Domain of Change: Prosperous Cities for Children

Prosperous Cities is one of the four inter-related domains of change identified within WV's *Cities for Children (CFC) Framework*[1].

Concept of Prosperous Cities

Urban prosperity both as a concept and a development outcome has seen important evolutions within international frameworks and policies in recent years. The World Bank has drawn attention to the complexity of prosperity as a broad multidimensional issue that requires large-scale transformations. Its 2009 *Reshaping Economic Geography* report[2] conceptualised economic prosperity through a multi-scalar approach that takes into consideration the interconnectivity of the multiple levels of human settlements, from local to the international. Density and place are highlighted as factors highly correlated with increasing spatial disparities between living standards and welfare within a context of economic growth. In the same year, UN-HABITAT launched a framework of urban prosperity as a response to the narrow economic developmental focus on economic productivity and growth.[3] With its City Prosperity Index, a fresh conceptual approach to urban prosperity was proposed that expanded beyond economic success as the sole indicator of prosperity to include broader conceptual dimensions. The tool focuses on five interrelated critical areas, namely (1) productivity; (2) enabling infrastructure; (3) the quality of life; (4) social and economic equity and inclusion; and (5) environmental sustainability.[4]

Issues of Prosperity, especially for children and youth

Although urbanisation is closely interrelated with economic growth, often urban advantage is a myth - particularly across the developing world where the concentration of economic activity in urban centres has been accompanied by a worrying trend of increasing disparities in living standards and in access to vital opportunities, including access to education, vocational training and gainful employment. Slums and informal urban settlements represent the divide between the *haves* and the *have nots*, where slum-dwellers cannot meet their basic needs, and are socially and economically excluded from the opportunities of city life. These disparities are based on urban spatial geography, where socio-economic differences segregate poor areas from their wealthier neighbours within a single city, or even within a single neighbourhood.[5]

Urban poverty and its implication for children are unfortunately obscured by the myth of 'urban advantage', which suggests that those living in urban areas have access to better nutrition, education, healthcare, employment and upward socio-economic mobility. However, an important lesson emerging from World Vision's internal research and urban programming experience, as well as the research by external major actors such as UNICEF,[6] is that proximity does not imply access. While basic amenities, services infrastructure, and social and economic opportunities and networks are available in dense urban areas, they are not available equally for all segments of urban society.

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[1] World Vision International (WVI) (2016). Cities for Children Framework: A Strategic Framework for Urban Programming.
[2] World Bank (2009). *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography.*
[3] IBRD & the World Bank (2013). World Development Report.
[4] UN-HABITAT (2013) Cities Prosperity Initiative Toolkit.
[5] IBRD & the World Bank (2013). World Development Report.
[6] UNICEF (2012). The State of the World's Children 2012: Children in an Urban World.

![World Vision logo]

For poor communities and vulnerable groups, such as disadvantaged children and youth living informal slum areas, numerous barriers exist to prevent them from obtaining the fundamental opportunities needed to live a full and prosperous life as economically productive urban residents. Currently there is a large proportion of children, adolescents and youth migrating to the city due to several reasons: to support their rural households, to explore opportunities for education and livelihoods to improve their livability standards, and then there are those who are forced to move due to conflict and climate change issues.

World Vision is already present in the world's most rapidly urbanising settings and we are learning that more than one billion children residing in the world's urban centres, millions live in squalid, unsanitary and unsafe slum conditions without access to education or viable employment opportunities in adulthood. They are forced to work in the waste management sector and other menial jobs that are dangerous to their health and wellbeing.

Weak physical infrastructure, lack of financial capital and security, endemic health issues, social marginalisation, market competition from better resourced players, institutional weakness, and difficult economic environments for business operation all work to impede economic development for the urban poor. Without recognition of labour rights, informal workers are forced into exploitative and dangerous occupations, including child labour. Without access to formal financial institutions, the dependence on cash economy produces income insecurity, vulnerability to urban price fluctuations, and limited understanding of savings and investment practices. Despite some advantages, informal employment can be a trap for perpetual poverty, and is often a 'blind spot' when it comes to policy interventions, job creation and youth support. However, without macro- and micro-level action to respond to rapid urbanisation, we see a growing concentration of poor people in cities and a growing divide between *haves* and *have nots*.

