

# Urbanization Trends Around The World: Regional Perspectives And Approaches And Linkages With Families

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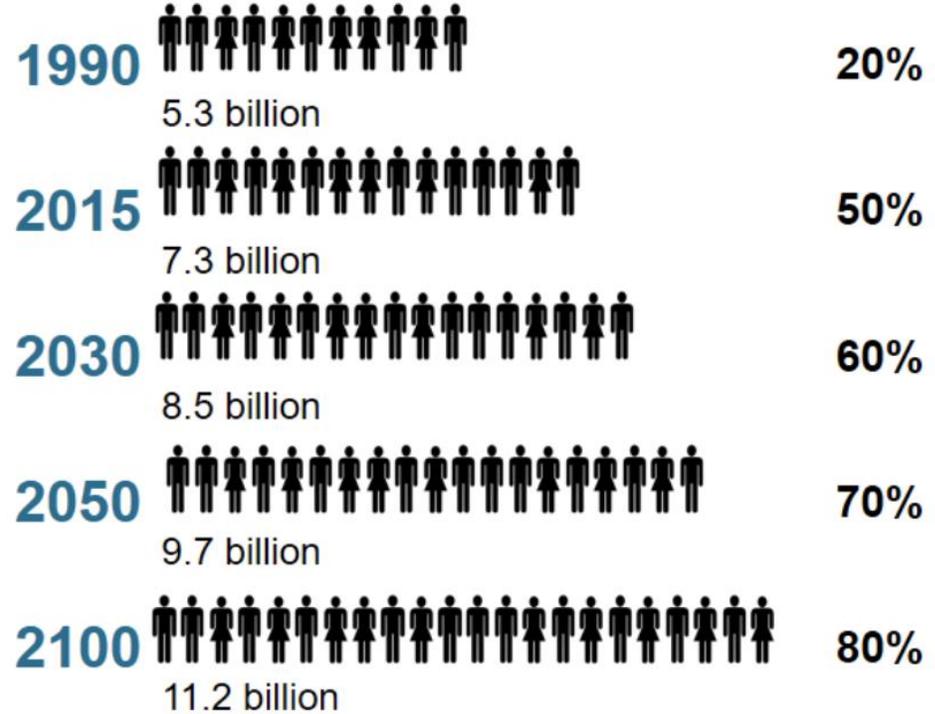
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# Urbanization

- The future of the world's population is urban (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2018)
- Urbanization is part of four demographic mega-trends including the growth of the global population, population ageing, and international migration
- By mid-century, roughly two thirds (68 per cent) of the world's population will be living in urban areas
- 90 per cent of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa

## World Population & Urbanization

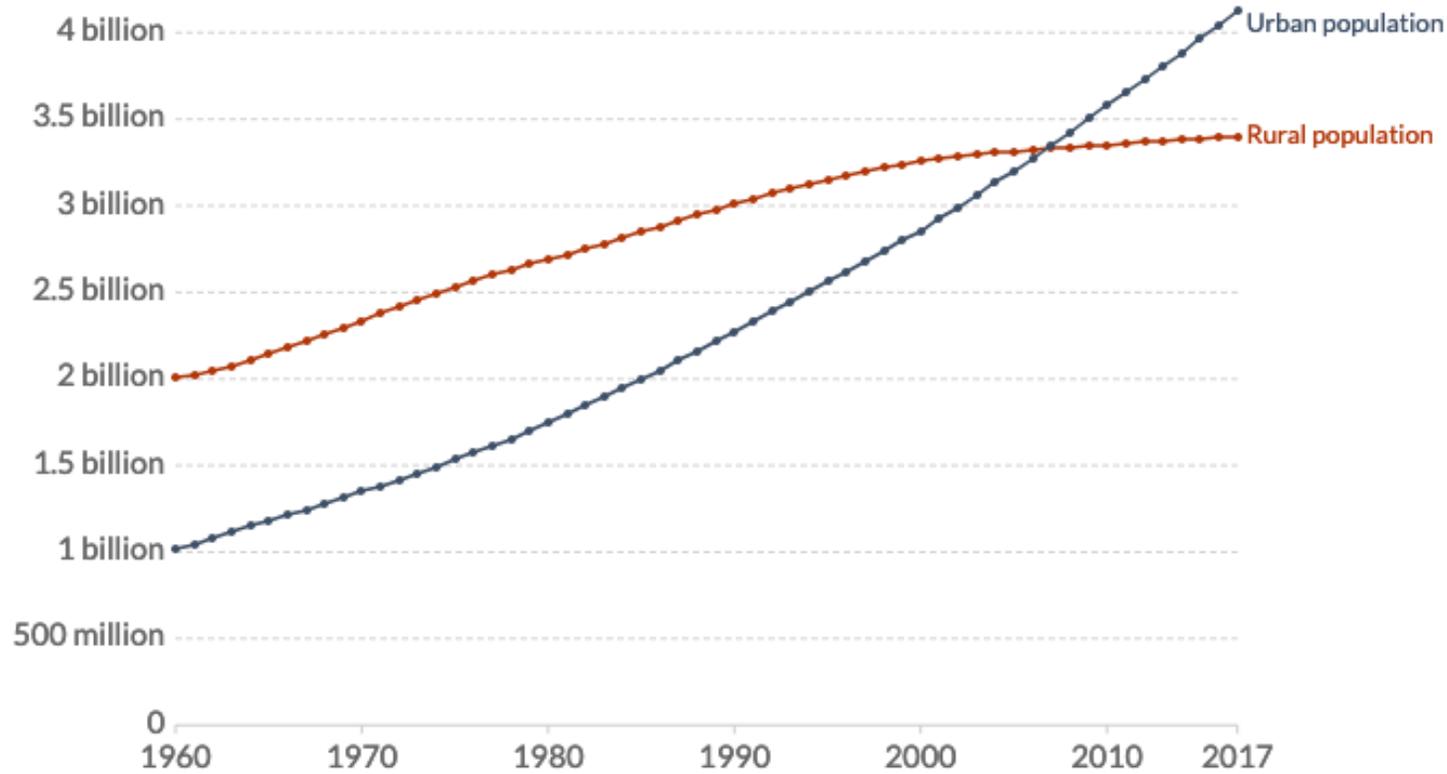


Source: United Nations

# Number of people living in urban and rural areas, World, 1960 to 2017

Our World  
in Data

↔ Change country



Source: UN World Urbanization Prospects (2018)

