

# Public Spaces for Children

A Consultation with Children on their use of Urban Public Spaces.



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For UNICEF, UN-Habitat, World Vision  
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## Cover Photo:

Girl in an urban slum, North Delhi, India.

World Vision,

*“There are a few simple requirements for young people’s play: physical safety, social security, diverse and stimulating physical surroundings, the presence of other children, a lack of temporal pressure and the proximity of adults.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Acknowledgements

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<sup>1</sup> Bartlett. S et al. (1999) Cities for Children. Children’s Rights, Poverty and Urban Management. Earthscan Publications Ltd. London.

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## Urban Public Spaces – a Child's Eye View

Bruno and his brother Amos leave their small, cramped house and emerge into a busy passageway. Motorcycles weave through a throng of people. Vendors squeeze their wares onto stalls and carts choking the narrow alleyways. The children take their small ball made from densely wrapped plastic bags and find a spot to play. They shout and run. Laugh and chase each other. "Keep quiet!" shouts one woman from her window. "You can't play there! You'll damage my flowers and plant pots. Go away!" shouts another man, sitting outside his house.

The children move on. They duck into an unfinished building. It's a favourite place to play for children in the slum. They navigate a sea of metal rods, rocks, broken glass and nails as they explore the empty rooms. The children startle a drug addict shooting up in a dark corner. They run out of the house into the alleyway. One of the children stumbles into an open sewer and twists his ankle. He begins to limp but carries on. Dust hangs in the air along with the stench from the drains.

They enter a busy street. To get to the only playground near their house they have to cross the road. Trucks, minibuses and cars jostle for position. Motorcycles careen up onto the sidewalks, missing the children by inches. They pick their way through the traffic, experts in dodging oncoming vehicles. Their soundtrack the incessant noisy buzz of horns and engines. The air is thick with exhaust fumes.

The playground seethes with people - hawkers and drunks, drug addicts and thieves among the throng. Parked vehicles and market stalls take up precious play space. A gang of young men roams the park. The children try to avoid them, but the young men walk over to them, teasing the boy with the limp: 'Cripple!' they shout, and start pushing them around. The children run. They run past the broken swings, the garbage strewn basketball court, carefully avoiding the broken bottles and used syringes. A dustbin lies on its side, rusted out and full. No security guards patrol the park. The adults in the park ignore their plight.

The children find a tree to climb, and then play tag. They see some of their neighbour friends and ask them to join their games. They play a game of football with the plastic ball. The ground is uneven and full of rocks and holes. The children slip and stumble. One of the boys gashes his knee on a sharp stone. Another just avoids stepping on a snake.

Suddenly, the rains come. The ground turns to mud, and the ditches around the playground fill and flood into the basketball courts bringing a fresh tide of garbage into the playground. There is no shelter. The children gather under the tree and wait for the rain to subside.

A man approaches them and offers sweets. The children refuse. Their parents warned them not to talk to strangers. They often hear stories about kidnapping and rape in the park. This makes them reluctant to come here. Many of their friends are too afraid to leave the passageways near the house. That is where they play, enduring the verbal harassment from their neighbours. They prefer to be close to home and their family. They feel safe.

The sun returns, but it's getting dark. The children's parents told them to be back before sunset. The playground and streets have no lights. They begin their perilous journey home.

## Introduction

In February 2020, at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the World Urban Forum, UNICEF and UN-Habitat launched an initiative to develop “Principles and Guidance for Public Spaces for Children”. World Vision was among the key stakeholders invited for an initial brainstorming on what this guidance document could look like. In this first meeting, World Vision (represented by Aline Rahbany, Technical Director, Urban Programming) suggested that no principles or guidance for children should be developed without their participation. World Vision proposed leading a consultation with children to inform this process given its record history of ensuring children’s participation in local, national and global policy and discourse related to their rights and well-being, as well as our large local footprint.

This consultation aims to capture children’s perspectives and lived experience in the public spaces in their communities. The questions focused on four different characteristics of that experience:

1. **Proximity and accessibility**, as children should be able to access public spaces independently within walking or biking distance;
2. **Safety**, as children should be able to access public spaces through a safe journey and without obstacles;
3. **Cleanliness**, as children are most vulnerable and potentially most exposed to air pollution, soil pollution and waste; and
4. **Stability, usability and playfulness**: as children should be able to use the space for defined and undefined forms of play, physical activity and intergenerational interactions.

The voices and experience of children in these different contexts can help establish the right mapping mechanism and definition of public spaces for children, and developing principles and guidance to provide urban planning policy and design guidance.

## I. Methodology

### I.1 Data collection

This report draws from 25 key informant interviews (KII) and 16 focus group discussions (FGD) with girls and boys aged eight to 18 in eight different countries. In total, 118 girls and boys took part in the consultation (see table 1 below). The data collection included a mix of socially distanced face-to-face, as well as virtual KIIs and FGDs.