Urban prosperity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and challenge, and *Prosperous Cities*, a complex aspiration that need to be addressed by a multitude of city actors including governments, civil society, private sector and others. City policymakers and planners, private and public sector stakeholders, and community agents of change will need to pay particular attention to ensuring that the wealth, jobs, and development outcomes created from successes of productivity, efficiency and innovation are inclusively distributed to all urban residents, particularly the most vulnerable (such as children and youth).

Responding to the challenge - Emergence of the Prosperous Cities approach

Prosperity and economic development are intricately connected with resilience, safety, health, and justice and inclusion. Prosperous Cities for Children, therefore, require a combination of physical interventions, governance reform, improved knowledge, social cohesion/inclusion as well as partnerships to capitalise on each other's multidisciplinary strengths. WV's proposed *Prosperous Cities for Children Framework* was inspired by several frameworks as outlined in the Prosperous Cities Literature Review[7] but particularly informed by UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Initiative[8].

As a child focused agency, World Vision attempts to look at urban prosperity beyond the economic boundaries. Its action research and desk review of several external frameworks led to identification of six dimensions. A prosperous city is one that provides: (1) economic productivity, (2) infrastructure development, (3) quality of life, (4) equity and social inclusion, (5) environmental sustainability, and (6) governance and legislation.[9] The

[7] WVI (2016). Prosperous Cities for Children: A literature review for World Vision's Just Cities for Children Framework.
[8] See: http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/city-prosperity-initiative/
[9] See: http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02-old/CPI_2015%20Global%20City%20Report.compressed.pdf

framework provides a unique and holistic view of sustainable urban development, articulating the different dimensions of a city's growth.

- **Economic productivity** – a prosperous city contributes to economic growth and development through productivity, income generation, employment and opportunities that provide adequate living standards for the entire population;
- **Infrastructure** – a prosperous city deploys the infrastructure, physical assets and amenities required to sustain both the population and the economy;
- **Quality of life** – a prosperous city provides amenities such as social services, education, health, recreation, safety and security for improved living standards, enabling the population to maximize individual potential and to lead fulfilling lives;
- **Equity and social inclusion** – a city is only prosperous to the extent that poverty and inequalities are minimal. No city can claim to be prosperous when large segments of the population live in abject poverty and deprivation. Prosperous cities are equitable and socially inclusive of all the population so as to ensure gender equality and civic participation, and protect the rights of minority and vulnerable groups: women, youth and children;
- **Environmental sustainability** – the growth of cities and their economic development does not destroy or degrade the environment; instead, the city's natural assets are preserved for the sake of sustainable urbanisation;
- **Governance and legislation** - a prosperous city is able to combine sustainability and shared prosperity through effective urban governance and transformational leadership, deploying appropriate and effective policies, laws and regulations, and creating adequate local institutional frameworks to optimize citizen rights and assets.

Prosperous Cities offer a profusion of public goods, allowing for equitable access to 'commons' and the development of sustainable policies. Cities are best able to combine sustainability and shared prosperity through effective urban governance and transformational leadership, deploying appropriate and effective policies, laws and regulations, and creating adequate institutional frameworks.

World Vision's Prosperous Cities Framework reflects and includes the core dimensions mentioned above through its strategic pillars and enablers as outlined in the *Cities for Children Framework*[10]. The framework reflects these in its goal and proposes entry points for the strategic pillars and enablers of change. These are based on a comprehensive literature review on Prosperous Cities' theories of change, initiatives and approaches internal and external to WV[11]. For greatest impact these interventions are encouraged to utilize both a lifecycle approach and citywide programming approach to advance urban prosperity.

Achieving Prosperous Cities for Children

The goal for the Prosperous Cities domain of change is "*to create an enabling environment for overall liveability focusing on inclusive education, pro-poor employment, local asset building and greater economic productivity for youth.*" Below, we describe the approach to achieve this goal using the **strategic pillars** and **enablers of change** of the *Cities for Children Framework*. The framework proposes a number of **entry points** that assist practitioners

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[10] WVI (2016). Cities for Children Framework: A Strategic Framework for Urban Programming.
[11] WVI (2016). Prosperous Cities for Children: A literature review for World Vision's Just Cities for Children Framework.

and policy makers develop issue-based focused interventions using a lifecycle approach that responds to the education and employment needs of children and youth in the city.

