisibles are needed. Within the context of this paper, the following are proposed as key pathways forward that would aid in reducing poverty and inequality and contribute to just cities.

Cater to the informal sector as it is critical to the economy and employs the majority of the population, especially in cities.

This paper has shown that the workers in the informal sector lack access to basic necessities, including social protection, in both cities, and this was made worse by the pandemic. It is critical that both the national and local governments find ways to ensure the workers in the informal sector have social protection and that they are protected during major calamities, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Inclusive policies should be developed,

and where they exist, they should be well implemented to ensure that the informal sector workers are not left behind. In addition, with the consideration that infrastructure is critical to productivity because of the interconnectedness, as both governments plan for urbanization, they should ensure they build inclusive infrastructure that would also help the informal economy actively participate in the economy. For instance, construction of market shades, equipped with sanitation facilities, as well as encouraging the informal workers to form associations to advocate for their issues would be instrumental (FKE, 2021).

Invest in the youth, as they are the future.

The case study has shown that youth are dropping out of school and that there are high levels of unrest that cause destruction and lead to a lack of access to education. These strikes mainly occur in public schools, suggesting that the poor are most affected. In turn, the situation further perpetuates inequality and increases the level of poverty. Thus, it is critical that government institutions at all levels target the youth and children to ensure that they get the basic skills needed to improve human capital. This is critical as unemployment levels are on the rise in both countries, especially among the youth, as shown in the literature above.⁵⁰ Thus, access to education is vital, especially during high levels of urbanization, because it will ensure that the youth can contribute to the economy when the time is right for demographic dividends to be realized. It is, thus, imperative that this population is

well-targeted through programs that would make them appreciate the need for education and its impact on their lives and countries at large. These types of programs should be incorporated in the education curriculum, as well as in churches and other social arenas. This means that all citizens have a role to play to shape the future of these children.

Streamline the implementation mechanisms for service delivery of public goods in cities to cater for the growing population, especially the Urban Invisibles.

The case study on access to education in Dakar and Nairobi has shown that a lack of adequate budget allocations can further disfranchise the poor and expand the inequality gap. More specifically, lack of resources can lead to a lack of affordability as parents are required to pay additional fees despite the Free Basic Education policy. Also, the quality of education is compromised due to overcrowding, lack of skills and motivation among teachers, physical inaccessibility, especially among the disabled, among other factors. As such, the national and city governments should ensure that public schools, especially in informal settlements, get adequate funding to ensure that these schools are better equipped to deliver as promised by the policies in place.

Develop a monitoring mechanism to better regulate the private sector in the provision of education in cities to prevent the growth of inequality.

There is no doubt that the increase in private schools has been instrumental in supplementing service provision in the education sector. However, the lack of mechanisms to better regulate these entities has led to the proliferation of profit-making institutions that claim to provide low-cost quality education, when this is not always the case. In addition, the private

schools that are indeed able to provide good quality education are not affordable to the Urban Invisibles. To address these challenges, the national and local governments should develop and implement monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the private sector delivers good quality service, truly complements the public sector and ensures no child is left behind. Within this monitoring mechanism, it would be critical to ensure all privately operating schools are legally registered with the national government and have all the paperwork to operate. Citizens also have a role to play to hold these schools accountable, so they stay true to their promises.

Above all, political will be critical to reducing inequalities in cities in the wake of rapid urbanization.

Government institutions at all levels have a role in ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background or social-economic status, benefit from public good service provision and have the right to access basic needs, including education.

This paper has shown that the lack of inclusion in the provision of public goods is affected by various structural, political, and a lack of implementation mechanisms that would ensure policies and regulations are well-implemented. For instance, the Urban Invisibles lack social protection, access to (good quality) education and basic necessities, such as food and sanitation, and yet there are policies in place that state that every citizen has a right to live a fulfilled life. It is important to note that policies need adequate accompanying implementation and monitoring mechanisms that are well funded and given priority to ensure that they work as designed. Also, key to this process is the political will and the need to separate the provision of public goods from political interference.

50 In Kenya, unemployment as a percent of the total labor force increased to 5.73% in 2020 from 5.01% in 2019. In Senegal, it increased to 3.63% in 2020 from 2.86% in 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=SN-KE>

Beyond political will, there is a need to ensure that policies are adaptable to the changing context. Key informants and available literature discussed above have shown that structural factors influenced by colonialism define political processes and development. Unfortunately, this can lead to elitism and higher levels of inequalities, where only a few benefit from such structures. Thus, it is critical for government officials and the citizens at large to realize when policies no longer benefit the people being served,

especially the poor. Officials at all levels should invest in research and development, understand the local context and the people they serve, and hold dialogues with citizens to understand what challenges they face. The voice of the citizens, especially the Urban Invisibles, is extremely critical for service delivery in cities. Only by being informed can officials truly serve the people who elected them and keep true to their promises, in turn, ensuring that everyone benefits, including the Urban Invisibles.



References

07

- Abizaid, O. (2019). Building a more inclusive and prosperous Dakar: recommendations from informal workers. Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing. WIEGO. <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/Abizaid-Dakar-Baseline-Report-2019.pdf>
- AfDB. (2018). Africa Economic Outlook 2018. African Development Bank. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/African_Economic_Outlook_2018_-_EN.pdf
- Alkire, S., & Deneulin, S. (2009). The human development and capability approach. In Deneulin, S. & Shahani, L. (Eds) An Introduction to Human Development and Capability Approach, 22-30. London: Earthscan.
- Anand, S. & Sen, A. (1997). Concepts of human development and poverty: A multidimensional perspective. In: Poverty and Human Development: Human Development Papers 1997, pp. 1-20. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Anas, M. (2017). Governance and Economic Growth in Africa. International Journal of Economics and Financial Research. Vol 3. P 323-331. [https://www.arpgweb.com/pdf-files/ijefr3\(12\)323-331.pdf](https://www.arpgweb.com/pdf-files/ijefr3(12)323-331.pdf)
- ANSD. (2021). Enquête harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (EHCVM) au Sénégal. Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie.
- APHRC. (2015). It is Time the Ministry Included Slum Children in the Free Education Bonanza. <https://aphrc.org/blogarticle/its-time-ministry-included-slum-children-in-the-free-education-bonanza/>
- Aroyo-Aroyo, F (2021). Connecting the dots: people, jobs, and social services. The World Bank. Retrieved November 2021 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35719/9781464816765.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>
- Balde et. Al. (2020). Labour market effects of Covid-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa: An informality lens from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal. United Nations University. <https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/abstract/?id=8514>
- Battle, D. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on health care, education, and persons with disabilities in Kenya. https://pubs.asha.org/doi/pdf/10.1044/2020_PERSP-20-00097
- Bojabotseha, T. (2011). Dualism and social formation of South Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure. Vol. 1 (3) - (2011) ISSN: 1819-2025. https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/botshabotseha_tp_article__1_1_3_.pdf
- Bourguignon, F. (2003). The Poverty-Growth-Inequality Triangle. Washington, D.C: World Bank. Retrieved May 2019. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPGI/Resources/342674-1206111890151/15185_ICRIER_paper-final.pdf
- Brookings. (2020). Prerequisite to getting Africa's urbanization "Right." Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/01/21/prerequisites-to-getting-africas-urbanization-right/>
- BMZ. (2021). Economic situation: strong role of small-scale enterprises. Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/senegal/economic-situation-48602>
- Collier, P. (2016). African urbanization. An analytic policy guide. Policy Brief International Growth Centre.
- Cooper, E. (2021). Kenyan students keep setting their schools on fire. Where's the alarm. African arguments. <https://africanarguments.org/2021/12/kenyan-students-keep-setting-their-schools-on-fire-wheres-the-alarm/>
- Datt et al., (2016). Growth urbanization and poverty reduction in India. National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper 21983.
- Deléchat, C & Medina, M. (2020). What is the informal economy? IMF. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/12/what-is-the-informal-economy-basics.htm>
- Development Aid (2021). African Countries Continue to have the Highest Poverty rates in the World. <https://www.developmentaid.org/#!/news-stream/post/84943/highest-poverty-rates-in-africa>

- Dodman, D., Leck, H., Rusca, M., & Colenbrander, S. (2017). African urbanisation and urbanism: implications for risk accumulation and reduction. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. (26), ISSN 2212-4209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2017.06.029>
- FES, (2020). Towards the just city. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Civil Society Urban Development Platform. Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/19072.pdf>
- FES (2022). Towards the just city in Kenya. Just City Series -Kenya Survey. Manuscript in Preparation.
- FKE. (2021). The informal Economy in Kenya. Federation of Kenya Employers and International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_820312.pdf
- Grysole, A. (2018). Private school Investments and Inequalities: Negotiating the future in Transnational Dakar. Cambridge University press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/private-school-investments-and-inequalities-negotiating-the-future-in-transnational-dakar/CC37F6C175E36C85408E61053E747723>
- ILO. (2020). Diagnostic De L'économie Informelle Au Sénégal. Organisation internationale du Travail. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/--protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_735752.pdf
- Jedwab, R., & Vollrath, D. (2015). Urbanization without growth in historical perspective. Working Papers 2015-7, The George Washington University, Institute for International Economic Policy. Retrieved March 2018. <https://www2.gwu.edu/~iiep/assets/docs/papers/2015WP/RemiJedwabIIWP20157.pdf>
- Sukkoo, K. (2009). Spatial inequality and economic development: theories, facts, and policies. In *Urbanization and Growth*, (Eds) Spence, M., Annez, P.C. & Buckley, R. M. pp 134-166. Washington, DC: Commission on Growth and Development. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2582/470610PUB0Urba1010FICIALOUSE0ONLY1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- KNBS, (2019). Economic Surveys. Kenya Bureau of Statistics. <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/119074/Kenya-National-Bureau-of-Statistics-Economic.pdf>
- KNBS, (2020). Inequality trends and diagnostics in Kenya 2020. A Joint Report of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics on Multidimensional Inequality. Kenya Bureau of Statistics. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Inequality-Trends-and-Diagnostics-in-Kenya-Report.pdf>
- KNBS, (2020b). Kenya comprehensive poverty analysis: children, youth, and women in focus. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343601594_Kenya_Comprehensive_Poverty_Report_Children_youth_womenmenelderly_From_national_to_county_level
- KNBS, (2020c). Quarterly gross domestic product report. Third Quarter, 2020. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmprom=quarterly-gross-domestic-product-report-third-quarter-2020>
- Lall, S. V., J. Vernon, H., and Venables, A. J. (2017). Africa's Cities: Opening Doors to the World. World Bank, Washington, DC. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25896/211044ov.pdf>
- Malenya, F. L. (2020). Basic education provision in Kenya's urban informal settlements. In J. Keengwe (Eds.), *Handbook of research on diversity and social justice in higher education* (pp. 308-332). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-5268-1.ch018>
- Mbaku, J. (2021). Deepening Good Governance. Inclusion, Democracy, and Security. Foresight Africa. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ForesightAfrica2020_Chapter2_20200110.pdf
- Mbaye, et. al. (2021). What happened to Senegalese students after the Covid-19 school closure. Centre for Global Development <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-happened-senegalese-students-after-covid-19-school-closure>

- Moreno-Monroy, A. I., & Veneri, P. (2018). Introduction. *Divided cities: Understanding intra-urban inequalities* (pp. 13–18). Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Moyi, P. (2017). School participation for children with disabilities in Kenya. *Sage Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499917740654>
- Mulinya & Orodho (2015). Free Primary Education Policy: Coping Strategies in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080614.pdf>
- Nafula et. al. (2020). Poverty and Distributional Effects of Covid-19 on Households in Kenya. AERC Working Paper. African Economic Research Consortium. https://media.africaportal.org/documents/03_Kenya-Covid-19-Nov-29.pdf
- NCPD, (2020). The State of Kenya Population. Zero harmful Practices – Accelerating the Promise of ICPD 25. National Council for Population and Development. https://kenya.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/state_of_kenya_population_report_2020.pdf
- OECD, (2007). Transport, urban form and economic growth. Conclusion of Round Table 127. https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/rt137e_0.pdf
- OECD, (2018), *Divided Cities: Understanding Intra-urban Inequalities*, Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264300385-en>
- OECD, (2020). Africa urbanization dynamics 2020: Africapolis, mapping a new African geography. *West African Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b6bccb81-en>
- Onsomu (2021). The Impact of Covid-19 on Industries without smokestacks in Kenya: The Case of Horticulture, ICT, and Tourism Sectors. African growth Initiative Brookings <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/21.07.27-Kenya-Covid-Update.pdf>
- Oranga, A. B. (2020). The role of urbanization in African human development: A cautionary tale. Doctoral Dissertation, The New School, New York.
- Oranga, J., Obuba, E., & Nyakundi, E. (2020). Education as an instrument of poverty eradication in Kenya: successes and challenges. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8, 410-424. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2020.89031>
- Oxfam. (2019). A Tale of Two Continents- Fighting Inequality in Africa. Oxfam International. https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-tale-of-two-continents-fighting-inequality-africa-030919-en.pdf
- Page, J. et. al. (2020). Urban Economic Growth in Africa. A framework for Analyzing Constraints to Agglomeration. Brookings https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20.09.28_urban_economic_growth_in_africa_FINAL.pdf
- Rodrik, D. (2016). An African Growth Miracle? *Journal of African Economies*. 1-8, Doi: 10.1093/jae/ejw027.
- Saghir, J., & Santoro, J. (2018). Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa. Meeting challenges by bridging stakeholders. Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- Saghir, J. (2017). Sustainable Infrastructure Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A View from the Ground. Institute for the Study of International Development. https://www.mcgill.ca/isid/files/isid/j_saghir_research_to_practice_policy_brief.pdf
- Seck, A. (2020). Poverty Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic-Induced Lockdowns in Senegal: Extent and Implications from a Household Survey. African economic Research Consortium. Working Paper. https://media.africaportal.org/documents/04_Senegal-Covid-19-Nov-29.pdf
- Shimeles, A., & Nabassaga, T. (2017). Why is Inequality High in Africa. Working Paper. African Development Bank Group. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/WPS_No_246_Why_is_inequality_high_in_Africa_A.pdf
- Shiundu, A. (2019). Dissatisfaction with “Free” Primary Education. *Development & Cooperation*. <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/kenya-even-poor-parents-send-their-kids-private-schools>

- Timmis, H. (2018). Jobs in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges. Institute of Development Studies. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5afacd43ed915d0df4e8ce4d/Jobs_in_Kenya.pdf
- Samuelson, P. A., (1954). The pure theory of public expenditure. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 36(4), pp 387–89.
- Turok, I., & McGrahanan, G. (2013). Urbanization and economic Growth: The arguments and evidence for Africa and Asia. *International Institute for Environment and Development*, 25 (2), 465-482. Doi: 10.1177/0956247813490908.
- United Nations, (2015). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Retrieved on Apr 2018. <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Report.pdf>
- UNDP, (2017). Income inequality trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: divergence, determinates and consequences. Odusola, A., Cornia, G., Bhorat, H. & Conceição, P. (Eds.) New York, NY: United Nations.
- UNDP, (2020). Social economic impact of Covid 19 Pandemic. Green Policy Reform. <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/UNDP-rba-COVID-assessment-Senegal.pdf>
- US Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, (2014). Senegal Minimum Advancement. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/560e3e820.pdf>
- UNECA, (2017). An Overview of Urbanization and Structural Transformation in Africa. Economic Report on Africa 2017. https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/chapterimages/chap3_03_0.pdf
- UNICEF, (2020). Analysis of multiples deprivations in secondary cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. UNICEF & UN HABITAT. <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/5561/file/Analysis%20of%20Multiple%20Deprivations%20in%20Secondary%20Cities%20-%20Analysis%20Report.pdf>
- Wan, G. 2012. Urbanization can be good for the environment. Asian Development Bank Institute. <https://www.asiathways-adbi.org/2012/12/urbanization-can-be-good-for-the-environment/>
- World Bank. (2016). Republic of Kenya: Kenya Urbanization Review. World Bank <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/639231468043512906/pdf/AUS8099-WP-P148360-PUBLIC-KE-Urbanization-ACS.pdf>
- World Bank. (2018). Learning to realize education promise. World Development Report. The World Bank Group. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>
- World Bank, (2018). Piecing together the poverty puzzle. Poverty and shared prosperity. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Bank, (2020). Kenya Economic Update: Navigating the Pandemic. The World Bank Group. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/957121606226133134/pdf/Kenya-Economic-Update-Navigating-the-Pandemic.pdf>
- World Bank, (2020b). Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020. Reversals of Fortune. The World bank Group.
- World Bank, (2021). World Bank financing helps to support Senegal in the fight against Covid-19. The World Bank Group Blog. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2021/08/31/world-bank-financing-helps-to-support-senegal-in-the-fight-against-covid-19>
- World Bank (2021). Socio-Economic Impacts of Covid -19 in Kenya on Households. The World Bank Group. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35173/Socioeconomic-Impacts-of-COVID-19-in-Kenya-on-Households-Rapid-Response-Phone-Survey-Round-One.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>



Annex

08

KII Guide

To ground the research, these questions were asked within the framework of accessibility (physical access by all social groups), affordability (is it affordable to all social groups), and adequacy (Services provided at acceptable levels).

1. How just is the distribution of urban public goods in African cities?

- a) How just do you consider that the distribution of public goods (such as access to education and healthcare)?
- b) Does the state provide such goods (education facilities and healthcare) to the residents of the city? Why?
- c) How does the state decide on the geographical location for these public goods?
- d) Do you believe these goods are accessible to all, especially the urban poor (physical, affordable, acceptable)?
- e) In your opinion, what causes divided cities in your country, where one population has more access to these goods than others?

2. Effect of Covid-19 on distribution and access of public goods

- a) How has the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the accessibility and distribution of these public goods?
- b) Which urban population would you say were most affected? And why?
- c) What was done to assist the most affected population during the Pandemic to ensure they accessed the basic services needed to survive?
- d) What do you think could have been done to help the affected population during the Pandemic?