OurWorldInData.org/urbanization • CC BY

Note: Urban populations are defined based on the definition of urban areas by national statistical offices.



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# What Is Urbanization?

- Number of inhabitants combined with:
  - Population density
  - Built up areas
  - Commuting density
  - Travel distance
  - Number of individuals not engaged in agricultural economic activities

Country	National definition of 'urban'
Argentina	Localities with 2,000 inhabitants or more.
Sweden	Built-up areas with 200 inhabitants or more and where houses are at most 200 metres apart.
Japan	Cities defined as shi. In general, shi refers to a municipality that satisfies the following conditions: (1) 50,000 inhabitants or more; (2) 60 per cent or more of the houses located in the main built-up areas; (3) 60 per cent or more of the population (including their dependents) engaged in manufacturing, trade or other urban type of business.
India	Statutory places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee and places satisfying all of the following three criteria: (1) 5,000 inhabitants or more; (2) at least 75 per cent of male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and (3) at least 400 inhabitants per square kilometre.
Zimbabwe	Places officially designated as urban, as well as places with 2,500 inhabitants or more whose population resides in a compact settlement pattern and where more than 50 per cent of the employed persons are engaged in non-agricultural occupations.
Singapore	Entire population.

# Ever Expanding Urbanization



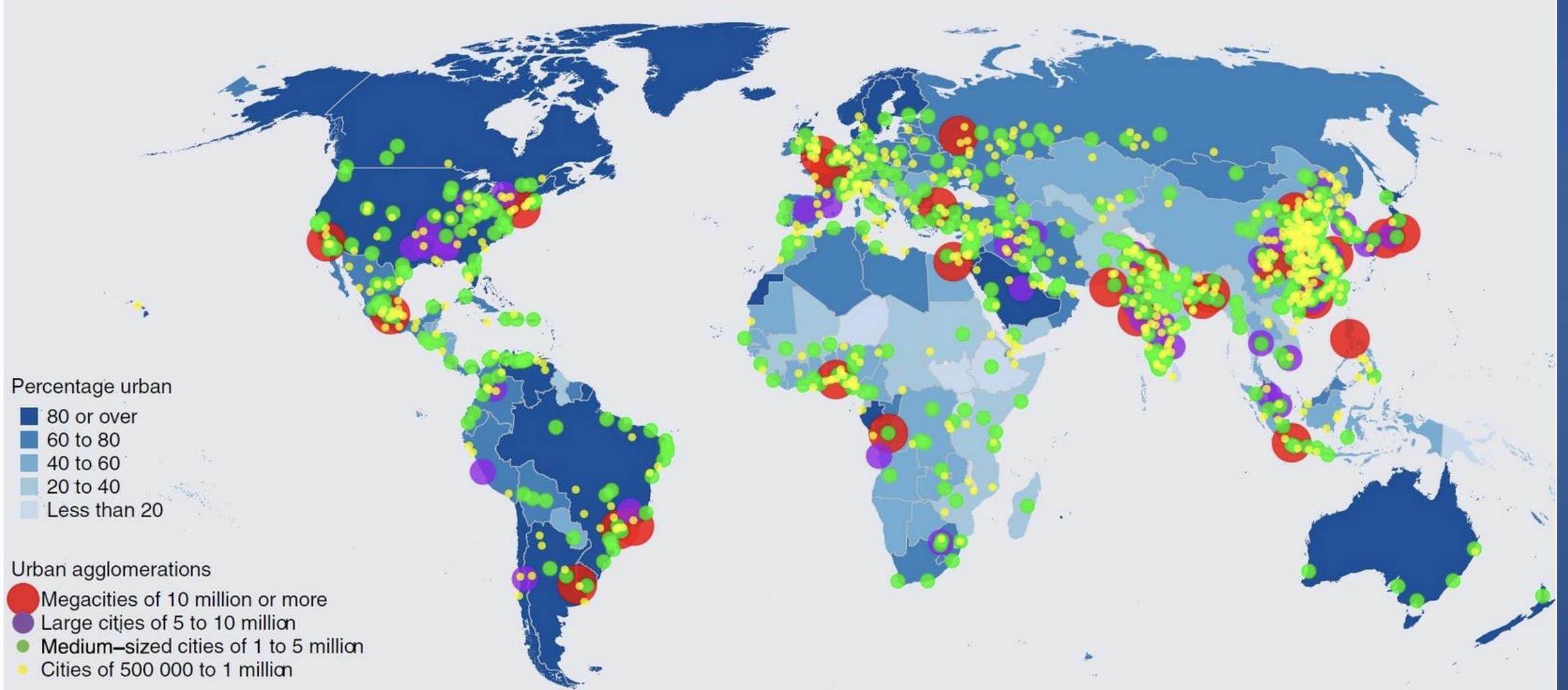
4.2 billion people, today live in urban areas vs. approx. 3.1 billion in rural areas