- **Strategic pillar 1**: **Building social cohesion amongst diverse communities and promoting inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups**

A city is only prosperous to the extent that poverty, inequalities and deprivation are minimal. The urban environment is home to incredible density, diversity and dynamism, which can result in a fragmented community and business environment. The urban poor are often excluded from participating in the formal economy by various bureaucratic hurdles and socio-economic barriers, forcing them to rely on the highly volatile informal economy, with a lack of safety nets and income security. Therefore, robust urban prosperity must entail equitable access and social inclusivity of all segments of the population to participate in its markets activities and contribute to its economic development. World Vision believes that excluding segments of population from developing appropriate skills will result in lack of skilled labour as well as mismatch of supply with demand that often proves expensive for the business sector. Entry points for this strategic pillar would include (1) creating internships and apprenticeships, (2) developing financial support services for young entrepreneurs, (3) creating and supporting savings groups and their networks, (4) rehabilitating and supporting child laborers and children outside formal education systems. Examples include WV Honduras' apprenticeship programme and WV Lebanon's youth-led plans to set up a foundation.

- **Strategic pillar 2**: **Strengthening the quality of urban governance at all levels, promoting community engagement with decision making processes, local-led advocacy in order to achieve citywide effective policy impact**

Prosperous Cities entail offering a profusion of and equitable access to public goods in a sustainable and inclusive manner, including economic wealth. This will fundamentally need to be supported by effective urban governance and transformational leadership that deploy policies, laws and regulations with a multi-dimensional understanding of prosperity and living quality, and intention of inclusivity and responsiveness to the most vulnerable socio-economic groups (e.g. child labourers, disadvantaged working youth, women as the primary caretakers, urban poor business cooperatives, and small and micro business enterprises). Entry points for this strategic pillar would include (1) building and strengthening local value chains, (2) forming cooperatives and unions, (3) reviewing policies related to micro and small enterprises, cooperatives and small businesses and (4) addressing child labour. Examples include WV Kenya's Kariobangi waste management programme that seeks to empower vulnerable youth to establish and run sustainable youth-led cooperatives, generating income through the development of viable value chains in solid waste; and WV India's Siliguri and Kanpur anti-child labour project that engaged institutional and enforcement actors to prevent, protect and promote anti- child labour policy and practice. Reintegration of child labourers into the formal education system is an appropriate entry point Prosperous Cities for Children.

- **Strategic pillar 3**: **Supporting knowledge building through enhancing the accessibility, representation, accuracy of data and information to leverage and advocate for inclusion and transformational change**

Gaps in data and information are key constraints in designing appropriate strategies for building Prosperous Cities for Children in fluid urban environments. In order to support vulnerable socio-economic groups to harness, rather than be obstructed by, the fast-paced dynamism of urban economic markets, it is essential they are provided with access to important information, knowledge and data in order to make informed economic

choices. As an integral area for intervention, the education system is both an important component of productivity and an excellent platform to engage and empower young people. Saving groups, business collectives, and youth clubs are an excellent way to distribute information, skills, expertise, and experiential lessons among their members, as well as an arena to pool together resources and coordinate joint initiatives Entry points for this strategic pillar would include (1) providing technical, vocational, entrepreneurial skill development, and (2) partnering with schools and education departments to include vocational, financial management and economic training 3) For vulnerable children outside of formal school systems, such as street children or child labourers, investing in their informal education with view to mainstream into the formal schooling system. Examples include WV India's Kanpur anti-child labour program, which established informal education centres, in collaboration with Department of Education, and WV Brazil's Future Market project that provided youth certified vocational training, in collaboration with the Department of Education.

- **Strategic pillar 4**: **Improving the quality of the built environment, shared public space and service delivery for safety, security and well-being of children and their communities**

In the dense and complex urban environment, infrastructure, physical assets, urban services and amenities will be influential to the success of cities in sustaining their population expansion and interrelated economic growth. Here, the spatial proximity of amenities provides an opportunity to contribute to local business development, productivity and innovation, and it is essential to capitalize on this urban advantage. With regards to transport, by supporting connectivity and equal access between different roads and zones of the city, regardless of socio-economic status, localized and dispersed actors can expand their market reach to a wider consumer base, collaborate with other actors to improve local value chains, and improve the function and operation of their business. Entry points for this strategic pillar would include (1) connecting poor labour workers to value-improved public service sector employment, and (2) facilitating slum upgrading programmes that include expansion of housing, basic services and infrastructure, to support economic development thereby creating jobs. An example is WV Cambodia Security of tenure program where community based infrastructure improvements were implemented with local government and partner NGOs which generated jobs for the marginalized.