3. How would a more just distribution of urban public goods look like?

- a) In your opinion, how would a more just (accessible, affordable, and acceptable) distribution of these public goods look like, in general?
- b) How would this just distribution look like post the Pandemic?

4. Changes needed to effect a more just distribution and access of public goods.

- a) What needs to be done to achieve a just distribution of these urban public goods?
- b) Which actors should be targeted to support a fairer distribution of public goods, and why?
- c) What kind of reforms (institutional and policy-oriented) would be needed to achieve a more equitable distribution of public goods?

5. Closing Questions: Best practices

**URBAN INVISIBLES POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN AFRICA'S
RAPIDLY GROWING CITIES**

- a) What lessons have you learned from the Pandemic that you believe would impact future planning for the just distribution of urban public goods?
- b) If you had the opportunity to implement three changes to ensure a just city (in terms of accessibility, affordability, and acceptability), what would those changes look like?
- c) Anything else you would like to share with me?

HOW JUST IS ACCESS TO FOOD IN AFRICAN CITIES?

MARCH 2022

Author: Maria Belen Fodde



HOW JUST IS ACCESS TO FOOD IN AFRICAN CITIES?

MARCH 2022

AUTHOR

Maria Belen Fodde
PhD candidate in Public and Urban Policy
The New School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wants to thank Lauren Phillips (MA Candidate in International Affairs at The New School) for her help on the literature review of this paper. She is also grateful to the FES Country Offices for their support and contributions during this work. Finally, but most importantly, she would like to thank the following people for their invaluable input, knowledge, and kindness: Jane Battersby, Charles Simane, Stephen Greenberg, Marc Wegerif, Andile Gcaza, George Wasonga, Wilson Maina, Shalate Teffo, Mike Oranga, and Mary Munyutha.

The working paper *“How just is access to food in African cities?”* was developed between September 2021 and March 2022. The paper discusses significant challenges to the functioning of urban food systems that will continue to grow in relevance in the years to come. Due to the timeframe of the research, the paper does not include updated information on the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on food prices, and the threats this is posing to food security. In addition to COVID-19 and climate change, the war became a new shock that affects food distribution across regions. In May 2022, the FAO Food Price Index showed a 22.8% increase above its value in May 2021. The price of cereals, meat, dairy, sugar, and vegetable oils increased significantly compared to 2021. It is necessary to monitor the variation of these prices and work to put active policies into place that prevent the rise of hunger and food insecurity across the world.



Introduction

01

Food security is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as “access to nutritious and sufficient food for all” (FAO, et al. 2019).



In **South Africa**, food security’s importance has been recognized as a human and a constitutional right. Section 27 of the country’s constitution expresses the right to have access to sufficient food for all the population (Republic of South Africa, 1996).



Its relevance has also been recently highlighted in **Kenya**, where the president has launched the Big Four Agenda that aims at addressing four key issues in the country: affordable housing; universal health coverage; manufacturing; and food security (Presidency of Kenya, 2021).

Access to affordable, good quality food is unequal and limited in Africa. Due to physical barriers, food prices, or the functioning of food systems¹ more broadly, there are groups and communities that have limited access to nutritious and decent meals, which impacts their physical and mental health. Food security in Africa has been undermined by factors such as conflict, climate change, and macroeconomic shocks that result in an increase in food prices and a decline in purchasing power. In 2018, 53.1% of Africa’s population was either moderately or severely

food insecure. By 2021, this number grew to 59.6%, which is significantly higher than the figures for Latin America and the Caribbean (40.9%) and Asia (25.8%) (FAO, et al. 2019, FAO, 2021b). Africa is also the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment (FAO, 2021b). Several African countries have been identified as suffering from food and hunger crises (Global Network Against Food Crises, 2021). It is the region of the world that has been experiencing the largest increase (12.9%) in the cost of a healthy diet² between 2017 and 2019. This impacts differently across the subregions: while Eastern Africa suffered from a 33% increase, Southern Africa saw a 2.1% increase (FAO, 2021b).

Currently, there are two main factors that have exposed the existing limitations of the food systems in these countries and more specifically in their urban areas.



The first is the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which had significant effects on the job market, on the purchasing power of families, and on the logistics around the distribution of food from rural and peri-urban areas to urban areas, and within cities as well.

¹ “Food systems encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and food industries, and the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded” (UN Food Systems Summit 2021, 2021).

² Healthy diet refers to the sustained consumption of macronutrients (proteins, fat and carbohydrates) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) over a period of time (FAO, 2021b)



In 2018, **53.1%** of Africa's population was either moderately or severely food insecure. By 2021, this number grew to **59.6%**.



The second refers to **climate change-related events** such as floods and droughts that are affecting food production, supply and distribution across the African continent.

The four pillars of the Just City in Africa proposed by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's Just City Working Group, is a relevant framework to understand the current conditions of food access and to move forward towards more just and equitable food systems in African urban areas (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2020). The following priorities established for the Just City in a broader sense can also be followed when thinking of policies and strategies that aim at guaranteeing fair and just access to food for all urban dwellers:

- i **dignity**, which focuses on the right of individuals to be respected regardless of their socioeconomic or political status;
- ii **equity** and **diversity**, which aims at the fair distribution of benefits among its citizens and the inclusion and protection of minorities;
- iii **rights** and **responsibilities** of citizens and visitors; and
- iv **democracy**, with collective decisions that prioritize rights, dignity and inclusion.

This implies an equal access to enough, decent food for all sectors of society, not only in terms of affordability or economic access, but also in the empowerment of key actors in the food system, such as street vendors, small retailers, and small-scale farmers. The relevance of these actors relies on their capacity to reach the *urban invisibles* of these cities – as recipients of injustices and lack of recognition they cannot escape – particularly those living in informal settlements or deprived areas. The empowerment of these actors implies the recognition of their rights to produce and trade, facilitating access to licenses and permits for their operations, and supporting their economic activities through the creation and maintenance of spaces to work. When this doesn't happen, as is currently the situation, these key actors become *urban*

invisibles as well, displaced by stronger and larger actors that do not necessarily work for the distribution of food that reaches all, but that is instead profitable.

This working paper looks at the main features of the food systems in the Gauteng City-Region³, South Africa and the city of Nairobi, Kenya, as well as their interactions with rural and peri-urban areas where food production takes place. It explores food security within these cities and the main elements that explain the inequalities in the distribution of affordable and high-quality food among urban dwellers. It identifies the main actors involved in food distribution, as well as the challenges and limitations they face in their operations. Secondly, it focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change as two factors that deepen historic and pre-existing inequalities while posing significant challenges and limitations to the food systems' actors.

The increase in food prices, declining purchasing power and the limitations of street and informal workers to operate during the pandemic, together with the unpredictability of food growth and distribution due to climate-related events, put pressure on these urban food systems. It concludes with reflections that can hopefully contribute to the discussion on a fairer and more just access to food in African cities, while looking at possible changes in food governance, the diversification of the food system, the opening of markets to small-scale producers, and food education and health promotion.

The paper is organized based on the following research questions:

- 1) How just is access to food in African cities?
- 2) What are the main drivers of inequality in food access?
- 3) What are the challenges in achieving a fairer distribution and access to food?
- 4) What are the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change on food distribution?

A set of conclusions and suggestions on possible ways to move forward are presented.

³ The Gauteng-City Region (GCR) is a cluster of cities and towns within and beyond the Gauteng province. Within the province, it includes the cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Germiston, Springs, Alberton, Boksburg, Benoni, Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Krugersdorp, Randfontein and Westonaria. Beyond its boundaries, the GCR includes Rustenburg, Sasolburg, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Witbank, Middleburg and Secunda (GCRO, 2021).



Methodology

02

This paper has looked at two relevant cases of urban food security in Africa: Nairobi and the Gauteng City-Region. For this purpose, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants in each of the cities (six in South Africa and four in Kenya). Key informants were researchers, scholars, civil society representatives, and policy institutes that study inequalities in the food system in these areas and that promote actions for fairer access and distribution of food.

Questions focused on their perceptions around access to food in urban areas, the challenges faced by the actors involved in food distribution, the effects of the COVID-19

pandemic and climate change, the existence of participatory or discussion spaces with different stakeholders, and their impression of possible policy changes to be implemented. Research on secondary data and literature review was also conducted, looking at survey data, previous research studies and relevant statistics to identify the level of food insecurity in these cities, the main actors in food distribution, and the challenges around fair access to food. Data collected from interviews and desktop review research inform this paper.



How just is access
to food in African
cities?

03

Food insecurity and inadequacy in Gauteng City-Region, South Africa, and Nairobi, Kenya.

Africa has experienced high levels of urbanization in the past decades, with an urban population growth of 2000% between 1950 and 2015 (OECD & SWAC, 2020). It is expected that urban growth in Africa will continue to be at a higher rate than other regions in the world.

The level of urbanization across the different sub regions and countries varies. However, these trends are remarkable in the cases of South Africa and Kenya. In South Africa, the level of urbanization has reached 67%, while in Kenya, only 28% of the total population is urban. However, it has an urban average population growth of 4% (The World Bank, 2022). High and rapid levels of urbanization require focusing on the effects that the growth of urban areas will have in the long term in terms of access to services and goods. Among them, there is access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food. The natural growth of the urban population, combined with rural-to-urban migration, represent a decrease in “people that farm”, increasing the number of non-farmers that will still require access to food but who do not produce any (Crush and Frayne, 2014). Key informants for this working paper mentioned the limitations faced in urban areas to promote initiatives related to urban agriculture, mostly due to lack of space and safety.⁴ The effects that larger urban areas will have in the future in terms of access to enough and affordable

food are still unknown, but currently, both countries show the need to focus on the inequalities around their urban food systems to implement policies that prioritize equal access to food products, especially for minorities and excluded groups.

Analyzing food security requires looking at four different dimensions: the physical availability of food, in terms of the level of production and supply distribution; the economic and physical access to food, in terms of affordability and expenditures in relation to perceived income; food utilization, which determines the nutritional status of the consumers as it refers to the quality of the products used and the preparation of meals; and finally the stability of these three dimensions, understanding that for a household to be food secure it should have access to enough, affordable and decent food on a regular basis (FAO, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to identify the challenges and current scenarios around food production and its accessibility, as well as its quality.

⁴ Several urban agriculture initiatives in informal settlements have been mentioned by key informants, such as sack gardening, backyard and high-rise building farming as well as hydroponic farming. They highlighted though the need to promote further actions and support to those who want to undertake them.



South Africa is a large producer of crops and livestock, with a strong flow of exports to other countries (Crush & Frayne, 2014). However, more than 25% of its population was living under the food poverty line (R441 per person per month) in 2015 (STATS SA, 2019). In 2017, out of 16.2 million households, 15.8% (2.5 million) reported having inadequate access to food, while 5.5% (almost a million households) reported having severely inadequate access (STATS SA, 2019). By 2020, the number of moderately or severely food insecure people was 26.3 million (FAO, 2021b), or about 45% of the total population.⁵ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a common global scale to classify the magnitude of food insecurity, found that between September and December 2020, 16% of the population faced high levels of acute food insecurity: 8,175,000 people were classified as in crisis (phase 3), while 1,160,000 were in emergency (phase 4)⁶ (2021). This total of over 9 million people are in need of urgent action to guarantee sustained food access.

Adequate access to food was strongly determined by demographics: black African-headed households had the highest proportion of households suffering from inadequate food access (17.9%), compared to 96.6% of white-headed households who reported having adequate access to food (STATS SA, 2019). At the national level, people living in urban informal areas are at higher risk of hunger (36.1%) than urban formal areas (25.6%). The difference is not only intra-urban: in rural areas, the

proportion of people at risk of hunger is 20.3% in the formal areas, and 32.8% in informal ones (Shisana, et al. 2013). These statistics show that, despite South Africa's capacity to produce food and feed other economies, access to food is a challenge and reflects inequalities between formal and informal areas. They also show differential limitations faced by urban areas compared to rural ones.

When looking at the region of Gauteng, indicators follow the same pattern. In the province of Gauteng, 16% of its population was identified by the IPC as being in a food security crisis or emergency, and urban populations in specific areas such as Diepsloot faced higher levels of food insecurity (IPC, 2021). In the Gauteng-City Region, where between 13.4 million and 16.8 million people lived in 2011 (GCRO, 2021), 36% of respondents in the Quality of Life Survey in 2020/2021 lived below the poverty line (R1,193 per person per month for the Gauteng province), compared to 24% in 2017/2018 (de Kadt, et al. 2021). 52% of households were identified as moderately or severely food insecure, which varied across municipalities: Merafong had 65% of households with food insecurity, while Emfuleni and Rand West had 62% and 60%, respectively (de Kadt, et al. 2021). Black households are most likely to experience severe food insecurity, while white households find themselves in a better position as only 2% of them reported suffering from severe food insecurity (de Kadt, et al. 2021). These racial disparities expose historical inequalities that remained after Apartheid. As will be seen, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these pre-existing inequalities, increasing the prevalence of households that skipped meals and that saw their food expenditures reduced as a result of lack of income and the loss of employment.

South Africa is a large producer of crops and livestock, with a strong flow of exports to other countries (Crush & Frayne, 2014). However, more than **25%** of its population was living under the food poverty line in 2015.

5 FAO defines mild food security as the status when there is some uncertainty regarding the ability to obtain food. Moderate food insecurity is identified when a person has insufficient money or resources to obtain a healthy diet, has uncertainty about the ability to obtain food, and has occasionally skipped meals. Severe food insecurity refers to the status of people that have run out of food or gone on an entire day without eating (FAO, 2022).

6 IPC classifies household food security on a scale from 1 to 5: 1 – None/Minimal; 2- Stressed; 3 – Crisis; 4- Emergency; 5 – Catastrophe. Phase 3- Crisis stands for “households that either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies”. Phase 4 – Emergency is defined as “households that either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation” (IPC, 2022).



In Kenya, out of a total population of 44 million, where more than half are considered poor (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), 68.5% are moderately or severely food insecure (FAO, 2021b). In 2016, 29.9% of Kenyan children under the age of 5 suffered from stunting (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The analysis of urban food security requires paying special attention to the capital city of Nairobi, as a total of 4.9 million people (Nairobi City County, 2018), around 30% of Kenya's urban population, lived in the city in 2015 (Sverdlik, 2021). 70% of its population lives in informal settlements that lack access to basic services, and that are located in only 5% of the total land of the city (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2020). The growth of population density (inhabitants per km²) in some of these informal settlements is extraordinary: between 2000 and 2020, the population density of Huruma increased by more than 760%, in Kibera by more than 500%, and in Mathare more than 470% (Sverdlik, 2021). Poverty and food poverty are, however, less prevalent in this urban area than when looking at rural and urban areas combined. The poverty level in Nairobi County is 16.7%, compared to a 36.1% nationally. The prevalence of food poverty was 16.1% in the County, compared to 21% nationally. The most affected groups are women, elderly people, people with disabilities, and slum dwellers, among others, who become *urban invisibles* in terms of access to food. It should be noted that Nairobi County produces 20% of the food it consumes (Nairobi City County, 2018).

In 2018, a survey of more than 1,400 households in Nairobi City County done by the Hungry Cities Partnership and the University of Nairobi found that 12% of them had experienced lack of food several times, many

times or always (Owuor, 2018). The survey also established that only 29% of surveyed households could be considered food secure. Of the rest, 13% were mildly food insecure, 33% were moderately food insecure and 25% were severely food insecure (Owuor, 2018). Food insecurity had a differential effect across population groups: households in the lowest income quintile had 14 more chances of being food insecure, compared to higher-income households (Onyango, Crush & Owuor, 2021).

In August 2020, the IPC Acute Food Security Analysis in urban areas of Kenya (IPC, 2020) assessed the food security situation and vulnerabilities faced in eight informal settlements in Nairobi, two informal settlements in Mombasa and two informal settlements in Kisumu through a telephone survey. 43% of the population surveyed were facing high levels of food insecurity, with 803,000 respondents in a crisis stage and 267,000 in emergency stage. More than 80% of respondents said that the number of meals consumed in the household had decreased compared to March 2020. The identified key drivers of food insecurity were the increase in food prices and reduced incomes as a result of loss of employment occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic-related lockdowns. In the surveyed settlements in Nairobi, the share of population in the crisis or emergency phase of food insecurity was 35% in Githurai, 50% in Kangemi, 50% in Kawangware, 50% in Mathare, 40% in Kayole, 40% in Dandora, 50% in Kibra, and 35% in Mukuru. As in South Africa, populations in phases of crisis and emergency – together with catastrophe, although not registered in these settlements – require active and continued intervention to receive food assistance.

As seen, Nairobi and the Gauteng-City Region show inequalities in terms of food security, mostly linked to the socioeconomic status of the different groups of urban dwellers. In both cities, and in both countries, there is availability of food either through domestic production or food imports. Access to food, however, depends on the availability of income and the purchasing capacity of households.

In Kenya, out of a total population of **44 million**, where more than half are considered poor, **68.5%** are moderately or severely food insecure



What are the main drivers of food inequality and what are the challenges to achieve fairer access?

04

Nairobi and Gauteng-City region's food systems

The analysis of food insecurity in African cities requires understanding the challenges around food access in urban areas, which are determined by specific urban dynamics.

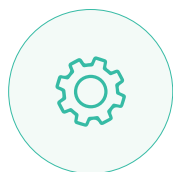
In the first place, urban dwellers rely heavily on income to access food (Chege, et al. 2021). Also, thinking in urban terms requires moving away from an understanding of food insecurity as a rural problem, where the challenge is only located in the production of food, but instead looking at the determinants of inequalities at the city level and the dynamics that might explain them (Battersby, 2012). This is increasingly important not only in the context of growing urbanization levels, but also because of the high levels of food production and the capacity of these national food systems to produce enough food, even to export in the case of South Africa. If this is the case, then limited access to food in urban areas necessarily responds to other challenges that might explain these inequalities. In this sense, it is necessary to look at a variety of elements of the food system, such as actors involved in the distribution, main sources of access to food products, challenges in the logistics of food distribution, policies implemented, and limitations at the production level.