95% of urban expansion: low & middle-income countries

In 1950 about 2/3 of population worldwide lived in rural settlements and 1/3 in urban settlements

**By 2050, we will observe roughly the reverse distribution, with more than 6 billion people**

Complexity of the rural – urban continuum



**Table 4.2. Largest metropolitan areas of the world**

Rank	Metropolitan area	Population in 2015	Country	Region
1	Tokyo	36.5 million	Japan	East Asia and the Pacific
2	Delhi	30.1 million	India	South Asia
3	Jakarta	29.8 million	Indonesia	East Asia and the Pacific
4	Shanghai	26.9 million	China	East Asia and the Pacific
5	Manila	25.0 million	Philippines	East Asia and the Pacific
6	Seoul	24.3 million	South Korea	East Asia and the Pacific
7	Cairo	23.5 million	Egypt	Middle East and North Africa
8	Kolkata	23.1 million	India	South Asia
9	Mumbai	22.3 million	India	South Asia
10	Sao Paulo	21.7 million	Brazil	Latin America and the Caribbean
11	Mexico City	21.4 million	Mexico	Latin America and the Caribbean
12	Beijing	21.3 million	China	East Asia and the Pacific
13	Dhaka	20.4 million	Bangladesh	South Asia
14	New York-Newark	19.5 million	United States	North America
15	Osaka	17.6 million	Japan	East Asia and the Pacific
16	Guangzhou	16.7 million	China	East Asia and the Pacific
17	Moscow	16.4 million	Russia	Europe and Central Asia
18	Bangkok	16.3 million	Thailand	East Asia and the Pacific
19	Los Angeles	15.7 million	United States	North America
20	Buenos Aires	15.0 million	Argentina	Latin America and the Caribbean

Note: This figure depicts the 15 largest metropolitan areas in the world in 2015.

Source: OECD calculations based on the Urban Centre Database GHS-UCDB R2019A, Florczyk, A. et al. (2019<sub>[2]</sub>), *GHS Urban Centre Database 2015, Multitemporal and Multidimensional Attributes, R2019A*, <https://data.jrc.ec.europa.eu/dataset/53473144-b88c-44bc-b4a3-4583ed1f547e>.

# Goal 11 in the 2030 United Nations Agenda

- Focuses on human settlements and specifically on making cities ***inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable***
- That this is a stand-alone goal highlights the importance of urbanization.
- Goal:
  - Resource-efficient, inclusive cities

U.N Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson:

“Cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost”

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



# Urbanization Is Interlinked With All Aspects of Life



- Affects:
  - Socio-demographic trends
  - Health
  - Natural resources
  - Environmental trends
  - Family Life



# Urban Sprawl

Urbanization is closely related to the three dimensions of sustainable development:

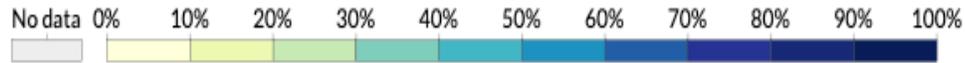
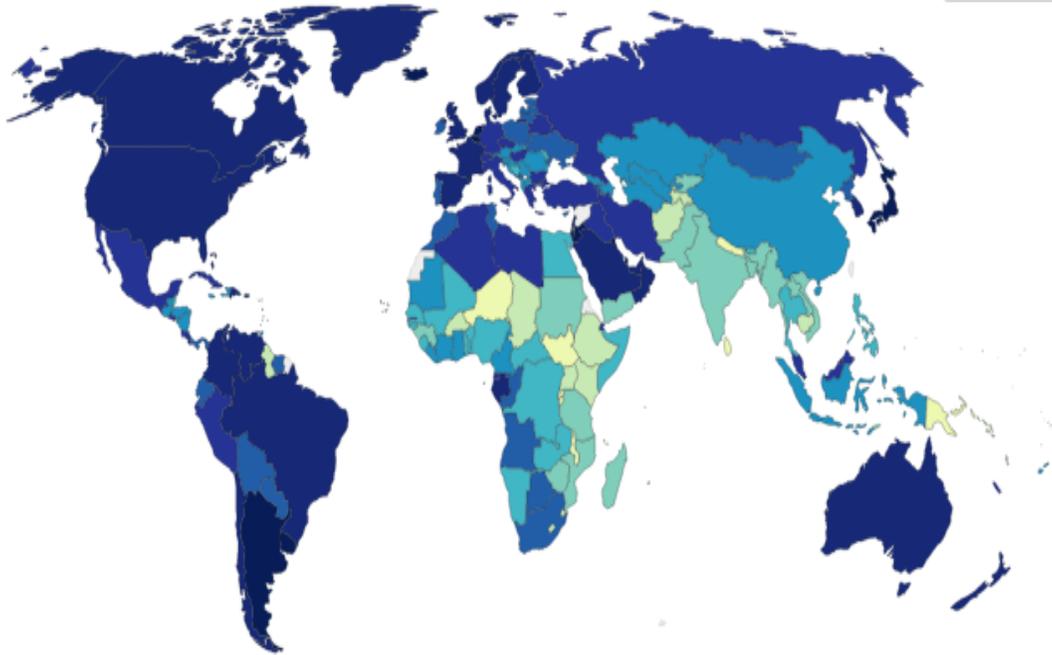
- Societal
- Economic
- Environmental

Challenge AND Opportunity

## Share of people living in urban areas, 2017

Our World  
in Data

World



Source: UN World Urbanization Prospects (2018)

OurWorldInData.org/urbanization • CC BY

Note: Urban populations are defined based on the definition of urban areas by national statistical offices.