	Girls		Boys		Totals
Age	8-12	13-18	8-12	13-18	
KII	5	9	7	4	25
FGD	28	20	27	18	93
Totals	33	29	34	22	118

**Table 1:** Total numbers of boys and girls consulted by age and gender

All of the girls and boys consulted lived in urban neighbourhoods. These included urban slums (Kenya), poor urban neighbourhoods (El Salvador, Brazil, Mexico) or informal refugee settlements (Zimbabwe), camps for the internally displaced and refugees in urban areas (Afghanistan, Bangladesh) and transition settlements in urban settings (India).

The lead researcher analysed data from the KII and FGD consultations. This report references research and activism on children’s geographies and child friendly cities. This includes the work of Sheridan

Bartlett<sup>2</sup>, the Growing Up in Cities Project and the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG)<sup>3</sup>. The findings from this study resonate strongly with the themes and recommendations emerging from their research (see bibliography for further details).

UNICEF also provides guidance and principles for making cities safe and respectful of children's rights. UNICEF supported initiatives in cities connects government and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and media and, importantly, children themselves who wish to make their cities and communities more child friendly.

## **1.2 Data Analysis**

The researcher identified themes, issues or activities arising from each question, and then tabulated responses from the KIs and FGDs. Each issue or activity identified by children from the FGDs or KIs was given a value of one. A child or a focus group could give several responses for one question. The researcher disaggregated the total scores by gender and age. Individual quotes from children in each section provides richer, thicker data to illustrate the reality behind the numbers.

## **1.3 Consent**

All girls and boys participating in the consultation signed a consent to participate form, along with their caregiver. World Vision staff observed strict child protection protocols during both face-to-face and virtual KIs and FGDs.

## **1.4 Subjectivity**

The researcher comes from the Global North. He did not grow up in a poor urban environment. He has allowed the voices of the children to determine the themes and issues raised by them without imposing a particular cultural lens or theoretical framework on the findings.

## **1.5 COVID-19**

The results of the consultation reflect children's pre COVID-19 experiences with public spaces. Some of the children spoke to the enhanced restrictions caused by the pandemic. The results of this consultation do not consider those issues. They foresee a time when the COVID-19 restrictions pass but the ongoing barriers and issues identified by the girls and boys remain.

## **1.6 Language**

The language used in the story and quotes draws directly from the KIs and FGDs' translations. The reader could interpret some of the terms used as pejorative or insensitive to the mental health or situation of individuals described by the girls and boys, especially those depicted as 'drunks' or 'addicts'. However, the findings aim to capture the reality of the children's world. This is how they see and describe it.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

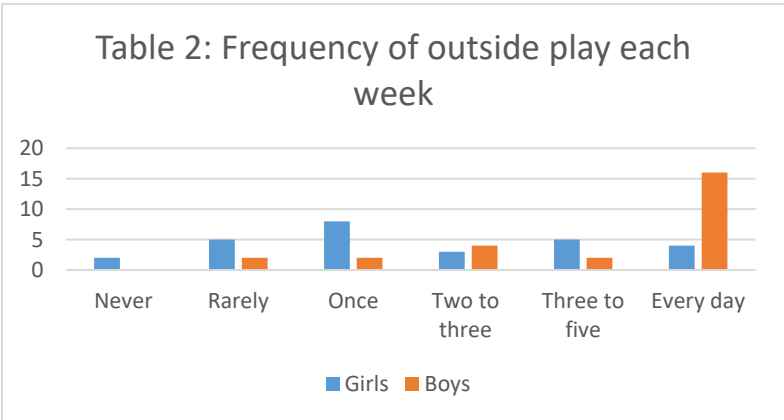
<sup>3</sup> <https://cergnyc.org/>

2. Findings

2.1 Proximity and Accessibility

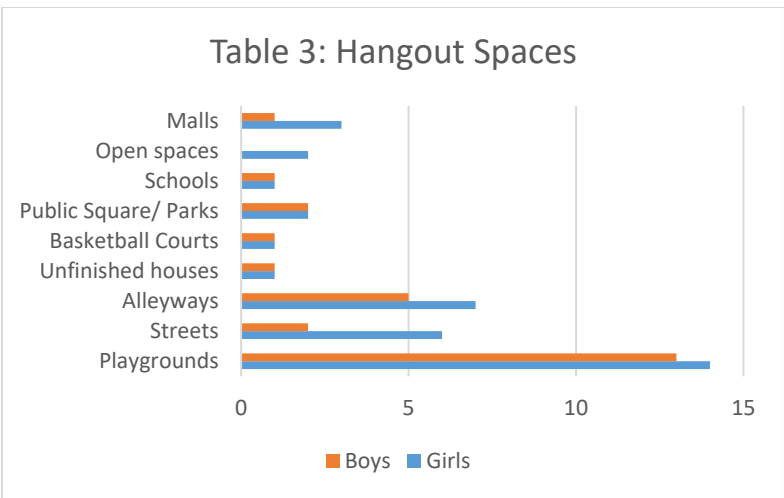
Girls’ opportunities to play in or access public spaces are restricted, especially as they get older. Cultural norms, public shame and perception, fear and security concerns play significant roles in preventing girls from playing outside. Boys enjoy greater freedom.