Actors. Though different in some of their dynamics, urban food systems of South Africa and Kenya share common stakeholders involved in the production, retail and distribution of food.

In terms of **production**, there are large and small-scale agricultural and livestock producers working in the rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

The **retail sector** entails a wide variety of actors, including supermarkets or large chain formal retailers, present both in South Africa and Kenya but with stronger impact in South African cities; smaller retailers, including street vendors, informal retailers and *spazas* (small grocery shops) – in the case of South Africa; and the so called “middle-men” in the case of Kenya.

In terms of **assistance** and **distribution** of food to the *urban invisibles*, community, grassroots and faith-based organizations play a significant role in the creation of spaces that guarantee fairer access to food. Finally, the State – at the national and local levels – defines the main policies in relation to production and retail, and contributes or hinders the development of certain activities, such as the ones developed by informal street vendors.



A. PRODUCTION

Large- and small-scale producers. Agricultural and livestock production is divided between larger farms, generally in charge of exports and supplies to large chain retailers, and farmers with a smaller scale of production that predominantly supply to small retailers and the so-called informal retail sector. Between these two groups of producers, there are significant differences and inequalities in relation to their resilience to external shocks (economic, natural events, and biological hazards such as the COVID-19 pandemic); their capacity to influence trade and food policy; the availability of resources to face costs related to supplies such as seeds, water and land; and finally in the products they produce.

In South Africa, the consolidation of food production is evident as only four companies account for 73% of the market share of maize, and 87% of the wheat market (Battersby, Haysom, et al. 2015). The concentration of food production is a result of the deregulation and liberalization policies that started in the 1980s and which have been consolidated since 1994 with the end of Apartheid and the opening of South Africa to international trade. These policies corporatized and concentrated power across the entire food value chain, in terms of production, logistics, manufacturing, and retail (Greenberg, 2017). The main advantage of

In South Africa, the consolidation of food production is evident as only four companies account for **73%** of the market share of maize, and **87%** of the wheat market (Battersby, Haysom, et al. 2015)

these highly corporatized businesses relies on the production level: the more they produce, the lower the price of the products, and the higher the competition with smaller producers (Greenberg, 2017). Large-scale farmers are severely advantaged in comparison to smaller producers in terms of the consolidation of land ownership, the privatization of cooperatives and the expansion of white agricultural interests, reflected in monopoly control (Battersby, Haysom, et al. 2015). As a result, production for smaller and black farmers has become a challenge due to limitations in access to natural resources such as land and water, as well as the food system more broadly due to logistics restrictions and market access.

Both South African and Kenyan small producers face similar challenges that limit their capacity to produce and sell at a lower cost to make food more affordable for urbanites. Those challenges range from limited access to inputs such as fertilizers and seeds, to lack of infrastructure, technical skills advice and support, and the unpredictability of climate, which has suffered from notorious changes in the past decades and has affected crops' growth and livestock raising. This is taking place in a context where Africa is seen as the "new frontier of accumulation", where the narrative identifies the continent as a region that missed out on the first Green Revolution, hindering its capacity to increase agricultural productivity (Mayet, 2016). Thus, investments are done in seeds and infrastructure to increase food production but with a significant focus on agricultural outputs and exports and not necessarily focusing on making food more affordable for those in need, particularly in South Africa. At the same time, the Green Revolution supposes the challenges to face the costs of fertilizers and pesticides, and to follow rules regarding the exchange of seeds that push towards monocrop production (Mayet, 2016).

Regarding seeds, farmers on the continent face significant limitations. More than 80% of seeds in Africa are produced and distributed informally, as the exchange of seeds between farmers is a good source for new and better varieties. The purchase of hybrid seeds is usually not possible for small farmers due to their cost. Maize and crops destined for exports are usually located within the “formal system” (Mayet, 2016). In the case of South Africa, the introduction of GMO seeds poses significant challenges to smaller producers, as they have high requirements, including fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides. This dependency on chemicals for their usage poses financial constraints on smaller farmers, who have less financial margin to face these costs. At the same time, there are concerns about how the current GM-centric agricultural model can help to increase resilience in the food system (Battersby, Haysom, et al. 2015). A key informant in South Africa who is involved in consultancy services for farmers highlighted the need for advice on seeds usage as well as fertilizers to increase and improve production. In Kenya, seeds become a challenge as the exchange of seeds between farmers is discouraged by the government, who seeks a more “formal market” of seeds (Seed Savers Kenya, 2018). In a context of

high variability of climate and its consequential impact on food production, the exchange of seeds could be a useful resource to have a more diverse production and, as a result, be able to face financial and climate shocks. In terms of infrastructure, the poor state of roads hinders the distribution and logistics of food.

In terms of natural resources, land is a contested resource for production as it is concentrated under large agro-business corporations, while small-scale farmers face challenges to access land, or live and produce under the threat of being evicted. With regard to water, its limited access due to climate variability, particularly in the case of South Africa, or the highly restrictive issuance of water licenses challenges production.

Food systems in these cities, as part of wider national contexts of condensed and corporatized systems, need to promote the involvement of smaller-scale producers. Even though these producers are able to distribute their products, one of the main problems identified is the lack of access to land that enables larger and more efficient production of crops and livestock. In addition to this, key informants from South Africa have also mentioned biases against black farmers and producers when accessing the food system. Improved access of small-scale producers in urban access could improve urban dwellers’ access to more affordable food at more convenient locations.

The *urban invisibles* of Gauteng and Nairobi rely significantly on small retailers and vendors to access their food, as will be seen in the following section. At the same time, these traders acquire these products from small-scale producers. Letting these actors in charge of the production, distribution and retail of food become invisibles and unable to participate in the wider food system pushes urban dwellers to only access food through formal, large retailers, who beyond are not always being able to provide the best supply of food, also play a strong role in terms of consumers’ choices and the food environment.





B. RETAIL

Food retail in South Africa and Kenya can be understood as a system that combines formal and informal actors and spaces. Super and hypermarkets are formal retail outlets that offer a large selection of types of processed and ultra-processed foods, as well as cereals, legumes, and fruits and vegetables in smaller quantities. On the informal side of food retail, a wide variety of outlets can be seen in Kenya: kiosks (small, temporary or mobile stands that sell most products in small quantities); mom-and-pop shops (larger than kiosks, offer processed and ultra-processed foods); tabletop vendors or *mama mboga* (small mobile and temporary roadside stands); cereal shops; open-air or wet markets (semi-permanent structures that operate on specific week days and sell fruits, vegetables, cereals, legumes, spices); cooked food street vendors; and informal restaurants (Chege, et al. 2021). In South Africa, the map of informal supply of food retail outlets adds the *spaza* shops, grocery stores that vary in shape and size but that fulfill the role of providing food and sometimes non-food items to residents of townships and settlements (Gastrow, 2022). Street vendors are also relevant actors in the distribution of food.

Supermarkets and large chain retail. In the past decades, rapid rates of urbanization have been one of the enablers for the expansion of supermarket networks in African countries (Weatherspoon & Reardon, 2003). South Africa and Kenya have been two countries on the continent that have experienced a large presence of these services. In South Africa, even though supermarkets were 2% of all food retail outlets, they represented between 50% and 60% of all food retail. In the case of Kenya, supermarkets controlled between 20% and 30% of the retail (Weatherspoon & Reardon, 2003). Supermarkets are a key actor in a highly corporatized and industrialized

agri-food system in South Africa (Greenberg, 2017), and in a country with a medium stage level of supermarket expansion, as in the case of Kenya (Weatherspoon & Reardon, 2003), where between 1995 and 2005 it had grown at an average annual rate of 18% (Neven, et al. 2005).

In the Gauteng region, supermarkets have a significant presence in urban areas, although their presence declines in informal settlement areas, where households rely on so-called informal sources of food distribution. Key informants agree on the fact that supermarkets' expansion continues, pushing smaller enterprises from the market, as they open smaller versions of supermarkets in poorer areas. In the case of Nairobi, although supermarkets are also widely expanded, they serve primarily the interests of the middle class or households with larger purchasing capacity. Lower-income households and residents of informal settlements generally purchase their food from smaller or informal retailers.

Smaller "informal" retailers. The so-called informal sector in these food systems includes the operation of the previously identified stores, as well as street vendors and traders that facilitate access to food to households that are either located at long distances from the "formal retailers", or that can benefit from the purchase of smaller quantities of produce according to their purchasing power (Battersby, 2012). In South Africa, street food traders account for 40% of the informal township economy at a national level (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies 2020). In Kenya, the informal sector employed 11.8 million people compared to 2.4 million employed in the formal sector in 2014 (KENASVIT, 2020).

In South Africa, even though supermarkets were **2%** of all food retail outlets, they represented between **50%** and **60%** of all food retail. In the case of Kenya, supermarkets controlled between **20%** and **30%** of the retail.

In Nairobi City County, small shops, supermarkets, and kiosks are highly frequented by households, followed by market and street sellers. 61% of households (out of more than 1,400) responded that they buy food from the “informal market” on an almost daily basis, which proves the importance these actors have in food distribution at the local level (Owuor, 2018). Visits to and purchases from supermarkets by low-income neighborhoods’ residents take place but with less frequency – mostly once a month (Neven, et al. 2005). People usually turn to supermarkets to get maize meal, bread, rice, pasta, coffee, oil, and sugar, among other products, while small shops, kiosks and street traders are the source for fruits and vegetables (Wagner, et al. 2019). A study drawn from the Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS) in informal settlements showed that in Nairobi most households bought raw foods from the market (87%), with the rest of households purchasing cooked food from the streets (Kimani-Murage, et al. 2014). It should be noted that small retailers in informal settlements face challenges related to access to services and the maintenance of food safety. For example, the high cost of water in the settlements limit the possibilities to use it for washing produce or cooking pans, and a significant number of them are near open sewers and drains in the settlements of Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru (Ahmed, et al. 2019). These challenges, resulting from inadequate infrastructure, increase risks to food.

In many townships and informal areas of the Gauteng City-Region (GCR), up to 70% of households usually rely on the informal sector for food supplies (de Kadt, Maree & Naidoo, 2020). In Johannesburg, a survey has shown that over 90% of households

identified supermarkets as a source of food products, with a monthly frequency. However, small shops and *spazas* were frequented at least once a week by 85% of the respondents (Rudolph, et al. 2021). The frequency with which respondents visited these two types of retail stores is a reflection of the benefits previously mentioned for each type of shop. While supermarkets can offer a wider variety of products and sell cheaper products in a large quantity, smaller or informal retailers show significant advantages in terms of location and economic accessibility both in Gauteng and Nairobi.

Comparing the retail structure between both cities, it is noticeable that the formal system is more present in Gauteng. In Nairobi, large supermarket networks are less developed, which contributes to a larger informal system that includes shops and stores, and the “middle-men” that mediate between producers and retailers. Key informants in Nairobi have mentioned them as sometimes being responsible for price distortions.

Key informants from South Africa and Kenya highlight a lack of significant organization at the informal sector level that could allow workers to ask for better working conditions and less government harassment. In some cases, they consider them to be “politically silenced”. Informal and street vendors face challenges related to access to appropriate work environments, such as access to toilets and water. This can sometimes result in extra costs in their operations, adding to the stress and extra time consumption (Carr, 2019). In the case of street vendors, the main

In South Africa, street food traders account for **40%** of the informal township economy at a national level. In Nairobi City County, small shops, supermarkets, and kiosks are highly frequented by households, followed by market and street sellers. **61%** of households responded that they buy food from the “informal market” on an almost daily basis.

challenges are related to the relationship with government authorities. Vendors suffer from harassment as well from the confiscation of their goods. Key informants mention that the number of informal/street vendors is quite large compared to the space available for them to operate, particularly in Nairobi. Space is one of their main limitations, as they are always looking for profitable places to work in, in the case of Nairobi, the CBD. In Nairobi, confederations and organizations of workers are currently trying to push for the creation of pop-up markets where smaller vendors can sell their products in better infrastructure conditions.

Both in Nairobi and the Gauteng City-Region, the advantages and disadvantages of each type of retailer tend to coincide. In the case of supermarkets, some of their advantages are around the lower prices per unit of food products, the higher safety standards of the produce, and the large range of foods available. However, these formal retailers struggle to fulfill certain aspects, such as being affordable for the poorest groups of society, having a more limited expansion in geographical terms, and not offering credit to lower-income households. These limitations make the informal retail sector or the *spazas* more attractive to them (Wegerif, 2020). The unit sizes are more affordable, as households can buy for their everyday use (what in Kenya is known as the *Kadogo* system). They also have a locational advantage, as well as long opening hours (Njanja, 2019). Per unit, however, the price of food can be higher. In this sense, the most vulnerable households are usually faced with the reality of spending more money on food, as they are not able to buy large quantities. Also, the quality of products can sometimes be perceived as poorer. In the case of meat and fresh produce vendors, they can provide cheaper food options and have locational advantages, but the safety of the products can be challenged in bromatological terms, or even in the lack of facilities to ensure the maintenance of the cold chain (Battersby, Marshak & Mngqibisa 2016).



C. ASSISTANCE

Grassroots, faith-based and community organizations are also significant actors in terms of food distribution. They are in charge and responsible for the functioning of communal spaces for food access, such as soup and community kitchens. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these organizations played a key role in the provision of food to households in need. Some of them offered their services to foreign nationals, who were not included in the government's relief programs. However, they generally relied on external funding, which threatens the continuation of these spaces when it decreases. In Nairobi, there is a significant presence of women and youth groups involved in the organization of agricultural economic activity at a small scale.



D. STATE

Food access is also ensured through the implementation of government programs that prove to play a strong redistributive role. School feeding programs in South Africa reach a significant number of households and help to reduce inequalities in term of food access. In South Africa, the National School Nutrition Program targets learners in primary and secondary schools, providing them with one nutritious meal that includes proteins, fresh fruits and vegetables, and carbohydrates. By 2014, the program had reached over 9 million children in over 19,000 schools nationwide. In the Gauteng province, it had reached more than 1.2 million learners (Republic of South Africa, 2014). In Kenya, school-feeding programs play a key role in distributing daily hot lunch to children.

HOW JUST IS ACCESS TO FOOD IN AFRICAN CITIES?

A total of 1.6 million children in primary and pre-primary level were receiving school meals in 2018 through a program that was originally funded by the World Food Programme and later on handed over to the government (World Food Programme, 2018).

However, in terms of food policy, it is possible to see in the case of South Africa

a “market-based policy” or a “laissez-faire” approach, as the State does not have an active intervention in terms of limiting the effects of the corporatized food system. Key informants have mentioned that the government lacks information on small-scale production, which limits their capacity to plan and implement effective policies.



Effects of urban food systems on health and nutrition

The high level of corporatization and the relevance of large food companies in the value chain impacts the consumer food environment (CFE) (Greenberg, 2017). The CFE refers to the factors involved in consumers' choices in terms of food consumption. In this sense, the price of products, its relation to the quality of food, as well as the conditions of supply, impact the decisions and the possibilities that households have of satisfying their food needs. It is known that ultra-processed food tends to be cheaper and more affordable than higher quality food, which makes it more attractive to low-income and middle-class households. These decisions, influenced by the actions of the power of corporations involved in the food system, have a direct impact on public health as well (Greenberg, 2017). As diets shift from cereal and fiber basis to sugar and fats, food-related non-communicable diseases rise in African countries, representing an extra cost in terms of health care and treatments. Obesity and diabetes, for example, are resulting health conditions of poor-quality diets where ultra-processed products are key (Galvez, 2018). The effects of poor diets are differential between urban and rural areas in South Africa. The South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey showed that overweight and obesity are highest in informal urban areas (20% and 5.2% for boys and 20.8% and 9.3% for girls, respectively), followed by formal areas (11.8% and 5.4% for boys, and 19.4% and 8.9% for girls). Malnutrition as a result of poor quality or lack of access to food is also high. Girls in urban informal areas had the highest levels of stunting, with a 20.9% prevalence (Shisana, et al. 2013).

In Kenya, urban areas are experiencing the same nutrition transition as South Africa and other countries. A survey done in the neighborhood of Makadara in 2017 showed widespread consumption of unhealthy food (fried foods, sweet foods and sweetened beverages), as well as of healthy but energy dense foods. These consumption habits are strictly related to the advertising and commercialization of food products. Sweet beverages are commonly advertised items and they are widely available just as fried and processed foods. Formal retail outlets commonly sell energy dense nutritional food items, such as butter or cookies (African Population and Health Research Center 2019). Studies on Nairobi's settlements have shown the prevalence of diabetes and non-communicable diseases, mostly as a result of behavioral conditions (consumption of food, alcohol, and cigarettes) (Ayah, et al. 2013).

The highly corporatized agri-food systems and the competition in terms of food prices between large corporations and small producers make it more attractive for consumers to acquire poor quality foods. Key informants have called for the promotion of education and awareness campaigns that emphasize the need to have a sustainable, balanced diet that includes the consumption of fresh produce and cereals, among others. These efforts also require a rethinking of government and corporate policies around food donations.

The experience of COVID-19 has proven the relevance that street vendors, local markets, and informal traders have in the distribution of food at the local level. The most relegated areas of cities, inhabited by low-income households, are usually reached by smaller-scale actors of the food system. Working towards a more just access of food in highly urbanised areas such as Gauteng and Nairobi County requires putting into place inclusive policies that acknowledge the relevance of these actors in the distribution process. In this sense, licensing regulations and permits expedition policies should be reviewed and simplified so that so-called informal vendors and traders can continue operating as "last mile deliverers" of affordable food to the households that need it most. Policies should also include the work on the provision of public or market spaces for these vendors to work. It is important to find solutions that allow traders to continue working in areas of relevance for them but also for their buyers, while providing them with the necessary equipment to preserve their products and guarantee the quality of the food they commercialize.