▶ 1960  2017

## Urbanization Differs By Region

- In high-income countries – more than 80% of population lives in urban areas
- In low to lower-middle income countries the majority lives in rural areas – but this is changing rapidly

# Urbanization Does NOT Necessarily Mean “Better”



Industrial Revolution onwards: moving to a city was equated with economic growth

Contemporary urbanization indicates that this is not always the case

Urban poor in lower-income countries are much more likely to suffer from living in sub-standard conditions:

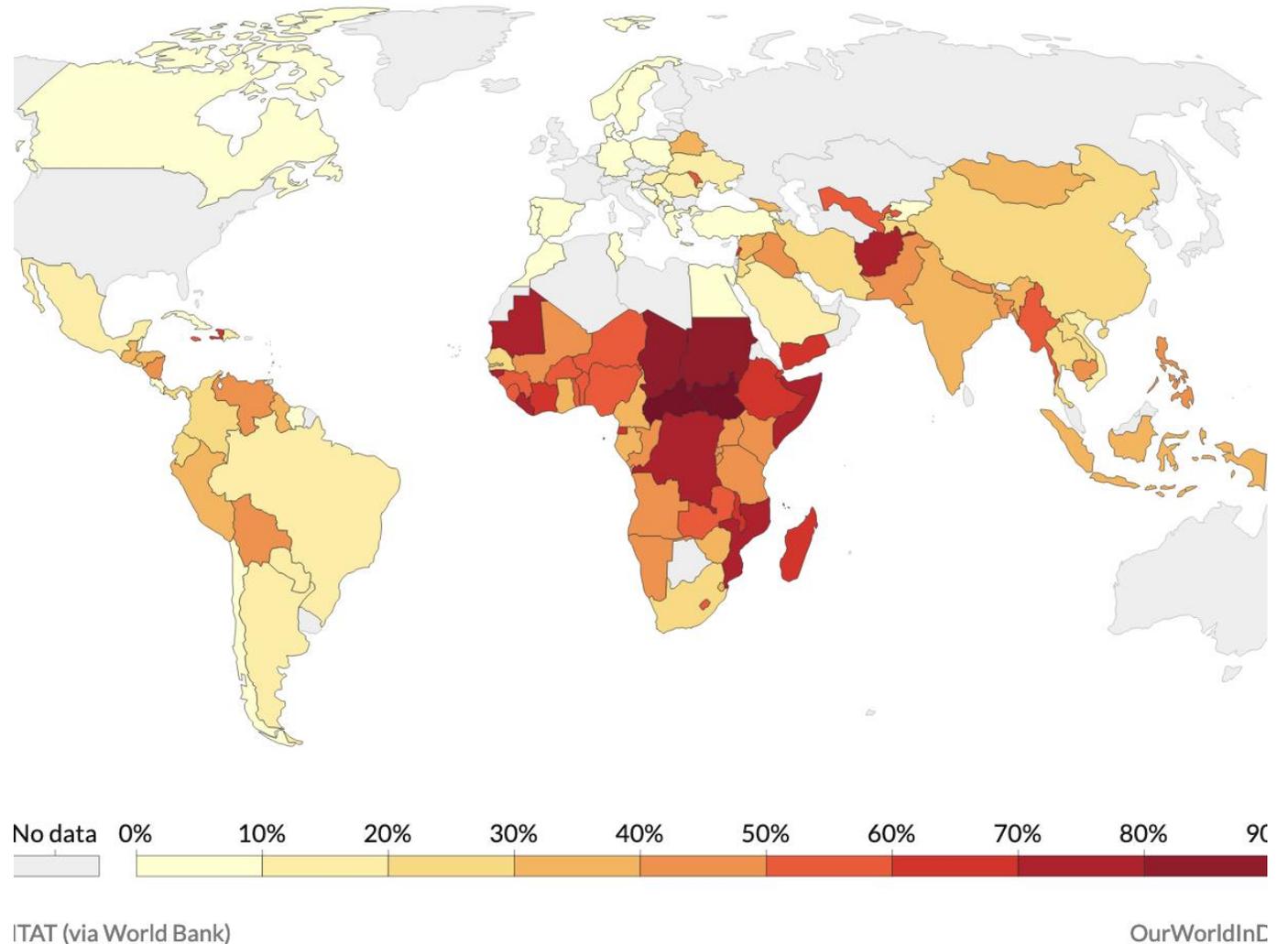
- Leads to a rise in mortality among children
- Increases diseases in the overall local population
- Growth in other various disparities in health-related factors

# Unequal Urbanization

- 23.5 percent of individuals in urban areas live in slums
  - In absolute numbers this equates to **over 1 billion** people
- 80 percent living in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (370 million), sub-Saharan Africa (238 million), and Central and Southern Asia (227 million) (UN, 2019)

## urban population living in slums, 2018

Slum is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking one or more of the following conditions: access to improved water, access to improved sanitation, sufficient living area, and durability of housing.