To successfully implement entry points projects to contribute to Prosperous Cities for Children, four **enablers** of change are suggested to build on the urban advantage. Each enabler for change guides development practitioners and local stakeholders in recognizing and utilizing the assets, capitals and advantages already present in urban environments.

The four enablers of change for the Prosperous Cities domain of change (common to all domains of changes) are:

1. **Partnerships**: **Establishing citywide partnerships with diverse city actors and strengthening capacities of all key stakeholders to promote collective action and collaboration for quality, scale and impact.** Partnerships cultivate cooperation and consolidating networks across various sectors around a shared value proposition of urban prosperity, which provide an avenue for co-production of ideas, information sharing, and the reallocation of capacity, skills and resources to meet demand and supply. Furthermore, by amassing the political capital of multiple individuals and collectives, the partnership strategy empowers even the most vulnerable groups to demand for an improved citywide policy environment that recognizes their rights and value, and supports them to reach their productivity potential. Siliguri, WV India's program, is an excellent example of setting an anti- trafficking network and rehabilitation of

trafficked children into the school system.

2. **Technology: Utilizing existing and new technological capacity and innovations to assist in designing smart and inclusive cities**. The increased ease and availability of existing and new technology penetrates even the hardest to reach communities, including high prevalence of mobile phone usage by urban youths. Job search and opportunities is enabled through technological infrastructure. This is a fundamental urban advantage in ensuring marginalised and institutionally hidden individuals are included to participate in economic services, such as internet micro-credit transfers, e-governance systems, community-led data enumeration and collection. Technological platforms such as social media are also excellent ways to boost advocacy and awareness campaigns across various issues, such as affecting citywide attitudinal changes on issues like child labour, create linkages for local businesses and usage of technology for youth empowerment through job search initiatives. Orlando East South Africa program set up a youth job network programme in collaboration with local business forums and Plan Act, a local NGO promoting local economic development. This initiative is an excellent example of technology empowering youth with knowledge and information to connect with diverse business and city opportunities.

3. **Urban Planning and Design**: **Ensuring urban planning and design is inclusive, participatory and responsive to the needs and solutions of the most vulnerable groups, especially children in urban settings.** Municipal and administrative systems play a vital role in urban development; they hold responsibility for developing regulatory economic and labour frameworks, providing essential services, facilitating community initiatives, promoting job creation and market productivity, and structuring education curricula to be relevant to local conditions. Therefore, effective urban prosperity interventions will require influencing the management of existing resources and/or the mobilisation of additional resources to launch appropriate responses to plan for rising urban populations to effectively and inclusively participate in city economic systems. In Lebanon, the municipality is working with Lebanese and Syrian youth from host and refugee communities in establishing youth-led solid waste management cooperatives, and mapping of street lights and unsafe hotspots in the community to improve site management and living conditions within informal tented settlements. Following, these improvements have been implemented by youth via cash for work programmes. World Vision's role in this process was a facilitator one; mobilizing youth from Syrian and Lebanese communities, connecting them to technical agencies to get trained on skills needed and introducing them to the municipality to be exposed to available jobs to contribute to this project.

4. **Urban Policy: Ensuring that urban policy at all tiers of the city, from neighborhood to city and national level, promotes equity and advocates for sustainable development**. The most critical change needed is to promote employment opportunities and development of disadvantaged youths, small and micro-enterprises, and social business cooperatives. Policy changes can provide tax exemptions for start-ups; low fees for business registration; more abundance and accessibility to finance, micro-credit and start-up loans for disadvantaged youths and businesses. Governments need to explore less stringent banking service regulations; school curricula reform to provide life skills and economic/entrepreneurial training; youth scholarships and government-supported placements in vocational courses, internships, and apprenticeships; and better access to social safety nets and support services for young entrepreneurs, migrant workers, and low-income earners. Importantly, education policy need to be placed as a high

priority in order to ensure that children, adolescents and youth are equipped with skills that match the demand of the industry sectors. For example, Brazil introduced a law that makes it compulsory for companies with over 100 employees to employ a certain proportion of youth. WV Brazil works in partnership with the corporate sector, the Department of Education and work agencies in youth vocational training and awareness of labour rights.