What are
the effects of
COVID-19 and
climate change on
food distribution?

05

The COVID-19 pandemic and the rise in climate change events have exposed and deepened pre-existing inequalities in the food systems of African cities.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, the impossibility to continue working and the consequent reduction of income in working families impacted their capacity to access food products. The existence of lockdowns and reduced mobility made it difficult to distribute and transport food products at previous levels. The imposition of lockdowns and curfews also restricted the operation of street and informal vendors, the key actors in the distribution of food in urban areas. At the same time, the increase in events such as floods and droughts in a context of a climate crisis results in unpredictability in the production and supply of food, particularly of crops, and they can have significant effects on the logistics of the food systems. At the same time, these unpredictable events are limiting small-scale producers and farmers' capacity to respond to these shocks due their lack of financial support to acquire the necessary equipment and technology that would help them adapt to climate variability.

This section explores the impact that these two factors have on the different actors involved in food production and distribution in urban areas. It identifies the main challenges and limitations faced by the main groups responsible for the distribution of food products to urban dwellers, particularly to the *urban invisibles* of these cities, in a context of natural and biological emergencies.

Impacts of COVID-19 in the food systems of Nairobi and Gauteng City-Region

The outbreak of COVID-19 represented a significant shock to the food systems of African cities as mobility restrictions impacted the distribution of food as well as there were large disruptions in the supply chain (George, 2020, FAO, 2021a), which affected the prices of food products. At the same time, the impact of the pandemic on the job market impacted the levels of income and, as a consequence, the purchasing power of households. In South Africa, only 15 million out of 40 million working-age people are employed, a situation that worsened during the pandemic (Brookings, 2021). In the Gauteng City-Region, 18% of respondents in the Quality of Life Survey 2020/2021 (de Kadt, et al. 2021) reported having lost a job since March 2020. This had a **significant impact on their capacity to purchase food products**, which has been identified as one of the main challenges during 2020 and 2021. The pandemic not only impacted the job market but also led to an increase in food prices both in Kenya and in South Africa, which between March 2 and March 26 2020 experienced an increase in food prices of 3.3% (PMBEJD, 2020).



The pandemic not only impacted the job market but also led to an increase in food prices both in Kenya and in South Africa, which between March 2 and March 26 2020 experienced an increase in food prices of 3.3% (PMBEJD, 2020).

In March 2020, there was a change in buying patterns in South Africa, as women chose to exclude meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables from their purchases, and focused on acquiring staple foods and non-perishables they could afford to buy (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies 2020).

The effects of COVID-19 in terms of access to food were clear:

- 25% of households in the Gauteng City-Region had adults who had skipped a meal in 2020 due to lack of money to buy food;
- 20% of households with children reported a child skipping a meal;
- 52% of households did not spend enough to secure a basic nutritious food basket, estimated at R2, 779.10 (USD151.5)⁷ for a 4-person household (de Kadt, et al. 2021);and
- Alternative sources of food became more important, as 44% of households with children benefited from school-feeding schemes in 2020, an increase from 38% from 2017/2018, which shows the relevance of these programs in emergency contexts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, schools undertook a significant role beyond education in itself, consolidating their role as key actors in terms of food access.

The restrictions imposed on mobility and circulation affected the functioning of informal networks of food, such as in the case of informal and street vendors. In the case of Gauteng City-Region, only supermarkets and “formal sellers” were allowed to remain open during the first weeks of the 2020 lockdown. Selling activities by informal, street vendors and spazas were forbidden, including in the operation of public markets (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies 2020). This posed several challenges and limitations to households that relied on local access to food. Even though by April 2020 street vendors were authorized to start working again, some street vendors suffered from harassment and the confiscation of products while operating in the streets (Wegerif, 2020). These practices, already existent before the beginning of the pandemic, continued in 2021, motivating the

South African Informal Traders Alliance to call for police to stop confiscating their products and guaranteeing better treatment of informal and street vendors (Mafata, 2021).

In the Gauteng City-Region, the effects of lockdowns and general restrictions due to COVID-19 were also visible in terms of mobility and acquisition of food and other needs. Shopping trips were respondents’ most frequent type of trip and had a much more localized nature between 2020 and 2021. More frequent trips are shorter trips: 48% of respondents said that it took them 15 minutes or less to reach the shops, compared to 27% in 2017/2018 (de Kadt, et al. 2021).

The effects of COVID-19 in terms of food acquisition in Nairobi are similar to the ones in the Gauteng City-Region.

- 74% of 200 residents surveyed in May 2020 in five informal settlements of the city reported having skipped meals or eating less due to the incapacity to purchase food (Sverdlik, 2021).

In Nairobi, COVID-19 restrictions on movement and circulation limited informal settlements households’ capacity to acquire foods in bulk in areas further away in the city, or on the outskirts of the cities. Key informants mentioned that this forced them to buy from sellers close to their dwellings, sometimes paying higher prices for food due to the generalized increase in food prices. Also, during the first months of the pandemic, panic buying was seen as people were trying to get as many food products as they could afford during the time when stores were open. In general, and as a result of income reduction, vendors experienced decreased sales (GAIN, 2020).

As previously mentioned, informal traders face significant challenges and vulnerabilities that became more visible and deepened during the COVID-19 crisis. Curfews imposed during 2020 and 2021 severely impacted informal vendors as they restricted their operations and the transportation of food products. Informal markets also saw their activities limited due to the closures, for example in the case of Eastleigh in May 2020 (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2020).

COVID-19 relief policies



In terms of relief policies implemented by the governments, 13% of respondents in the 2020/2021 Quality of Living Survey in Gauteng said they had received food support from the government or an NGO during the pandemic. Also, 35% of the respondents reported having applied for the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant that the government implemented in May 2020. Black African and colored respondents were more likely to report that they had applied for the grant (de Kadt, et al. 2021). The SRD is promoted by the South African Government and consists of a R350 grant per month (19USD). The grants are assigned only to South African citizens, residents or refugees – not to foreign nationals, who end up being “new” *urban invisibles*. To qualify, one must be unemployed and should not receiving any other income or social grant, or any other government support. The suspension in the distribution of these grants led to riots in July 2021, pushing the government to restart the distribution. Child support grant beneficiaries received an extra R300 (16.35USD) in May 2020, and an extra grant of R500 (27.26USD) per month from June to October.

The government issued relief as well in the form of food parcels as temporary assistance for people who were unable to meet their basic needs. Recipients were citizens, permanent residents, or registered refugees who were receiving disability grants, were suffering from disasters, or who had no member in the household who was employed, among other requirements (South African Government, 2020). In March 2020, the provincial government of Gauteng announced food assistance for citizens who earned

a combined household income of R3600 (USD196), recipients of pensions, disability and child welfare, and military veterans. They worked together with organizations and foundations that donated money and/or food and collaborated in the distribution to the neediest households. A hotline was also created for people in need of food assistance from the government (DispatchLIVE, 2020).

In the case of South Africa and the Gauteng City-Region, government financial support received by households in need of access to food during the pandemic was significantly limited. As mentioned above, a household of four people needed around R2800 (USD153) to acquire a healthy food basket to stay away from hunger but also to receive the necessary nutrients. The limitations of the social grants are clear in this sense: they worked as an emergency policy destined to avoid people from starving, but their effects to enable people to access the necessary amount and quality of food to be considered food secure were far from desirable. This is if we consider that the social relief grant distributed R350, while in May 2020 a basic food basket cost R960 (USD52), being 9.8% more expensive than the same basket in May 2019 (IPC, 2021).

13% of respondents in the 2020/2021 Quality of Living Survey in Gauteng said they had received food support from the government or an NGO during the pandemic.



In Kenya, the government established a cash transfer program targeting households in vulnerable urban settlements. The program reached 20,000 households since April 2020, distributing Ksh. 4,000 monthly (38USD)⁸. In addition to the government's intervention, the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed Ksh. 4,000 per person per month to more than 55,000 households in the 11 sub-counties of Nairobi (IPC, 2020). Social pensions were expanded to 300,000 new household beneficiaries, and a public works program called Kazi Mtaani was created with the goal of providing jobs to more than 26,000 Kenyans living in informal settlements (GAIN, 2020).

These social protection programs had some limitations. Even if they worked as a relief to the beneficiaries, they failed to reach the most vulnerable groups. It is estimated that the COVID-19 cash transfer program assisted only less than 5% of all socioeconomically vulnerable households in Nairobi (Human Rights Watch, 2021). In addition, the program was riddled with irregularities, like ignoring eligibility criteria for beneficiaries and diverting funds to officials' friends and relatives (Warah, 2021).

Regarding food production and support to smaller producers, in 2020 the Kenyan government issued an e-voucher system that targeted around 200,000 farmers.

The subsidy was expected to assist farmers in the acquisition of seeds, fertilizers, soil testing services, and other tools (Kairu, 2020). In relation to food aid and affordability, in March 2020 the government launched a program to mobilize food at a subsidized price, and in September 2020 it established regulations on maize prices (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2020).

The government established a cash transfer program that reached **20,000** households since April 2020, distributing **Ksh. 4,000** monthly (38USD).

World Food Programme (WFP) distributed **Ksh. 4,000** per person per month to more than **55,000** households in the 11 sub-counties of Nairobi.

⁸ US dollar-Kenyan Shilling conversion May 2020: 1USD-Ksh105.05

Climate-related shocks and their effects on food security

As the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed some of the pre-existing inequalities in urban cities, such as income, access to jobs, and to urban services, and has limited food accessibility across urban areas, climate change events are also putting pressure on food systems in South Africa and Kenya. In terms of natural disasters, droughts are the most important reason for agricultural production loss across the world, followed by floods (FAO, 2021a). In Africa, climate change has a high negative impact on agriculture and crop production, as well as on nutrition, and on key economic actors (IPCC 2022). Losses in total crop and livestock between 2008 and 2018 represented approximately 20 billion dollars, and the two largest commodity groups that have been affected are cereals, and roots and tubers (FAO, 2021a). The effects of these losses are not only visible in terms of trade, but also in food consumption. The production loss between 2008 and 2018 represented a loss of 82 days of calorie intake per capita per year (FAO, 2021a).



Since the 1980s, South Africa has suffered economic losses of over 95 billion rands as a result of weather-related disasters such as floods, wildfires, storms and droughts (Institute for Security Studies, 2021). The recent Western Cape drought plus floods and fires in different provinces expose the country's vulnerability to these events, not only in terms of disaster management but also in the effects that these events can have on agriculture production. Crop revenues could fall as much as 90% by 2100 as a result of climate change and variability, primarily affecting small-scale producers (IPCC, 2007).



In Kenya, the economic losses as a result of climate change are estimated to be around 3-5% of GDP annually. The main climate-related events are droughts and floods, with a decrease in cold days and nights and an increase in temperature in certain areas of the country (Kenya, 2020). This poses the challenge to government authorities and main actors in the Kenyan food system to work on the adaptation of production and to increase resilience to face the effects of these events. Among climate-related events, the increase in rainfall and droughts across Kenya possess challenges in terms of adaptation. Kenya will likely experience losses in the production of milk, maize, tea, beef, potatoes, among others, which could impact the price of products, as well as per capita calorie availability. The increase in rainfall has the potential to increase production in the highlands, but in order for this to contribute to agriculture production, investments in inputs and services, such as in infrastructure, water management, and land-use policy, need to be made (Herrero, et al. 2010).

In South African and Kenyan rural and peri-urban areas, small-scale producers are the most affected by these events. The changing nature of the climate context affects the predictability of the crops. An unexpected increase in rains in Nairobi, as well as recent frosts in the Gauteng region, affected agricultural production and the capacity to predict these events. The impact of these challenges is not equally distributed between all actors in the agribusiness. Changes in environmental conditions require farmers to adapt and acquire the necessary equipment and technology that enables them to protect their produce.

While this is feasible for larger producers, agriculture producers at a smaller scale struggle to deal with the financial impacts of these events. The effects on crops and food production – and as a result consumption – are significant, in particular in the case of Kenya. One of the most harmed crops is maize, a staple in Kenyans' food diet. A Kenyan civil society organizer mentioned that "we consider someone is somehow food secure if they have access to maize."

These challenges have been present and evolving for the past years. In 2012, a study of 710 farm households in 7 districts of Kenya showed that small farmers were adopting practices in response to perceived climate change, such as changing the crop variety and type, diversifying livestock feeds, and applying soil and water conservation practices, among others. The main constraints they found were in relation of the lack of financial and natural resources to do so, lack of information, and lack of input. This showed the need for greater investment in agricultural production at a small scale (Bryan, et al. 2013).

The challenges and limitations posed by the changes in climate have motivated the Kenyan government to promote the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Strategy 2017-2026 that identifies the main conflicts around agriculture and livestock production and details strategies to be implemented moving forward, as a way of reducing the impact of climate-related events. The main goals of these strategies are to enhance the adaptive capacity of farmers, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and address several issues around the impact of CSA (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2017).

COVID-19 and climate-related events have arisen as relevant shocks on food supply and access that need to be addressed. The importance of diversification in crop production has been identified as one of the most important strategies to face these shocks. The existence of lockdowns and mobility restrictions have represented a limitation towards the importation of food products at a global scale. At the same time, climate change poses questions on the possibilities of production as well as logistic limitations in the food supply chain. Seed policies that enable farmers to share and exchange seeds in order for small-scale agricultural producers to have a more diversified production is one strategy that could turn beneficial in case of weather-related events such as droughts, floods or heatwaves that impact the growth of certain crops. Policies that promote agroecology would have to be promoted to promote a larger diversification of food production. In the case of imports and logistics, the impact that climate-related events can potentially have on the distribution of certain products makes it necessary to think about a feasible diversified input chain that aims at acquiring affordable products from different sources/producers to easily replace products in case of shortages.

A study showed that small farmers in Kenya were adopting practices in response to perceived climate change, such as changing the crop variety and type, diversifying livestock feeds, and applying soil and water conservation practices, among others.



Conclusions:
Towards more
just food access
in African cities

06

Traditionally, the analysis of food security and concerns around hunger and malnourishment have been tackled as a “rural” problem, or as a limitation of the system to produce the necessary food to satisfy the needs of the population. The cases of Gauteng and Nairobi show that, beyond the production of food, there are other elements that need to be considered when focusing on food security. Food security in African cities needs to be tackled as a matter of economic access and affordability from the households’ perspective, while at the same time considering the realities of actors involved in the wider food system and how they affect the accessibility of food.

Firstly, there is a need to **acknowledge the role that actors from the so-called informal sector play in making food available**, accessible and affordable to the *urban invisibles*. Even though in South Africa, due to its high level of corporatization, formal retail stores have significant relevance, smaller shops succeed in reaching out to the more disadvantaged urban groups. Empowering these actors with the goal of making food more affordable to all urban dwellers implies addressing the priorities of equity and diversity, while **designing food systems “from the people for the people.”**

More just food systems in urban areas need to combine policies that focus on production and supply of food, while improving working and social conditions.

Urban solutions such as markets and infrastructure are determinant to improve working conditions. The need for active policies that encourage small-scale production in the context of climate change, and support to adapt to and enter the food system, are key to ensuring a more varied and accessible food system among the *urban invisibles* of these cities. Creating more democratic food systems implies supporting small farmers and their connection to retail spaces. In the case of South Africa, this means opening the market to black and poor farmers who compete against larger producers and who do not have the ability to face external shocks. A just food system needs collective and democratic decision-making that includes the *urban invisibles*, and that encourages bottom-up approaches, designed by them and for them.



Bibliography

07

- African Population and Health Research Center, (2019). *Dietary transitions in Kenyan cities: leveraging evidence for intervention and policy to prevent diet-related non-communicable diseases*. Nairobi: African Population and Health Research Center. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23868>.
- Ahmed, S., Haklay, M., Tacoli, C., Githiri, G., Davila, J., Allen, A. & Fevre, E. (2019). Participatory mapping and food-centred justice in informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. *Geo: Geography and Environment* (00077) 1-21. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/geo2.77>.
- Ayah, R., Joshi, M., Wanjiru, R., Njau, E., Otieno, C.F., Njeru, E. and Mutai K. (2013). A population-based survey of prevalence of diabetes and correlates in an urban slum community in Nairobi, Kenya. *BMC Public Health* 13. <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-13-371>.
- Battersby, J. (2012). Beyond the food desert: finding ways to speak about urban food security in South Africa. *Geografika Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 94 (2), 141-159.
- Battersby, J., Haysom, G., Kroll, F. & Tawodzera, G. (2015). *A study on current and future realities for urban food security in South Africa*. Technical report, Johannesburg: South African Cities Network.
- Battersby, J., Marshak, M., and Mngqibisa, N. (2016). *Mapping the Invisible: The Informal Food Economy of Cape Town, South Africa*. Cape Town: Southern African Migration Programme.
- Brookings, (2021). *South Africa after COVID-19—light at the end of a very long tunnel*. July 13. Accessed November 20, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/07/13/south-africa-after-covid-19-light-at-the-end-of-a-very-long-tunnel/#:~:text=share%20on%20Facebook-,South%20Africa%20after%20COVID%2D19%E2%80%94light%20at%20the%20end,of%20a%20very%20long%20tunne>.
- Bryan, E., Ringler, C., Okoba, B., Roncoli, C., Silvestri, S., & Herrero, M. (2013). Adapting agriculture to climate change in Kenya: Household strategies and determinants. *Journal of Environmental Management* (114) 26-35.
- Carr, C. (2019). For street vendors, finding water and toilets isn't just a nuisance, it's cutting into earnings. WIEGO. August 12. Accessed February 26, 2022. <https://www.wiego.org/blog/street-vendors-finding-water-and-toilets-isnt-just-nuisance-its-cutting-earnings>.
- Chege, C.G.K., Wanyama, R., Lundy, M., Nguru, W. and Jager. M. (2021). Does retail food diversity in urban food environments influence consumer diets? *Sustainability* 13 (7666): 1-15. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su13147666>.
- Crush, J. & Frayne, B. (2014). Feeding African cities: the growing challenge of urban food insecurity. In Parnell, S. & Pieterse, E. *Africa's Urban Revolution*, 110-132. London: Zed Books.
- de Kadt, J., Maree, G., & Naidoo, Y. (2020). *Challenges in accessing food during a lockdown*. Johannesburg: Gauteng City-Region Observatory.
- de Kadt, J., Hamann, C., Mkhize, S.P., & Parker, A. (Eds.) (2021). *Quality of life survey 6 (2020/2021)*. Overview Report, Johannesburg: Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO).
- DispatchLIVE, (2020). *Covid-19: Food relief distribution for needy families in Gauteng*. April 1. Accessed December 15, 2021. <https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2020-04-01-covid-19-food-relief-distribution-for-needy-families-in-gauteng/>.
- FAO, (2008). An Introduction to the basic concepts of food security. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Accessed November 20, 2021. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/2357d07c-b359-55d8-930a-13060cedd3e3/>.