# Quality Of Living Varies in Urban Centers



- 1 in 3 households in urban areas live in slum conditions
- One measure of living standard:
  - Quality of life
  - Lack of access to water; sanitation; living area; quality of housing
- Unplanned sprawl leads to loss of biodiversity, natural vegetation and dramatic noise and air pollution
- Growth of slums in areas vulnerable to natural disasters
  - Leads to out migration

# *Urbanization* Is Closely Linked To *Migration*:

United Nations estimates, approximately 763 million individuals migrated internally within their own societies

- 281 million individuals, or 3.6 percent of the world population were living outside of their native countries as of 2020 (IOM, 2022)
- 79 million individuals currently forcibly displaced within or across international borders as result of conflict or natural disasters
  - Displacement is primarily an urban phenomenon
- 96.5% of people are living in their own societies



Migration is the voluntary movement or the involuntary movement (of individuals within a country, or across borders internationally, with the goal of creating a better life (UNDP, 2016)

# Migration Trends

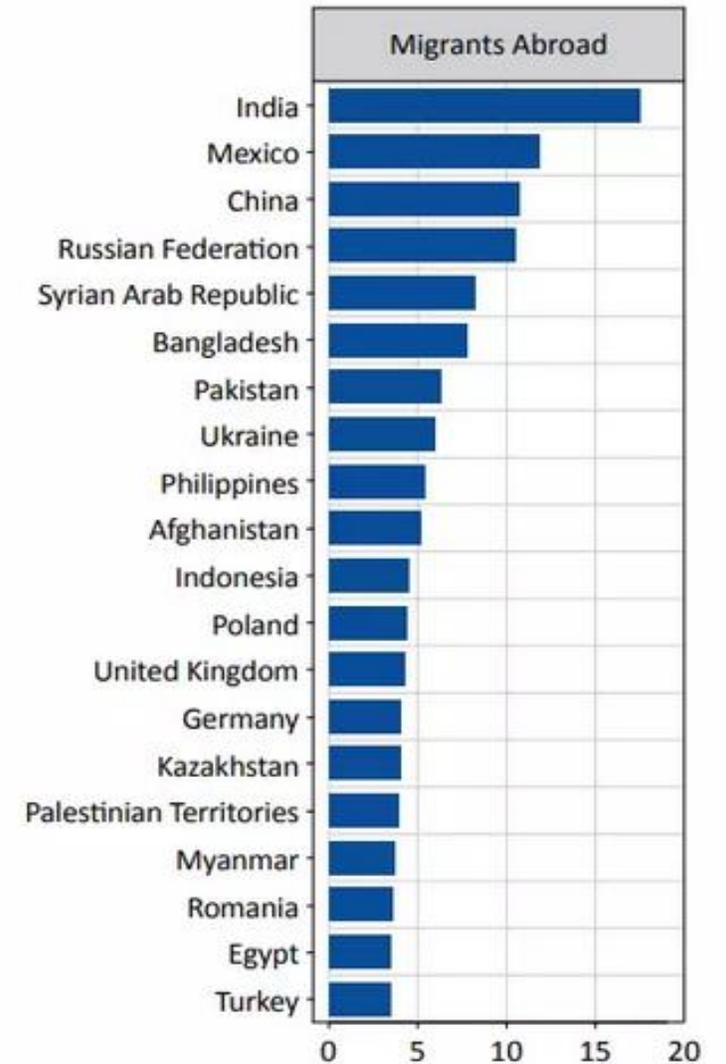
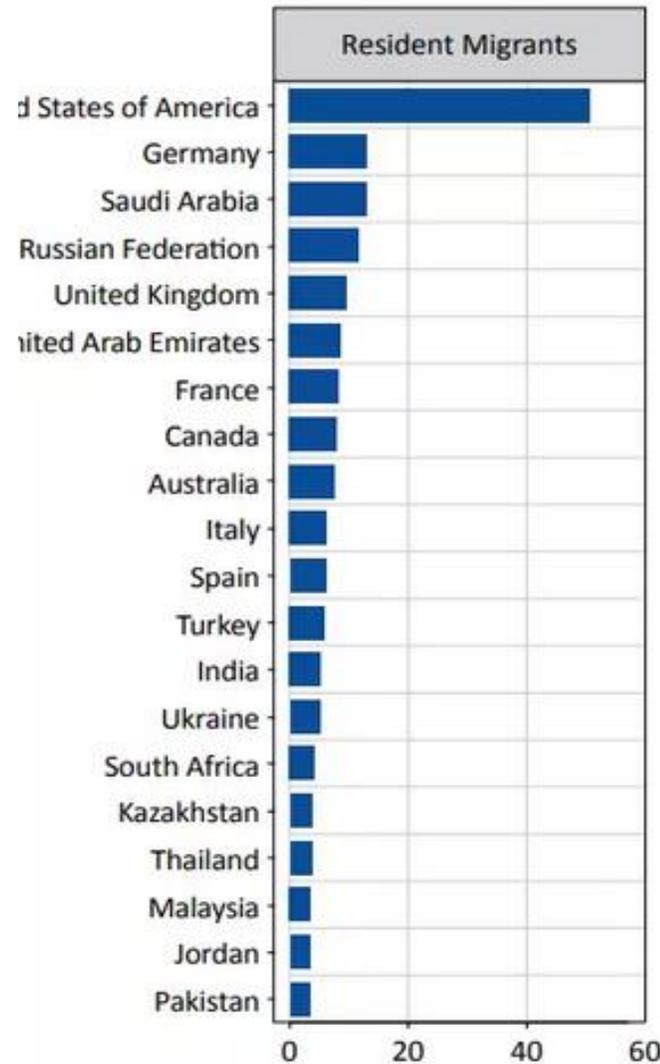
For many moving away from their hometown or village can be the best – sometimes the only – option open to improve their life chances

Migration can:

- Improve income
- Health
- Educational prospects

But its value is more than that: ***being able to decide where to live is a key element of human freedom*** (UNDP 2009, p. 1)

3. Top 20 destinations (left) and origins (right) of international migrants in 2019 (millions)



UN DESA, 2019a (accessed 18 September 2019).

6 of all international migrants worldwide in 2019 were born in Asia.

Image: World Migration Report 2020

# Migration Is Multi-Faceted

- Migrants from rural areas often settle at the margin of urban centers where they are socially excluded from the social, economic, and political life of cities
- Understanding migration patterns is critical:
  - Policies and strategies need to recognize that the lives and access to opportunities of newly arrived migrants differ vastly from those of established urban dwellers
- Issue of persons with disabilities



# Urbanization, Migration & Gender



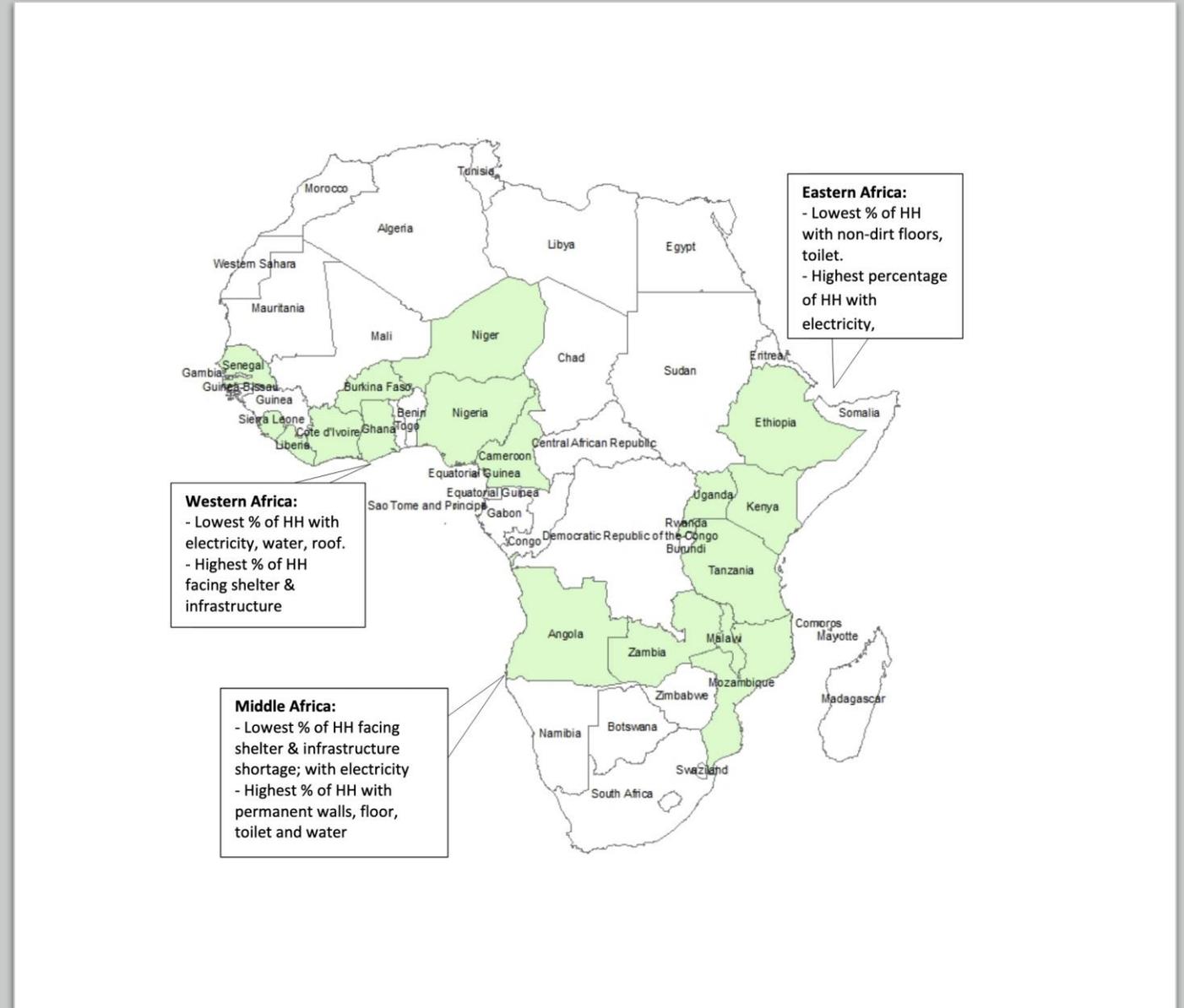
- Girls & women drawn to urban areas:
  - Opportunities for education and employment
  - Distance from highly patriarchal family and community settings

## HOWEVER

- Urban areas provide specific dangers for girls & women
  - Sexual harassment & violence in public spaces, schools & on transportation
    - Very little acknowledgement of this issue
    - Cannot access basic services such as water, food, pregnancy care, medical care
  - Susceptible to sexual trafficking & abuse in domestic situations

# Urbanization, Migration, & Housing Issues Are Closely Linked

- Impact is seen on the housing sector as residential land use is predominant over other land uses
- Increasing populations have to be accommodated in cities: the problems of slums, unauthorized construction and haphazard development of fringe areas often prevails





Aerial view of Yick Fat Building, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. © Tavarius/Shutterstock

# Urbanization, Globalization & Housing

- Current housing trends, especially in urban areas, do not bode well for a large proportion of global families:
  - Globally, prospective homeowners are compelled to save more than five times their annual income to afford the price of a standard house
  - Renter households often spend more than 25 per cent of their monthly income on rent (UN World Cities Report, 2020)
- Unplanned urbanization & the global domination of housing markets by **commercial entities**, are influencing housing patterns and housing availability
- Infrastructure is severely deficient in most urban areas:
  - Affects the natural and built environments
  - Exacerbates poverty because of its effects on the health and living environment of the poor