- FAO, (2021a). *The impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- FAO, (2021b). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world. Transforming Food Systems for Food Security, Improved Nutrition and Affordable Healthy Diets for All*. Rome: FAO.
- FAO, (2022). *Hunger and food insecurity*. Accessed February 27, 2022. www.fao.org/hunger/en.
- FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. 2019. *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. Rome: FAO.
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, (2020). *Towards the just city in Kenya*. Nairobi: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/19072.pdf>
- GAIN, (2020). *Impact of COVID-19 on Kenya's food systems: a situation report - Edition 1*. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.
- Galvez, A. (2018). *Eating Nafta. Trade, food policies, and the destruction of Mexico*. California: University of California Press.
- Gastrow, V. (2022). *Global informality project*. Accessed February 26, 2022. [https://www.in-formality.com/wiki/index.php?title=Spaza_\(South_Africa\)](https://www.in-formality.com/wiki/index.php?title=Spaza_(South_Africa)).
- GCRO, (2021). *The Gauteng City-Region*. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.gcro.ac.za/about/the-gauteng-city-region/>.
- George, L., (2020). *COVID-19 is exacerbating food shortages in Africa*. June 1. Accessed November 20, 2021. <https://hungrycities.net/covid-19-is-exacerbating-food-shortages-in-africa/>.
- Global Network Against Food Crises, (2021). *Global Report on Food Crises 2021*. Rome: FSIN.
- Government of the Republic of Kenya, (2017). *Kenya climate smart agriculture strategy 2017-2026*. Nairobi: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.
- Greenberg, S. (2017). Corporate power in the agro-food system and the consumer food environment in South Africa. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44 (2), 467-496.
- Herrero, M., Ringler, C., Steeg, J., Thornton, P., Tingju Zhu, B., Omolo, A., Jawoo Koo, A. and Notenbaert, (2010). Climate variability and climate change and their impacts on Kenya's agricultural sector. Nairobi: International Livestock Research Institute.
- Human Rights Watch, (2021). We are all vulnerable here. Kenya's pandemic cash transfer program riddled with Irregularities. July 20. Accessed December 28, 2021. www.hrw.org/report/2021/07/20/we-are-all-vulnerable-here/kenyas-pandemic-cash-transfer-program-riddled.
- Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, (2020). *Food in the time of the coronavirus: Why we should be very, very afraid*. April 1. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.plaas.org.za/food-in-the-time-of-the-coronavirus-why-we-should-be-very-very-afraid/>.
- Institute for Security Studies, (2021). *Urban South Africa is ill-prepared for the coming climate change storm*. June 4. Accessed February 25, 2022. issafrica.org/iss-today/urban-south-africa-is-ill-prepared-for-the-coming-climate-change-storm.
- International Food Policy Research Institute, (2020). *COVID-19 Policy Response (CPR) Portal*. December 19. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/IFPRI.td7290/viz/CPRPORTAL/Overview?publish=yes>.
- IPC, (2020). *IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis Urban August – December 2020*. Nairobi: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

- IPC, (2021). *South Africa: acute food insecurity situation September - December 2020 and Projection for January - March 2021*. Nairobi: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1153024/?iso3=ZAF>.
- IPC, (2022). *Understanding the IPC Scales*. Nairobi: *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification*. https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/communication_tools/brochures/IPC_Brochure_Understanding_the_IPC_Scales.pdf.
- IPCC, (2007). *Climate Change 2007: Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Accessed February 10, 2022. archive.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch9s9-4-4.html.
- IPCC, (2022). *Climate Change 2022. Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Kairu, P. (2020). *Kenya: E-Voucher system for small farmers to access inputs starts in October*. July 16. Accessed February 27, 2022. allafrica.com/stories/202007170174.html.
- KENASVIT, (2020). *Call to the Government of Kenya to take urgent and immediate measures to ensure the full protection of economic and social rights of the informal sector in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*. Nakuru, April 9. <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/file/KENSAVIT-INFORMAL%20TRADERS%20STATEMENT%20IN%20RESPONSE%20TO%20COVID%2019.pdf>.
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, (2021). *SDG Gender Fact Sheet 2021 - Kenya*. Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; Kenya Vision 2030; UN Women.
- Kenya, (2020). *Kenya's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*. Nairobi: Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
- Kimani-Murage, E., Schofield, L., Wekesah, F., Mohamed, S., Mberu, B., Ettarh, R., Egondi, T., Kyobutungi, C. & Ezech, A. (2014). Vulnerability to food insecurity in urban slums: Experiences from Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 91 (6) 1098-1113.
- Mafata, M. (2021). *Joburg's informal traders call for police to stop confiscating their goods*. August 20. Accessed December 15, 2021. <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/i-come-here-every-day-knowing-that-at-some-point-i-will-have-to-grab-my-things-and-run-from-jmpd/>.
- Mayet, M. (2016). Seed sovereignty and ecological integrity in Africa. In *Seed Sovereignty, Food Security*, by V Shiva. California: North Atlantic Books.
- Nairobi City County, (2018). *County Annual Development Plan 2019/2020*. Nairobi: Nairobi City County.
- Neven, D., Reardon, T., Chege, J. and Wang, H. (2005). *Supermarkets and consumers in Africa: The case of Nairobi, Kenya*. Staff Paper 2005-04, Michigan: Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University.
- Njanja, A. (2019). *'Kadogo' economy rules retail sector*. July 17. Accessed February 20, 2022. www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/corporate/companies/-kadogo-economy-rules-retail-sector-2257816.
- OECD & SWAC, (2020). *Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2020. Africapolis, Mapping a New Urban Geography*. Paris: OECD Publishing. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1787/b6bccb81-en>.
- Onyango, E., Crush, J. and Owuor, S. (2021). *Urban food security and household shocks in Nairobi, Kenya*. HCP Discussion Paper No. 47, Waterloo and Cape Town: Hungry Cities Partnership.
- Owuor, S. (2018). *The state of household food security in Nairobi, Kenya*. Hungry Cities Report 11, Cape Town: Hungry Cities Partnership.

- PMBEJD, (2020). *Food prices and public health messages in a time of Covid-19*. Johannesburg: PMBEJD.
- Presidency of Kenya, (2021). *Big Four Agenda*. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://big4.delivery.go.ke/>.
- Republic of South Africa, (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria.
- Republic of South Africa, (2014). *National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) 2013/14 Annual Report*. Annual Report, Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.
- Rudolph, M., Kroll, F., Muchesa, E., Paiker, M. & Fatti, P. (2021). Food security in urban cities: a case study conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Journal of Food Security* 9 (2) 46-55.
- Seed Savers Kenya, (2018). *Renewed hope in farmers managed seed system in Kenya*. December 10. Accessed February 28, 2022. <https://seedsaverskenya.org/managed-seed-system-kenya/>.
- Shisana, O., Labadarios, D., Rehle, T., Simbayi, L., Zuma, K., Dhansay, A., Reddy, P. et al., (2013). *South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES-1)*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- South African Government, (2020). *Social grants - Coronavirus COVID-19*. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.gov.za/covid-19/individuals-and-households/social-grants-coronavirus-covid-19>.
- STATS SA, (2019). *Towards measuring the extent of food security in South Africa: An examination of hunger and food adequacy*. Statistics, Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Sverdlik, A. (2021). *Nairobi: City Scoping Study*. London: African Cities Research Consortium.
- The World Bank, (2022). *World Bank Open Data*. Accessed February 20, 2022. data.worldbank.org.
- UN Food Systems Summit 2021. (2021). *Food Systems – definition, concept and application for the UN Food Systems Summit*. UN Food Systems Summit. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/food_systems_concept_paper_scientific_group_-_draft_oct_26.pdf.
- Wagner, J., Hinton, L., McCordic, C., Owuor, S., Capron, G. and Gonzalez Arellano. S. (2019). Do urban food deserts exist in the global south? An analysis of Nairobi and Mexico City. *Sustainability* 11 (1963) 1-15. doi:10.3390/su11071963.
- Warah, R. (2021). *Corruption is undermining Kenya's COVID-19 response*. September 29. Accessed March 23, 2022. one.org/africa/blog/corruption-undermining-kenya-covid19-response/.
- Weatherspoon, D., & Reardon, T. (2003). The rise of supermarkets in Africa: Implications for agrifood systems and the rural poor. *Development Policy Review*, 21 (3) 333-355.
- Wegerif, M. (2020). "Informal" food traders and food security: experiences from the Covid-19 response in South Africa. *Food Security* (12) 797-800.
- World Food Programme, (2018). *School meals programme in Kenya*. Nairobi: World Food Programme Kenya.

HOW JUST IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST AFRICAN CITIES?

MARCH 2022

Author: Dr. David López-García



HOW JUST IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST AFRICAN CITIES?

DR. DAVID LÓPEZ-GARCÍA

MARCH 2022

Working paper prepared for the conference: “The Just City in Africa: Democracy, Social Justice, and Sustainability in a Post-COVID-19 World”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author thanks Pius Tibaingana and Stevenson Ssevume for their support in collecting the data for Kampala Metropolitan Area and Antidius Kawamala for the data on Dar es Salaam. The author also thanks the colleagues from the Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania FES country offices for their careful reading and feedback on the drafts of this study.



Introduction

01

Public transport is most often associated with the provision of collective transport to support the intra-urban mobility needs of an urban population (Mulley & Nelson, 2019).

Governments provide public transport as an important social service in urban areas because it provides a travel mode option for those who would otherwise have none (Murray & Davis, 2001). Research has shown that lacking enough public transport services can contribute to social exclusion and a poor quality of life (Currie & Delbosc, 2010). The problem of transport provision and transport-related social exclusion in African urban areas is severe and complex. The cost of public transport is high relative to households' budgets, making it unaffordable for the urban poor.

In African cities, while the average household spends between 5% to 27.5 % of their daily budget on public transport, the poorest quintile can spend between 53 % and 100 % of their budget on public transport (Kubar & Barret, 2008).

In African cities, while the average household spends between **5%** to **27.5%** of their daily budget on public transport, the poorest quintile can spend between **53%** and **100%** of their budget on public transport (Kubar & Barret, 2008)

As a consequence, a large percentage of trips are made on foot, reaching between 30% to 45% in Nairobi, Lagos, and Addis Ababa, and up to 70% in Dar es Salaam and Kampala, with over 50% belonging to a low-income bracket (Haas, 2017; IAPT, 2010). This, in turn, restricts job searches to the territories within walking distance, ultimately excluding the urban poor from potential job opportunities (Vinay et al., 2017).

Public transport challenges in African cities have been exacerbated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The crisis and the measures taken by governments to deal with the pandemic have deeply affected people's mobility and the public transport sector in Africa (World Bank, 2020). For example, because many cities implemented measures to reduce passenger loads, there is a reduced supply of public transport services. There is also reduced demand for public transport, as governments put in place actions to reduce the movement of people. Due to reduced demand and decreasing revenue, the public transport sector is under financial stress, which in many cases resulted in fare increases. This, in turn, has affected the ability of low-income segments of the population to travel (World Bank, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the vulnerability of transport sector workers, particularly minibuss drivers and conductors in the paratransit system (World Bank, 2020).

Within this context, this working paper examines how just public transport in African cities is seeking to contribute to the larger effort by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) of advancing the just city in Africa and promoting just urban outcomes for the “urban invisibles”. The concept of a “*Just City*” constitutes an attempt to deal with approaches to urban development that produce unjust outcomes. Such conceptualization of the just city is based on a core belief of human dignity based on African values as the starting point for living in the city and is based on four pillars: dignity, equity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and democracy.¹ The just city is a gateway to advance just urban outcomes amongst what FES calls the “urban invisibles”. By “urban invisibles” FES refers to the most marginalized groups in African urban areas that are invisible in policy and practice and are key recipients of injustice with no means of escaping from it. Specifically, FES puts forward the existence of “mobility invisibles”, which refers to groups of people that find it difficult or impossible to use urban modes of transport (FES, 2020).

This working paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- Which urban mobility solutions have proliferated in African cities, and why?
- How just is public transport in East African cities?
- What would it take to achieve a public transport that is more just?
- How has the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic affected how just public transport is in African cities?

To answer these questions, a study of two urban regions in East Africa was conducted

with the support of FES country offices. The cases of Dar es Salaam (DAR), Tanzania, and Kampala Metropolitan Area (KMA), Uganda, were studied. Both DAR and KMA are among the fastest growing African metropolitan areas and their urban sprawl patterns continue to put enormous pressure over their transport systems (Joseph et al., 2021; Vermeiren et al., 2012).² While both case studies are in East Africa, the results of this study aim at identifying findings and producing insights applicable to other regions across Africa.

This study analyzes public transport in the case studies through the lens of the Socially Just Public Transport Pillars as proposed by FES (2020), which entails examining five key pillars:

- Availability,
- Safe and affordable access,
- Inclusion,
- Human rights and equity, and
- Sustainability.

The results of the study show how and why, when seen through the lenses of the Socially Just Public Transport Pillars, public transport systems in DAR and KMA are far from just. Nevertheless, the study allowed to identify actions to advance a more just public transport in the case studies. Investing in roads infrastructure in territories with low availability of minibus services and implementing policies to lower the fare of public transport are strategies to improve *availability* and *affordability* of public transport, which in turn would contribute to public *transport* as a *human right*, more *equitable*, and more *sustainable*.

¹ For a thorough review of FES’s conceptualization of the just city in Africa see FES (2020), pp. 7-19.

² Dar es Salaam (DAR) has an estimated population of 5.3 million people and is one of the most rapidly growing megacities in Africa. It is a monocentric city and 75 percent of all residential housing is built in unplanned neighborhoods (Joseph et al., 2021). Kampala Metropolitan Area (KMA) is the most productive and urbanized region of Uganda (Kiggundu et al., 2021). Comprising Kampala District, and the surrounding Wakiso, Mukono and Mpigi districts, KMA has an estimated population of 2.5 million people, contributes 40 percent of Uganda’s GDP, generates 46 percent of all formal employment in the country, and hosts 70 percent of the country’s manufacturing plants (KCCA, 2019; Kiggundu et al., 2021)



Public
transport and
just urban
outcomes

02

Cities provide a wide array of opportunities and services to their inhabitants: schools, hospitals, green spaces, jobs, governmental offices, consumer goods, etc.

But there is a problem. Such opportunities and services are not evenly distributed throughout urban space, and given people's residential location and socioeconomic condition, not everyone has the same level of accessibility to them (Duranton & Guerra, 2016; Geurs & van Wee, 2004; Kellerman, 2006; van Wee & Geurs, 2011). Having access to the city and its resources—including, for example, access to schools, hospitals, and other aspects of cultural, social, and economic life—is inescapably tied to a *getting* to component that is only possible by moving physically across urban spaces (Verlinghieri & Venturini, 2018). For the population that lacks the means to purchase a private vehicle, public transport systems are often the only alternative to physically move across urban spaces and reach the places offering urban opportunities and services.

Scholars have developed concepts to better understand how lack of access to public transport can produce social exclusion (Church et al., 2000; Kenyon, 2003). These concepts are useful analytical tools for an assessment of unjust urban outcomes suffered by the “mobility invisibles” in African urban areas (FES, 2020).

Transport disadvantage occurs when people in need of public transit services do not have sufficient public transit service opportunities (Murray & Davis, 2001).

Social disadvantage occurs when individuals or groups of individuals are either low-income, unemployed, or have low political engagement and participation, and lack social support (Currie & Delbosc, 2010).

When transport and social disadvantages overlap, they interact to produce what scholars call *transit poverty* (Lucas, 2012), “which in turn exacerbates the problems of [in]accessibility to opportunities, services and interactions that increase the risk of becoming socially excluded” (Oviedo & Titheridge, 2016: p. 153).

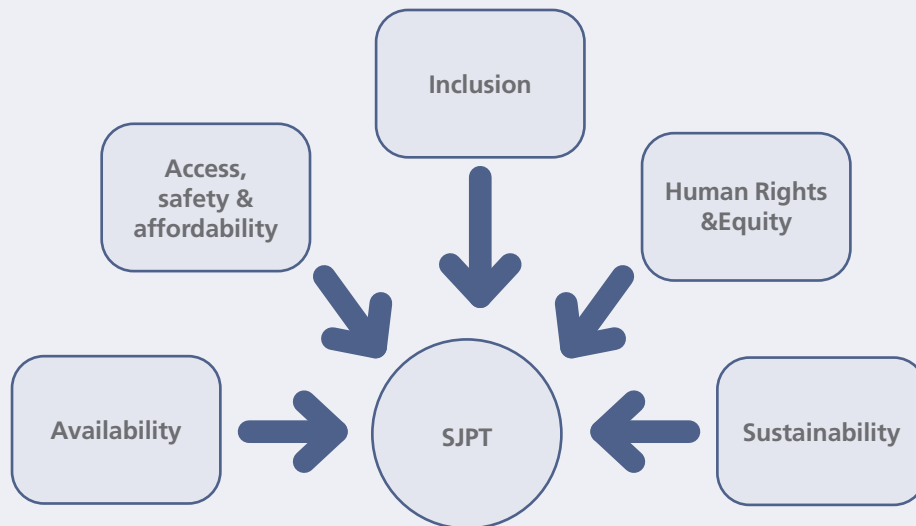
Transport-related social exclusion has been defined as “the process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole or part to insufficient mobility in a society and environment built around the assumption of high mobility” (Kenyon, 2003, p. 210). It can be argued, thus, that the “mobility invisibles” in African urban areas suffer from transport-related social exclusion.

As this literature review conveys, transport policies can serve the purpose of preventing transport poverty and social exclusion for the “mobility invisibles”, thus achieving increased equity in the population's access to urban opportunities and services.

The just city in Africa framework proposed by FES seeks to provide a blueprint for achieving public transport outcomes that are more just. Given that the word *just* is a polysemic term that can mean different things to different people (Stone, 2012), a working definition of what *just* means in the context of public

transport must be clearly defined. This paper adopts the definition of socially just public transport developed by the Socially Just Public Transport Working Group (SJPT-WG) based in Nairobi (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Socially Just Public Transport Pillars **Source: FES, 2020**



The concept of Socially Just Public Transport as proposed by FES is based on five pillars (2020, p. 92-95):

- **Pillar 1:** Availability. Socially just public transport should be available, adequate in proportion to the needs of users, and convenient for all users. It should include different modes of transport and enhance intermodal connectivity. It should be responsive to the needs of all users, including the poor and the rich, and vulnerable populations.
- **Pillar 2:** Safe and affordable access. Public transport should ensure the safety of all users, including females, children, and passengers with special needs. Public transport should provide affordable access through mechanisms such as regulated and standardized fares that cushion poor and vulnerable populations.
- **Pillar 3:** Inclusion. A socially just public transport system should seek to reduce inequality and push for universal access while paying attention to the needs of all persons. This can be achieved by ensuring that the transport systems meet the needs and demands of different category of users.

- **Pillar 4:** Human rights and equity. Public transport systems should ensure that all persons have equal right of access and use of the system, and that the mobility needs of people are not curtailed by feelings of insecurity, lack of privacy, or failure to uphold human dignity. Users should have the ability to choose from different travel options and modes, as well as being able to move freely without interference. Additionally, the government and service providers have the responsibility of enabling the creation and equal access to decent jobs in the public transport sector.

- **Pillar 5:** Sustainability. Public transport systems must be prepared to respond to the rising public transport needs brought about by increased urbanization, while considering the challenges associated with climate change.

The Socially Just Public Transport Pillars (FES, 2020) will be used as analytical lenses for the study of how just public transport in Eastern African cities is. The pillars will also inform a discussion on what it would take for public transport in East African cities to become more just.



Methodology and
data

03

The study of public transport in DAR and KMA was conducted through a mixed-methods approach.



The **qualitative component** of the study entailed semi-structured interviews with local urban transport specialists in government, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Nine interviews were conducted, five in Kampala and four in Dar es Salaam. The interviews were analyzed through the data analysis technique of *memoing*. This technique consists of listening to the interview recordings and drafting a memo of the elements that speak to the Socially Just Public Transport Pillars as proposed by FES. The memos were then analyzed and coded, which allowed to identify emerging patterns. The semi-structured interviews combined with quantitative data availability informed the design of the quantitative component of the study.



The **quantitative analysis** consisted in calculating access to public transport indexes for both case studies following the method proposed by López-García (2021).³ The data about the available public transport systems was collected by local researchers in Uganda and Tanzania.⁴ In the case of Dar es Salaam, the access index is calculated based on walkability to stops of both the minibus (dala dalas) and the BRT systems. In the case of Kampala Metropolitan Area, the index is calculated based on walkability to minibus (taxi) stops. The assumption to produce these maps is that the populations with low access to public transport stations have no other option but to riding a motorcycle taxi (boda-boda) or walk.

³ An access index measures the availability of stops by identifying the service area of the selected public transport systems (Bhat et al., 2005). The calculation of the access index was made with the help of geographic information systems (GIS), through a series of steps. First, the stops and terminals of the selected mass transit systems were mapped, and two service zones buffers from each of them was drawn. A first buffer was set at 800m, the international standard, as used in previous studies in East Africa (Lukenangula, 2017). A second buffer was set at 1,600m, twice the international standard, aiming to account for the long distances that the population in the case studies are willing to walk (Lukenangula, 2017). Using GIS, a table with the number of times the centroid of each unit of analysis intersects with a service zone buffer was made. In the case of DAR, the unit of analysis is sub-wards, while in the case of KMA is parishes. A normalized access index was then calculated. The normalization process consisted of re-scaling the number of times a unit of analysis centroid intersects with a buffer to a scale in the range [1,0]. To do so, I employed the distance between the maximum and the minimum values in the table (Schuschny & Soto, 2009, p. 58). As the value of the index approaches 1, there is more access to public transport stops. As the value of the index approaches 0, there is less access. Finally, the access index was mapped and analyzed using GIS and five categories were created using natural breaks analysis: low, medium-low, medium, medium-high, and high.

⁴ The data for KMA was collected by Pius Tibaingana and Stevenson Ssevume. The data for Dar es Salaam was collected by Antidius Kawamala.



Research results

04

4.1 Emerging mobility solutions in East Africa



4.1.1 MINIBUSES

Called *dala dalas* in Dar es Salaam and taxis in Kampala, these 14-seater minibuses are the traditional and most widespread public transport system in East Africa (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2017; Weingaertner et al., 2008). Privately-owned by hundreds of individual bus owners and managed through taxi-organizations, these minibus services are run with a for-profit logic by which service providers try to maximize revenue while minimizing operation cost. To do so, minibus owners resort to a series of strategies, such as adapting their routes to the corridors with high demand of trips, waiting until the minibus has enough customers to start a trip (called the full and go system), and avoiding areas of the city with bad quality roads that would increase maintenance cost. Despite having the lowest fare among existing transport systems (Kiggundu et al., 2021), the fare can still exclude the lower-income population from riding the minibuses. The supply of minibuses does not meet the demand of customers during peak hours (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2017). This excess of demand manifests in the long lines that commuters must bear to board a minibus and in people sometimes having to walk to their destinations due to the lack of vehicles.



4.1.2 BODA-BODAS

These motorcycle taxis have become the fastest-growing mobility solution in East African cities since the early 2000s (Kiggundu et al., 2021). Several underlying reasons

explain this staggering rise of *boda-bodas*. Over the last two decades, Dar es Salaam and Kampala have urbanized rapidly (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2017; Macchi et al., 2013), sprawling the functional area of their urban regions and increasing the transport needs of the population. Both cities continue to show a monocentric urban structure (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2017; Goswami & Lall, 2016; Joseph et al., 2020, 2021), with most of the formal jobs and services clustered in their central business districts (CBDs). While transport needs have grown considerably, the provision of roads infrastructure to support such increasing demand has not grown at the same rate. The increased demand for trips towards the CBD in limited road infrastructure has produced severe congestion, especially during peak hours.

Within this context, *boda-bodas* have emerged as a transport solution able to deal with the high monocentricity of the city and its congestion. Due to their small size, *boda-bodas* can easily bypass traffic jams. *Boda-bodas* are not bounded by a fixed route – unlike the 14-seater minibus services – and can circulate through any terrain, which has made them a suitable solution to reach even the furthest and more disconnected destinations. Additionally, *boda-bodas* have become an important source of jobs for city dwellers, especially for the young population (API, n.d.). Today, it is estimated that there are nearly 200,000 *boda-boda* drivers in KMA, and the industry continues to expand (Spooner et al., 2020). All these factors have combined to produce increases both in the demand and the supply of *boda-bodas*. More recently, and as a response to concerns related to safety, innovative entrepreneurs have designed *boda-boda* e-hailing services such as the Safe *Bodas* in Kampala. As reported by interviewees, the *boda-boda* e-hailing services are mainly used by foreign residents and females due to the increased sense of safety provided by the platform.

According to participants in this study, the fares of boda-bodas can reach three to four times those of minibuses for the same ride. Furthermore, specific circumstances, such as extreme weather conditions, can provide drivers with increased bargaining power over passengers, thus increasing the fare. Despite boda-bodas becoming one of the most effective solutions to congestion, and despite reaching the transport disadvantaged territories that no other transport system can reach, their high fares take an important share of their user's income and makes them inaccessible for the low-income population.



4.1.3 BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

The concept of BRT systems has received important support from development partners such as the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), among other development agencies. Nevertheless, the BRT system in DAR has received considerable criticism related to the system's limited availability and its lack of affordability (Joseph et al., 2021; Rizzo, 2019). BRT systems have been put forward as a legitimate transport policy solution to what local actors deem as the most pressing transport-related problem in East African cities: congestion (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2017; Joseph et al., 2021). The BRT system was also valued by potential commuters for its comfort, travel fare, and its potential to reduce travel times for residents of peripheral areas (Nkurunziza et al., 2012). When

facing the question of where to channel BRT investment, criteria such as high demand and efficiency have become the blueprint for distribution criteria. Implementing agencies and funding partners resort to policy analysis tools designed to identify the corridors in which BRT investment will yield the larger net utility. Directing BRT investment into the most efficient corridors is expected to achieve the goal of transport systems becoming self-financed, which is another important goal for local actors.



4.1.4 E-HAILING PLATFORMS

Since 2013, foreign-based e-hailing companies, such as Uber and Taxify, have entered the market in East African cities (ITNA, 2018). Other Africa-based e-hailing platforms have followed the example and are now trying to get their market share (Mourdoukoutas, 2017). E-hailing platforms have also played a role in job creation within African cities, with estimates suggesting that Uber alone has 60,000 drivers operating in 15 major African cities (Mourdoukoutas, 2017). While these companies have achieved a stable operation, participants in the study pointed out several challenges are in e-hailing services. First, the lack of adequate roads and severe traffic congestion makes e-hailing services a slow trip. Customers wait long periods of time for the cars to arrive and then spend considerable amounts of time in traffic jams. Additionally, the high fares for the use of e-hailing services makes them an option available only for the middle- and high-income population.



4.2 How socially just is public transport in East African cities?

4.2.1 AVAILABILITY

The results of the access index are presented in Table 1. In the case of Kampala Metropolitan Area, when the service area is set at twice the international standard – 1,600 meters – 39.1 percent of the territory has no access and 45.9 percent falls within the low category. If the service area is set at the international standard – 800 meters – then 70.6 percent of the territory lacks access to public transport. Similarly for Dar es Salaam, when the service zone is set at twice the international standard, 66.5 percent of the territory has no access to public transport stops and 26.8 percent has low access. However, if the service zone of public transport stops is set at the international standard, things look worse, as 83.1 percent of the territory lacks access at all.

Mapping of the access index allows us to confirm that in both cases, the spatial distribution of access to public transport is heavily influenced by the monocentric structure of the cities (Maps 1 to 4). While the population closest to the CBD have increased levels of access to public transport stops, the population in peripheral areas has low or no access. In the case of KMA, Map 1 – set at the international standard of 800m service zone – allows to observe that most peripheral areas lack access to public transport stops. Even when the service zone buffer is set at 1,600 meters (Map 2), only the areas closer to the CBD have medium to high access to public transport, while peripheral areas have low or no access at all.

TABLE 1:

Access to public transport in Dar es Salaam and Kampala Metropolitan Region.

Source: Author's calculations based on shapefiles provided by the FES country offices of Tanzania and Uganda.

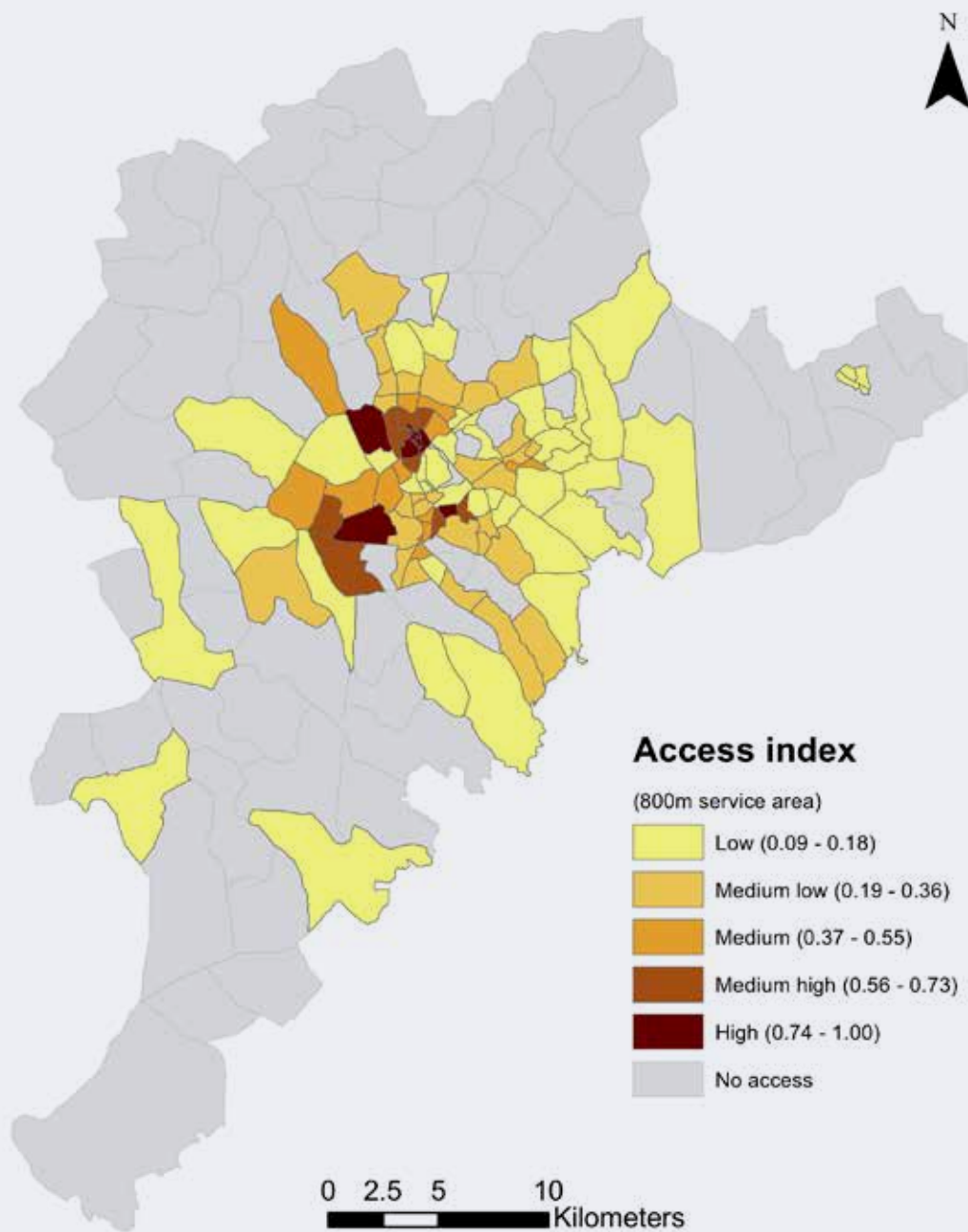
| | No access | Low | Medium low | Medium | Medium high | High | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|---------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Dar es Salaam | | | | | | | |
| 800m buffer (Ha) | 135,377.7 | 19,482.1 | 4,375.6 | 1,832.4 | 1,208.4 | 337.0 | 162,973.2 |
| (%) | 83.1 | 11.9 | 2.7 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 100 |
| 1,600m buffer (Ha) | 108,301.1 | 43,677.7 | 4,632.3 | 3,106.2 | 2,088.9 | 1,167.0 | 162,973.2 |
| (%) | 66.5 | 26.8 | 2.8 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 100 |
| Kampala Metro Area | | | | | | | |
| 800m buffer (Ha) | 72,949.5 | 20,234.3 | 5,914.4 | 2,289.1 | 1,124.3 | 803.7 | 103,315.4 |
| (%) | 70.6 | 19.6 | 5.7 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 100 |
| 1,600m buffer (Ha) | 40,397.6 | 47,476.9 | 8,823.1 | 3,656.6 | 2,161.3 | 799.8 | 103,315.4 |
| (%) | 39.1 | 45.9 | 8.5 | 3.5 | 2.1 | 0.8 | 100 |

HOW JUST IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST AFRICAN CITIES?

The case of DAR shows the same spatial pattern as the case of KMA, with the characteristic that the stations of the BRT system in DAR overlap perfectly with areas with good access to previously existing public transport stops to begin with (Maps 3 and 4). If at all, only at the western most section of the BRT system does the Dar Rapid Transit (DART) contribute to increasing public transport access among the low- and medium-income categories. A key aspect to keep in mind is that DART did not add new public transport stops to the city; it only substituted taxi stops with BRT stops.