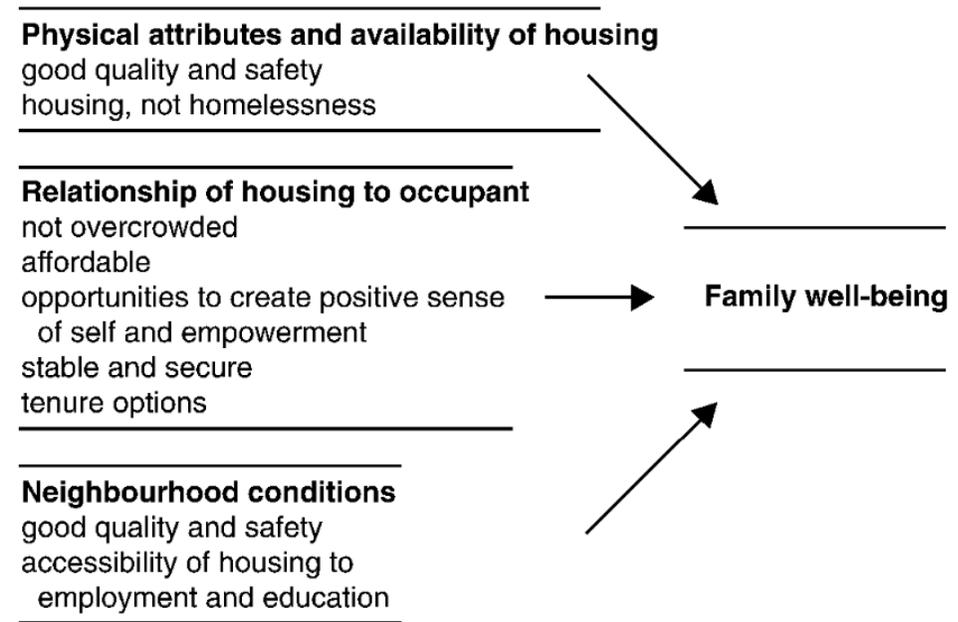
# Effects of Sub-Standard Housing

- Nearly 1 Billion individuals affected
- Live in cramped conditions / dangerous neighborhoods
- Stay indoors to protect themselves
  - Influences health – especially of children, individuals with disabilities & the older persons
  - Respiratory / neurological disorders rise
  - Developmental delays
  - Mental health effects (over the life course)
  - Rise in domestic violence
  - Less social interaction / less social cohesion



# Urbanization & Housing

- A fundamental human right is to have a safe and comfortable home where one can live
- Housing is foundational to sustaining and promoting family life
- Stable housing is critical for positive child development



**Figure 1.** Connections between housing and family well-being.

# Urbanization & Family Life

- Since early 1900s:
  - Scholarly interest: urbanization leads to fragmentation of family life (Chicago School);
  - Goode: convergence to one type of family
- Contemporary analyses:
  - No unilinear family development
  - Urban areas allow for exposure to new ideas / life styles
  - Communication technologies allow for greater family cohesion & transmission of values



# Urbanization & Family Effects



- Reduced fertility
- Later age at marriage – influenced by trends such as cohabitation. In the UK 85% of people who married, cohabited
- Rising divorce rates in *some* parts of the world in urban areas
  - Great variation within societies
  - More heterogeneity
  - Employment opportunities for women
- Aging in place in urban areas: moving to urban areas or staying there
  - Specific needs: health care, transportation, appropriate housing
  - China example of “left-behind children” – increased work and caretaking burden on the elderly

# Urbanization & Family Life Differs In Various Regions

- In Western regions of the world:
  - Unmarried; couples without children / “Kiddie deserts”
  - Economic and social advantages and consequences
- In non-Western regions of the world:
  - Urban margins: populated by migrants from rural areas
  - Poor; children; elderly – disadvantaged to be far from locus of power
  - Floating populations
- Specific issues face children and youth: It is predicted that by 2030, 60 per cent of urban dwellers in developing countries will be under the age of 18 (World Cities, 2020)



# Urbanization CAN Provide Opportunities

- Opportunity to increase efficiencies and to create a model of sustainable human living areas
- Urban areas are ideal places to link economics and the marketplace, energy outputs, environmental concerns, and social life
- Greater cultural and ethnic diversity
- New emphasis on creative industries:
  - Berlin – visual arts
  - Mumbai - film
  - Austin – music and technology
  - Seoul – gaming and digital media
- Cities, if well planned, can lead to greater equity, social inclusion and quality of life



Berlin Biennale 2008

# Urbanization & Green Spaces



- Unplanned / unmanaged urbanization V destructive to planet and human life
- Projects around the globe are promoting public / green spaces with a focus on children, individuals with disabilities and older persons
  - Curitiba, Brazil – incorporating green spaces into design of city; planted 1.5 million trees and life expectancy rose by 2 years
  - Singapore – built “up” and 10 percent of land assigned as green space
  - Indonesia – slums known as kampongs closed to traffic and greened with urban gardens
  - LAND: public – private partnerships to create green sustainable neighborhoods that promote the arts and child development



# Recommendations & Best Practices

- Working towards global understandings / definitions of urbanization
- Systematic, nuanced data gathering
  - Data needs to be disaggregated to account for migration status, income levels, social groupings etc. to allow voice and reach to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families and populations
- New technologies are allowing for innovative types of data gathering, storing, analysis and sharing