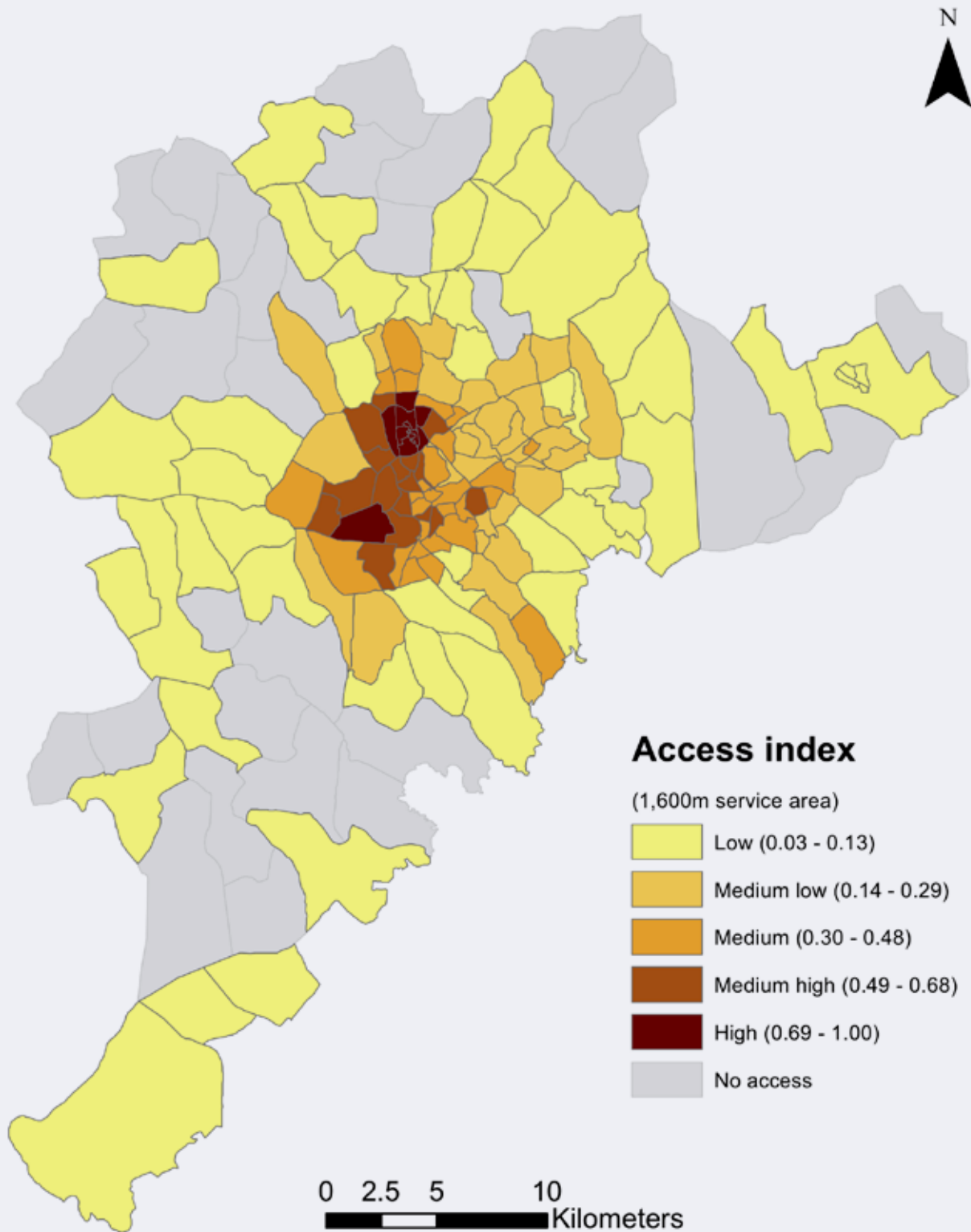
MAP 1

Access to minibus stops in KMA, 800m service zone

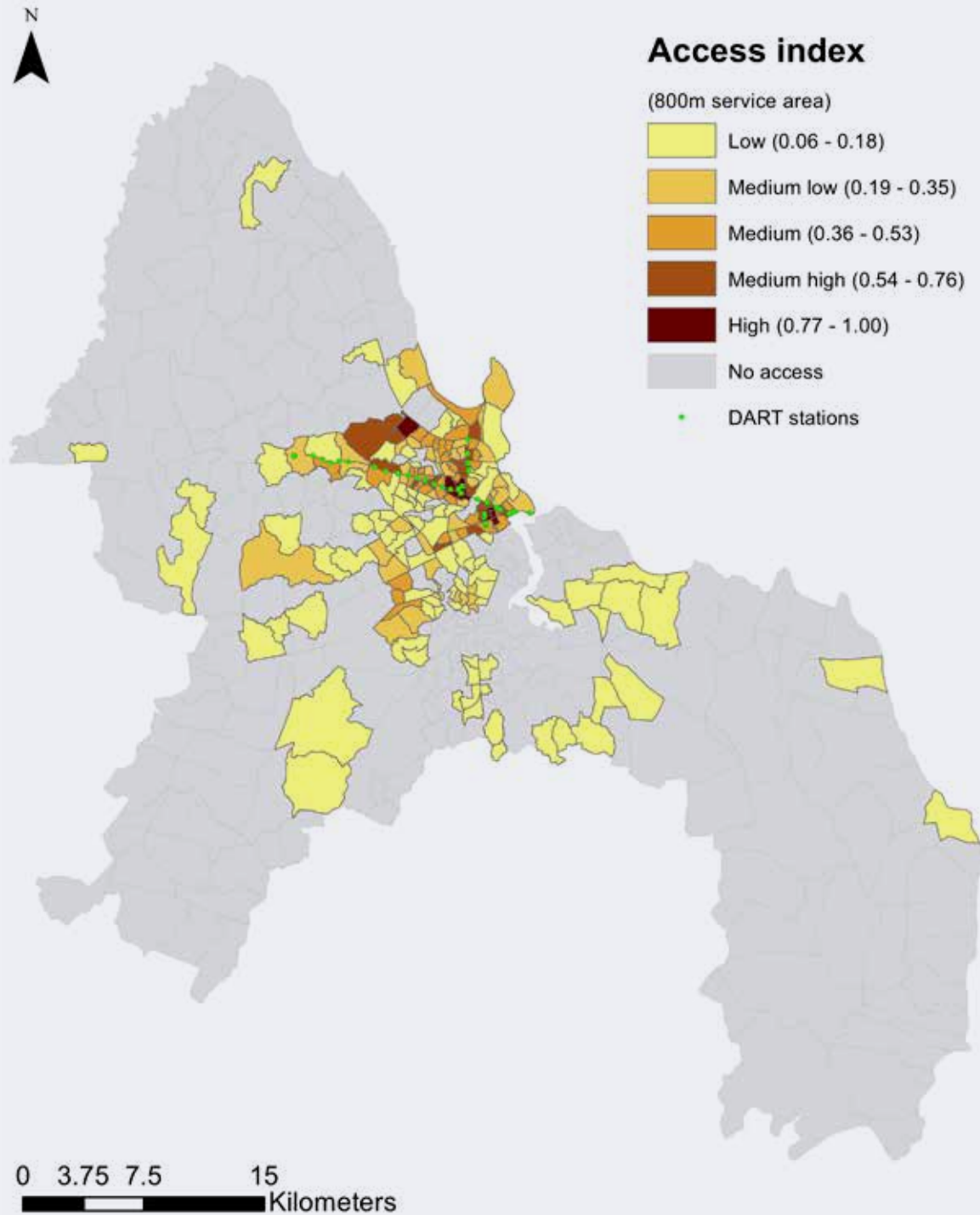


MAP 2:

Access to minibus stops in KMA, 1,600m service zone

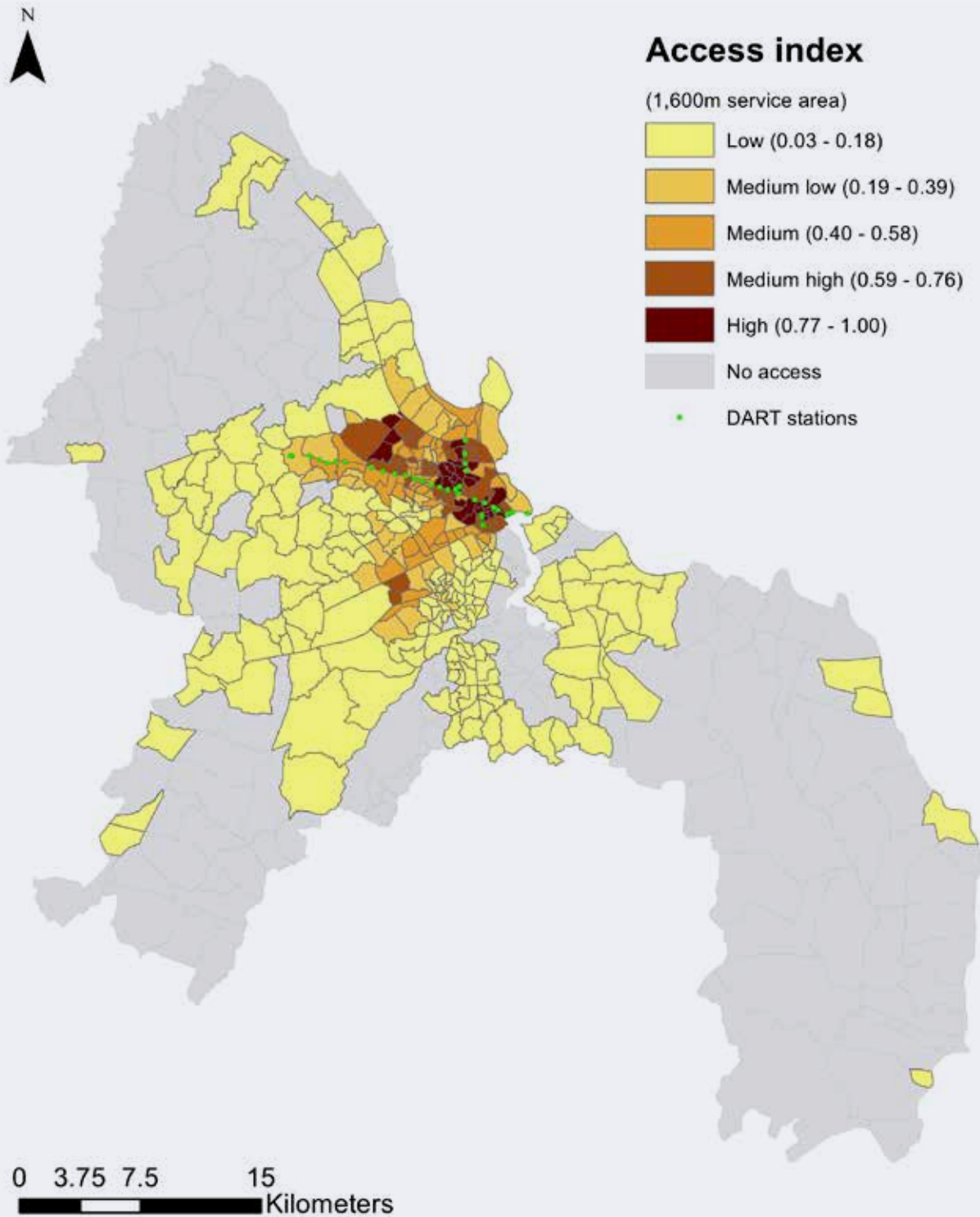


MAP 3:
Access to minibus and BRT stops in
DAR, 800m service zone



MAP 4:

Access to minibus and BRT stops in
DAR, 1,600m service zone



Deficiencies in roads infrastructure was a salient explanation among interviewees for the lack of public transport availability. The roads infrastructure in DAR and KMA is insufficient, with most secondary roads too narrow and unpaved (Joseph et al., 2021). KMA roads were constructed in the 1960s for an estimated carrying capacity of 100,000 vehicles, and yet today they are used by over 400,000 vehicles on a daily basis (Kiggundu et al., 2021). This is problematic because the minibus systems are bound to circulate through existing main roads, failing to expand coverage to territories lacking adequate roads. Additionally, an important share of new residential areas is being built in places lacking roads suitable for minibuses' circulation (Joseph et al., 2020, 2021; Kiggundu et al., 2021), leaving such places without service.

4.2.2 SAFETY AND AFFORDABILITY

Participants in the study raised several safety concerns that are well-documented by available research. There is persistent violence and harassment against women passengers in the minibus systems (Joseph et al., 2021), and the fear of being assaulted while riding boda-bodas (Kiyanga, 2021). Those who can –the middle-class and foreign residents– escape this safety concerns using e-hailing services. In the case of boda-bodas, e-hailing services such as Safe-boda allow the wealthier population to ride in a registered motorcycle with a registered driver, with the details of their trip being recorded in the e-hailing platform. There is also the concern about the safety of minibus workers due to fierce competitions for passengers. Participants in the study did report several incidents in which the competition for customers and revenue has caused violent events among minibus workers.

Affordability continues to be one of the most pressing problems in East Africa's public transport (Joseph et al., 2020, 2021; Rizzo, 2019). The 14-seater minibus services remain the most affordable mode of transport (Kiggundu et al., 2021). Nevertheless, as seen in Maps 2 and 4, most peripheral

areas have low or no access to such service, and for a large share of the population, the minibus is not an option. According to the interviewees, there are times of the day in which the carrying capacity of minibuses is too low compared to the demand, which makes it difficult for people to get ahold of a minibus. The lack of adequate road infrastructure produces severe congestion, and minibuses spend considerable time in traffic jams. Consequently, the population that has no easy access to a minibus, or that cannot afford to waste their time in a minibus, has no option but to ride a boda-boda, which can cost two to three times the price of a minibus for the same trip. Alternatively, a large share of the population prefers to do their trips by walking to cut transport costs altogether. This is especially the case for the population residing in informal housing settlements (also known as slums), usually located closer to the CBD, which enables their residents to walk to work or to search for economic opportunities (Vermeiren et al., 2012).

As explained earlier, the BRT in DAR has been advanced as a public transport solution that would alleviate congestion and make trips more affordable. The DART has received a considerable number of critics for its high fares and poor capacity. Regarding fares, the two-way ticket of DART is considerably more expensive than the same trip in a dala dala (Joseph et al., 2020). According to some calculations, a DART two-way ticket can take up to 30 percent of the daily income of 70 percent of DAR's population (Rizzo, 2019), and therefore excludes the low-income population from using the system (Rizzo, 2019; Vermeiren et al., 2015). Regarding the system's congestion, interviewees reported that DART's capacity is not enough to service its existing demand. This is especially the case during peak hours, as the high monocentricity of DAR around the CBD produces an excess of demand in the mornings and evenings. Consequently, during peak hours there are not enough buses, the capacity of the system is overwhelmed, and commuters in a rush have no option but to use a boda-boda.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is also posing important safety and affordability challenges for public transport in DAR and KMA. The extent to which the pandemic is affecting public transport seems to be mediated by the duration of lockdowns and the measures imposed by the government.



In the case of DAR, where the lockdown lasted for only three months between March and May 2020, and restrictions have been almost lifted, public transport has returned to pre-pandemic scenarios. In KMA, in contrast, measures to mitigate the Covid-19 infection rates remain (KCCA, 2020), and public transport has been affected considerably.



In KMA, several Covid-related measures have negatively affected the minibus system. Minibuses were forced to reduce their capacity from 14 to 8 passengers, and due to an ongoing curfew, cars must stop circulating at six in the evening (KCCA, 2020). Minibuses' demand has decreased because there is the widespread belief that passengers purposefully avoid riding a minibus to avoid physical proximity with other people. The combination of reduced demand and reduced capacity has decreased revenue, making it more difficult for drivers to operate at a profit while still being able to pay the daily rent to bus owners for operating the vehicle (Rizzo & Atzeni, 2020). Minibus drivers have been forced to increase the fare, so passengers pay more per ride. Because of increased taxi fares, many passengers are switching to boda-bodas, contributing to decreasing the demand for minibus trips.

In addition to its effects on affordability, the pandemic is also affecting job security of workers in the public transport sector through an array of mechanisms.

First, given that most minibus stages allocate cars to drivers on a first-come-first-served basis, drivers are finding it more difficult to get ahold of a vehicle to work. Therefore, most minibus drivers are only working one out of three days.

Second, being out of work, minibus drivers have been forced to look for alternative sources of income. When not working, drivers are engaging in alternative kinds of trades and economic activity.

Third, the pandemic is affecting the number of jobs available in the minibus stages. Aiming to lower the cost of operating their vehicles, drivers are beginning to bring their wives as conductors or work without one. This allows them to offset the effects of reduced revenue.

4.2.3 INCLUSION

The extent to which public transport in East African cities pays attention to the needs of all persons has important nuances. From a universal accessibility and gender perspective, public transport can be deemed as not inclusive. Participants in the study agree that issues of universal accessibility for people with disabilities, the elderly, and children, do not hold an important place in priorities of public transport providers. Virtually all public transport vehicles lack equipment for universal accessibility (Joseph et al., 2020). Additionally, and as explained earlier, public transport excludes female passengers who feel unsafe using the system.

Aiming to bring nuance into the discussion, it should be acknowledged that other aspects about the mobility needs of the population are better satisfied by informal public transport. Recent research in DAR by Joseph et al (2021) that compares mobility perceptions after implementation of DART found that in the eyes of passengers, traditional public transport is more inclusive than the BRT.

For instance, minibuses and boda-bodas continue to have a lower fare, connect people with remote neighborhoods and places outside the major roads, and the possibility to commute with goods (Joseph et al., 2021). In this way, given the specific needs of the population in East African cities, informal public transport could in some cases be considered more inclusive than formal solutions such as the BRT.

4.2.4 HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

As the findings of this study should have made clear by now, in DAR and KAM the population does not have equal right of access and use of public transport.

- The low-income population is outpriced from using any kind of public transport, and instead they are forced to walk. The population does not have the ability to choose from different travel options and modes. As shown by Maps 2 and 4, the population in peripheral areas has no access to minibus services and instead they are forced to ride a more expensive boda-boda or to walk.
- Traffic jams also push the population away from minibuses and into boda-bodas.
- Safety concerns push those who can afford it into a Safe-boda. Even the BRT system in DAR cannot be an option for a large share of the population due to long waiting times, overcrowding in buses and stations, and difficulties to commute with goods (Joseph et al., 2021).
- Regarding equal access to decent jobs in the public transport sector, both existing research and interviewees point to the precarity of transport-related jobs. For instance, estimates for KMA suggest that only nine percent of the minibus crew have written agreements with employers, working hours are extremely long, with 36 percent of the crew reporting working more than 15 hours per day, and earnings for drivers employed informally can fluctuate considerably (Spooner et al., 2020).

4.2.5 SUSTAINABILITY

By this point, the evidence presented so far should make it clear that public transport systems in East Africa are not prepared to respond to the rising mobility needs brought about by their increased urbanization. DAR and KMA are urbanizing rapidly (Joseph et al., 2021; Vermeiren et al., 2012), and the high monocentricity of their urban structure (Goswami & Lall, 2016) means that the mobility demand towards the CDB will continue to increase at a dramatic pace. Nor DAR or KMA are preparing their transport systems for this challenge. Their governments have not invested in expanding the roads network and their capacity since the seventies (Kiggundu et al., 2021). As explained by the interviewees, the lack of adequate roads limits the ability to increase any public transport system capacity. Perhaps DAR was trying to adapt its public transport for future needs through the DART, but the slow pace of implementation (Rizzo, 2015) is compromising the effectiveness of its public transport policy. The combination between high monocentricity and lack of adequate roads suggests that congestion is likely to persist, with important implications for air pollution, quality of life, and overall environmental sustainability.



4.3 Towards a just public transport in East Africa

4.3.1 IMPROVING AVAILABILITY

According to the interviewees, improving road infrastructure can potentially bring improvements in availability of public transport. Such availability improvements would be sparked through a series of mechanisms.

First, increasing road capacity would contribute to ameliorate congestion, therefore easing travel.

Second, road investment in hitherto inaccessible places would invite minibus organizations to expand their service area to reach disconnected places.

Third, improving road infrastructure would contribute to the feasibility of transport solutions such as BRT systems that require ample urban space.

Of course, there are important challenges to improving road infrastructure that should be carefully considered. For example, the financial capacity of governments for road investment should be enhanced. International cooperation agencies could play a key role in financing the road building efforts. Nevertheless, a word of caution is needed.

The urban morphology of some areas will make it impossible to build roads without displacing populations (Jan, 2019; Lukenangula, 2017; Spooner et al., 2020). This means that the socio-economic consequences of road building should be carefully examined through equity lenses:

- Which should be the origins and destinations that improved road infrastructure ought to connect?
- Which urban space should be reclaimed for improved road infrastructure?
- Which are the populations that would be potentially displaced?

- How would those displaced be compensated to promote urban development without making any urban population worse off?

These and other questions should be explored to ensure that road development is just.

4.3.2 ENHANCING INCLUSION

As pointed out by several of the interviewees, there is the urgent need to strengthen data availability on the demand for transport. This is another area of opportunity for international cooperation agencies, as they could support the production of origin-destination surveys to shed light on the demand for transport. Such surveys should be aimed at being representative at the lowest geographical levels possible, aiming to show differences in transport demand at the smallest intra-urban level. A better understanding of intra-urban mobility needs would allow policymakers and international donors to be responsive to the mobility needs of the population. Increased road infrastructure and a better knowledge of the mobility needs would allow efforts like BRT systems to achieve increased availability and inclusiveness.

4.3.3 IMPROVING AFFORDABILITY

There is an urgent need for policies that make public transport affordable for low-income populations.

There is a consensus among participants in the study that affordability could be achieved by fare regulation. While regulation is a legitimate policy tool that is commonly used in public transport policy, the potential of regulation to achieve an affordable public transport system must be carefully examined. The key is to assess if regulation can accomplish lowering fares to an amount that would not prevent any user from riding public transport systems – what economists call non-excludability. In a context like East African cities, achieving non-excludability through regulation is challenging.

Given that most public transport in DAR and KAM is informal, government regulation faces the challenges of enforcement. Additionally, given the large share of the low-income population, realizing non-excludability will require a very low fare close to negligible. In a context in which most public transport systems are privately-owned and -managed, are driven by a for-profit logic, and with increasing operation costs, establishing a fare close to non-excludable through regulation would make the transport systems unprofitable, and therefore financially unsustainable. Hence, regulation might not be enough to achieve increased affordability.

A combination of policy tools is needed. Regulation must be accompanied by financial and organizational policy tools. Regarding financial policy tools, offering a subsidy either to providers of public transport services or to passengers can contribute to a reduced fare. Public investment in infrastructure for transport systems, such as roads, stations, stops, parking lots, and in services such as ticketing, cleaning, and so forth, can reduce the operational and maintenance costs of transport systems, thus achieving profitable margins at a reduced fare. As per organizational policy tools, direct provision of public transport systems by the state is a widespread strategy through which governments win control over their fares and service provision.

The implementation of financial and organizational policy tools for public transport delivery in East African cities has its own challenges. For example, participants in the study agreed that the lack of political will by local politicians is one of the main causes obstructing the delivery of public transport systems. According to the interviewees, the efforts to build a BRT system in KMA stalled after the local government refused to follow requests made by funding development partners about creating a new metropolitan governance structure for public transport. Discussing the particularities of these and other challenges is beyond the scope of this working paper. Nevertheless, the key message

is that fare regulation is not the only policy instrument available to achieve affordability, and a broader conversation about alternative policy instruments is urgently needed. In the context of the budgetary challenges faced by urban governments in East Africa, the support of development partners plays a key role in the deployment of financial and organizational policy tools. The funding provided by development partners can be channeled to secure public transport affordability for the “urban invisibles”.

4.3.4 IMPROVING TRANSPORT AS A HUMAN RIGHT AND EQUITY

The gateway to improve the delivery of mobility as a human right and improved equity is to increase the availability and affordability of existing public transport systems. As explained earlier, the insufficient service area of the minibuses leaves the population in peripheral areas with no other option but to walk or ride expensive boda-bodas. The deficiencies of the BRT system in DAR forces the population to look for alternative transport modes. The high fares of BRT, minibuses, and boda-bodas leaves no option to the low-income population residing in slums but to walk to avoid transport costs. Improving the availability and affordability of transport systems can potentially contribute to increase the travel modes and options for the population, and therefore a better delivery of the right to mobility.

4.3.5 IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY

The projections indicate that DAR and KMA will continue to urbanize rapidly (Joseph et al., 2021; Vermeiren et al., 2015), which will bring about further challenges to the sustainability of public transport systems and overall environmental sustainability. Adapting the public transport system to the increasing transport needs of their rising populations will require bringing this challenge to the forefront of the public and governmental agendas. Important amounts of financial resources are required, and international cooperation agencies can play a key role in this regard.

HOW JUST IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST AFRICAN CITIES?

Nevertheless, development partners must place special attention on how to make the investments in public transport more just. What are the distributional effects of public transport investment? Which urban populations capture the benefits of public transport investments, and which bear the burdens? And ultimately, how can international cooperation for public transport development advance just urban outcomes for the “urban invisibles”?

Considerable funding is needed to enhance road infrastructure. A word of caution must be said, however, about the risks of supporting the use of private vehicles by increasing roads capacity. Development partners and local policymakers must keep in mind recent research in cities from the global north arguing that expanding highways and building more roads can sometimes make traffic worse (Sisson, 2020; TFA, 2020).

The underlying reason for this is that enhancing the supply of roads makes it more attractive for urban residents to acquire a private vehicle, thus congesting roads once again. If what seems to be true for cities in the global north holds true for East African cities, increasing road capacity could potentially increase traffic congestion, and intensify air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In this sense, funding must be strategically allocated to increase road capacity for public transport systems while avoiding to support the use of private vehicles. This can be achieved through strategies such as the development of dedicated lanes for public transport. Important amounts of funding are also needed to make public transport more affordable through policies such as direct provision of public transport or fare subsidies for the low-income population.





Conclusions

05

This working paper aimed to assess how just the distribution of public transport in East African cities is, and what would it take to make transport more public and more just.

By analyzing the case studies of DAR and KMA, the paper identified the emerging mobility solutions in each urban region and examined how existing transport policies have produced unjust public transport landscapes. The analytical strategy consisted in examining public transport in the case studies through the lens of the Socially Just Public Transport Pillars as proposed by FES: inclusion, safe and affordable access, availability, human rights and equity, and sustainability.

The results of the study showed the urban spaces with the least access to public transport systems. These are the territories where the “mobility invisibles” reside, and they must become the object of policy intervention. Public transport in East African cities is unjust because most of their urban space lacks adequate access to public transport services. The population residing in these territories live under transport-related social exclusion which affects their access to urban opportunities, services, and resources. The dire situation of the “mobility invisibles” in East African cities must be brought to the forefront of public discussion and policy debates. This working paper seeks to contribute to this goal.

While existing public transport policies in East African cities have produced unjust urban outcomes for the “mobility invisibles”, there are ways to advance a more just public transport.

Public transport in East African cities is unjust because most of their urban space lacks adequate access to public transport services.

For example, investment in road infrastructure can allow the most affordable public transport system – the 14-seater minibus service– to reach the places currently underserved. This is an important area of opportunity for international development organizations who could play a key role in providing funding for road infrastructure to support public transport. The maps presented in this study point out to the areas where investment in road infrastructure and minibus availability is urgent. Investing in origin-destination surveys can provide key information about the demand for transport, which could be used to plan transport systems that are more inclusive. In addition to fare regulation, there is an urgent need for policies to make public transport affordable for the low-income population. Policies such as the direct provision of public transport systems or subsidies should be explored by national and local governments.

International cooperation agencies can play a key role by providing funding for the implementation of policies that are able to deliver a more just public transport. This is especially true in the junction of post-Covid-recovery programs, which could be used for policies aiming to improve the situation of the “mobility invisibles”. There is an urgent need for a broader conversation about what it is that international donors must do differently if they want to achieve more just outcomes of urbanization in East Africa. A more socially just public transport is a gateway to achieve more just urban outcomes for East Africa’s urban population. A more socially just public transport system is a gateway to contributing towards the goal of a just city in Africa.



References

06

- Andreasen, M. H., & Møller-Jensen, L. (2017). Access to the city: Mobility patterns, transport and accessibility in peripheral settlements of Dar es Salaam. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 62, 20–29.
- API, (n.d.). Workshop report. Agenda participation initiative and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Tanzania Office.
- Bhat, C. R., Guo, J. Y., Sen, S., & Weston, L. (2005). Measuring access to public transportation services: review of customer-oriented transit performance measures and methods of transit submarket identification. Austin, TX: Center for Transportation Research at The University of Texas at Austin.
- Church, A., Frost, M., & Sullivan, K. (2000). Transport and social exclusion in London. *Transport Policy*, 7, 195–205.
- Currie, G., & Delbosc, A. (2010). Modelling the social and psychological impacts of transport disadvantage. *Transportation*, 37(6), 953–966.
- Duranton, G., & Guerra, E. (2016). Developing a common narrative on urban accessibility: An urban planning perspective. In Brookings: moving to access. <https://tinyurl.com/h4f9evd>
- FES, (2020). Towards the just city in Kenya. Civil Society Urban Development Platform, Just City. Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/19072.pdf>
- Geurs, K. T., & van Wee, B. (2004). Accessibility evaluation of land-use and transport strategies: Review and research directions. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 12(2), 127–140.
- Goswami, A. G., & Lall, S. V. (2016). Jobs in the city: Explaining urban spatial structure in Kampala. Policy Research Working Paper Issue 7655. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Haas, A. (2017). From moving vehicles to moving people: Designing a mass public transportation system for Kampala. International Growth Center. Retrieved (November 22, 2021) from <https://www.theigc.org/blog/from-moving-vehicles-to-moving-people-designing-a-mass-public-transportation-system-for-kampala/>
- IAPT. (2010). Major trends and case studies. International Association of Public Transport. Brussels: International Association of Public Transport.
- ITNA, (2018). Top 7 African taxi-hailing apps giving Uber a run for its money. IT News Africa. Retrieved (December 15, 2021) from <https://www.itnewsafrika.com/2018/06/top-7-african-taxi-hailing-apps-giving-uber-a-run-for-its-money/>
- Jan, A. (2019). Transforming urban transport – The role of political leadership TUT-POL Sub-Saharan Africa final report. Case: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- Joseph, L., Neven, A., Martens, K., Kweka, O., Wets, G., & Janssens, D. (2020). Activity participation and perceptions on informal public transport and bus rapid transit in Dar es Salaam. *Transportation Research Record*, 2674(11), 573–583.
- Joseph, L., Neven, A., Martens, K., Kweka, O., Wets, G., & Janssens, D. (2021). Exploring changes in mobility experiences and perceptions after implementation of the bus rapid transit system in Dar es Salaam. *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, 9(2), 930–938.
- KCCA. (2019). Statistical abstract for Kampala City. Kampala Capital City Authority. <https://www.kcca.go.ug/media/docs/Statistical-Abstract-2019.pdf>
- KCCA. (2020). Guidelines for opening public transport. Kampala Capital City Authority. <https://www.kcca.go.ug/news/399/guidelines-for-opening-public-transport#.Ybn04VO20Wp>
- Kellerman, A. (2006). Personal mobilities. Taylor & Francis. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203087169>

- Kenyon, S. (2003). Understanding social exclusion and social inclusion. *Municipal Engineer*, 156(ME2), 97–104.
- Kiggundu, A. T., Nyakwebara, C., Eriaku, W., & Nakanwagi, O. (2021). An assessment of stage bus transit operations in the greater Kampala, Uganda. *International Refereed Journal of Engineering and Science (IRJES)*, 10(6), 26–50.
- Kiyanga, B. (2021). Chaos and disruptions as the challenge to urban transportation in Tanzania. *Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering*, 9, 73–80.
- Kumar, A., & Barret, F. (2008). Stuck in traffic: urban transport in Africa. *Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic Background*. World Bank Group.
- López-García, D. (2021). Interactions between economic development, housing, and transit policies and the mobility experience of workers in Greater Mexico City. Doctoral Dissertation presented at The New School.
- Lucas, K. (2012). Transport and social exclusion: Where are we now? *Transport Policy*, 20, 105–113.
- Lukenangula, J. M. B. (2017). Wakability in rapidly growing cities in developing countries: The case of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Spatial Planning of the TU Dortmund University, Germany.
- Macchi, S., Ricci, L., Congedo, L., & Faldi, G. (2013). Adapting to climate change in coastal Dar es Salaam. AESOP- AC SP Joint Congress, 15-19 July, Dublin, July, 18.
- Mourdoukoutas, E. (2017). Africa's app-based taxis battle Uber over market share. *Africa Renewal*. Retrieved (December 15, 2021) from <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-november-2017/africa-s-app-based-taxis-battle-uber-over-market-share>
- Mulley, C., & Nelson, J. D. (2019). Public transportation systems. *Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of urban and regional studies*, 1 (6). Wiley. DOI:10.1002/9781118568446.eurs0253
- Murray, A. T., & Davis, R. (2001). Equity in regional service provision. *Journal of Regional Science*, 41(4), 577–600.
- Nkurunziza, A., Zuidgeest, M., Brussel, M., & Van den Bosch, F. (2012). Spatial variation of transit service quality preferences in Dar-es-Salaam. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 24, 12–21.
- Oviedo, D., & Titheridge, H. (2016). Mobilities of the periphery: Informality, access and social exclusion in the urban fringe in Colombia. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 55, 152–164.
- Rizzo, M. (2015). The political economy of an urban megaproject: The bus rapid transit project in Tanzania. *African Affairs*, 114(455), 249–270.
- Rizzo, M. (2019). Dar es Salaam's new rapid bus system won international acclaim – but it excludes the poor. *The Conversation*. Retrieved (November 22, 2021) from <https://theconversation.com/dar-es-salaams-new-rapid-bus-system-won-international-acclaim-but-it-excludes-the-poor-109987>
- Rizzo, M., & Atzeni, M. (2020). Workers' power in resisting precarity: comparing transport workers in Buenos Aires and Dar es Salaam. *Work, Employment and Society*, 34(6), 1114–1130.
- Schuschny, A., & Soto, H. (2009). Guía metodológica: Diseño de indicadores compuestos de desarrollo sostenible. Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL).
- Sisson, P. (2020). Expanding highways and building more roads actually makes traffic worse. *CURBED*. Retrieved (December 15, 2021) from <https://archive.curbed.com/2020/3/6/21166655/highway-traffic-congestion-induced-demand>

- Spooner, D., Mwanika, J. M., Natamba, S., & Manga, E. O. (2020). *Kampala Bus Rapid Transit: Understanding Kampala's Paratransit Market Structure* (Issue June). Manchester: Global Labour Institute.
- Stone, D. (2012). *Policy Paradox: The art of political decision making*. Third Edition. New York, NY: Norton & Company.
- TFA, (2020). *The congestion con: How more lanes and more money equals more traffic*. Washington, DC: Transportation for America.
- van Wee, B., & Geurs, K. T. (2011). Discussing equity and social exclusion in accessibility evaluations. *European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research*, 11(4), 350–367.
- Verlinghieri, E., & Venturini, F. (2018). Exploring the right to mobility through the 2013 mobilizations in Rio de Janeiro. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 67(September 2017), 126–136.
- Vermeiren, K., Van Rompaey, A., Loopmans, M., Serwajja, E., & Mukwaya, P. (2012). Urban growth of Kampala, Uganda: Pattern analysis and scenario development. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 106(2), 199–206.
- Vermeiren, K., Verachtert, E., Kasajja, P., Loopmans, M., Poesen, J., & Van Rompaey, A. (2015). Who could benefit from a bus rapid transit system in cities from developing countries? A case study from Kampala, Uganda. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 47, 13–22.
- Vinay, S., Henderson, V., & Venables, A. J. (2017). *Africa's cities: Opening doors to the world*. World Bank Group.
- Weingaertner, C., Svane, Ö., & Brikell, B. (2008). Daladala buses deregulated - Analysing urbanisation's situations of opportunity via Tanzanian example. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 3(1), 16–28.
- World Bank, (2020). *Urban mobility and COVID-19 in Africa*. World Bank Group, Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Just City in Africa

© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kenya Office, 2022



Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Kenya Office
info@fes-kenya.org
P.O. Box 14932-00800
Nairobi, Kenya