# Recommendations for Sustainable, More Egalitarian Urbanization

- Perspectives of local governments should be integrated into international discussions, given their role in implementing such agendas
- Institute more wide-spread participatory processes in urban and rural areas to facilitate poverty eradication
- Incorporate recent migrants into urban planning councils to represent their needs
- Highlight the needs of recent migrants vs. long-established migrants in urban areas and create appropriate programs and policies to facilitate integration
- Coordination between urban, regional, national and international development planning

# Recommendations To Better Integrate & Serve Migrants

- Migrants to urban areas need access to educational, health, mental health and other such services
- Promote progress towards the institution of universal protection systems
  - Vulnerable populations in conflict zones / natural disasters are often overlooked – including family members with disabilities
  - Cash and in-kind transfers and subsidies are one proven mechanism for supporting families



# Recommendations For Integrating Urbanization & Gender

- Incorporate a gender lens in planning urban areas: gendered experiences / inequality
  - Data gathering and analysis
  - Educational initiatives
  - Policy formation and programing for safe conditions for movement and living
  - Resource base to create culturally specific programs
    - Vienna
    - Berlin
    - Barcelona
    - Copenhagen



# Urban Programs With A Gender Lens ARE Working



- Egypt:
  - Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development has involved 100 youth agents (50 young women and 50 young men) to guide activities in schools and community settings to promote respectful gender relationships and safety in public spaces
- Quito, Ecuador:
  - Local ordinances have been adopted to strengthen legislation against sexual harassment in public spaces
- UN Women has launched a global program in 20 cities that partners with community-based women's organizations to specifically highlight the needs of women in urban centers (UN Women, 2017)

# Recommendations That Support Urban Families

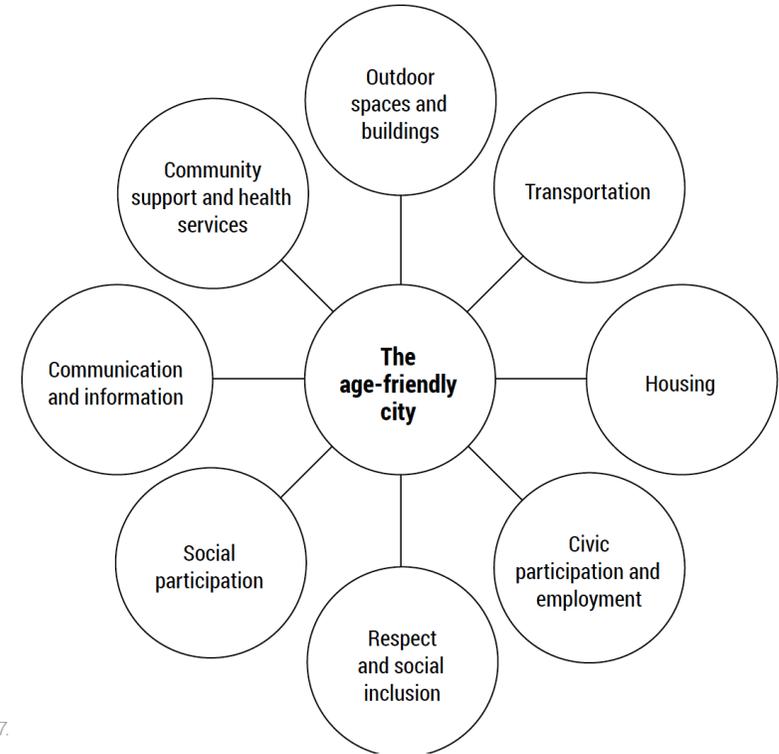
- Incorporating a life course perspective with a special focus on children and youth:
  - Opportunities for education and training = employment / greater social cohesion and peace
  - International Youth Foundation in Chihuahua, Mexico trains youth for jobs in the burgeoning aerospace industry
  - Rockefeller's Digital Jobs Africa group is working to build a cadre of young people who will work in the information and technology labor markets of Africa
  - International Labour Organization (ILO) is working to bring together urban-rural youth employment in Kenya



# Programs That Support Urban Families

- The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government:
  - has adopted the principles of age-friendly focusing on a multi-dimensional approach includes: medical care, community and re support, transport and mobility, housing a built environment, active ageing, more fle employment and family friendly measure: local governments playing a key role
- More than 700 cities in 39 countries are part of the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities to promote healthy, active ageing and improve quality of life for the elderly

Figure 5.1: Age-friendly city topic areas



Source: World Health Organization, 2007.



# Recommendations That Support Urban Families

Increased policy focus on understanding the increasing complexity of family life

- Different family members may have varying legal statuses – affects family relationships
- Holistic approaches promote family cohesion & more beneficial programming

Families, in all their multiplicity of shapes and sizes, need to be supported through:

- Affordable mixed income housing
- Reliable, safe transportation
- Pedestrian friendly streetscapes
- Access / improvement of education & social services
- Green spaces

# Improving Urbanization Efforts & Meeting SDG 11

- Improved resource utilization and access to local economies to lessen poverty and unemployment
- Strengthening family supports and services in order to improve the the social and economic capital of individuals and concurrently, the well-being of communities in urban and rural settings
- Coordinated responses in order to reach the most vulnerable, individuals and assist them in realizing their rights, capabilities, and full potential as individuals and communities



# World Cities Report, 2020

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“Well-planned, managed, and financed cities and towns create economic, social, environmental and other unquantifiable value that can vastly improve the quality of life of all. Urbanization can be leveraged for the fight against poverty, inequality, unemployment, climate change and other pressing global challenges. In this regard, sustainable urbanization can play a key role in the Decade of Action to accelerate growth and shared prosperity to advance the achievement of the SDGs by 2030” (p. v )

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



Thank you! Enjoy the great urban  
center of New York 😊