Girls in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and slums face greater challenges as space near or between housing is limited and parents are more concerned about their safety.



Boys and girls prefer playing in the alleyways close to home. However, these are highly contested spaces. Traffic, vendors and open sewers compete for space. ‘Older people’ shout and harass them when they play. Children with disabilities (CWD) rarely go out.

Children from poor urban neighbourhoods can access parks and playgrounds. However, those in slums or camps rely either on a space created by a local community based organisation (CBO), or scraps of wasteland commonly strewn with garbage and waste.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Our parents (usually mothers) do not allow their girls to go to school and study, how they can agree us to play outside” (Girl, 14 yo, IDP camp, Afghanistan).

“I know a child with disabilities. He cannot go out alone. His legs do not move, but he is very smart and alert... Rarely does his father take him outside to play and breathe.” (Boy, 16 yo, IDP camp, Afghanistan)

“Many of the streets are narrow, with wastewater flowing, many have kiosks with people and their businesses. This makes streets not a choice for kids to play.” (Girls 13-18 yo, urban slum, Kenya)

“We only go to playgrounds and parks in our community if they are walking distance from our homes. We don’t go to other spaces that will require transportation fare since we don’t have enough money.” (Boy, 15 yo, urban slum Philippines)

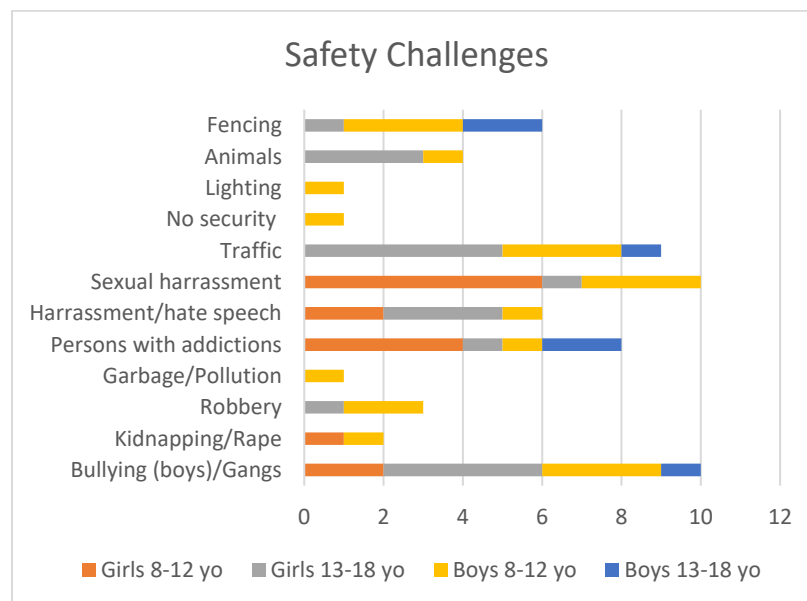
“I do not go outside to play because I have a lot of assignments and household chores.” (Female, 11 yo, urban slum, Philippines)



## 2.2 Safety

Girls of all ages stated that they never go out alone. Almost all girls and boys irrespective of age hang out with relatives and friends. Caregivers especially give the children a sense of safety and can provide the means to access parks or spaces that require a fee.

Major concerns for all girls and boys include physical and sexual harassment, often by older boys, or adults – especially persons with addictions and gangs. A lack of security exacerbates children’s fear of rape, kidnapping and theft. Life in the camps or slums, where children experience limited and overpopulated spaces only heighten these concerns.



Girls and boys keep away from public spaces due to a lack of fencing around play spaces; no lighting in parks, alleyways and streets; few security guards in parks; no clear rules and awareness about how to use public spaces, and almost no age appropriate play areas.

Traffic on streets and in alleyways where children play creates a high risk of injury and disruption of games. Intrusive traffic through designated play areas and public space also render those spaces unusable or accident-prone.

Girls and boys mentioned that they experience harassment by some local leaders, older people, police and military personnel, and that those same leaders can instigate conflict in public spaces. Girls aged 13-18 yo and CWD receive the most intense discrimination and verbal harassment, mainly from older boys.

Almost all children have house rules about play outside of the home. However, these are less stringent for boys.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Once I stayed at our neighbor’s house for more than 1 hour, it was in the early evening. My father physically punished me, and my family did not allow me to meet my friends for two weeks.” (Girl, 15 yo, IDP camp, Afghanistan)

“We are more vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment in the camp.” (Girl, 12 yo, IDP camp Afghanistan.)

“Parents do not allow girl children to play outside. They fear about them going missing. Someone can kidnap them or sell them.” (Girl 12 yo, urban slum, Bangladesh.)

“In my area, I cannot say if it is safe or not safe. There are local government officials in my community that instead of promoting peace and order, they are the ones who also break the rules.” (Boy 16 yo, urban slum, Philippines)

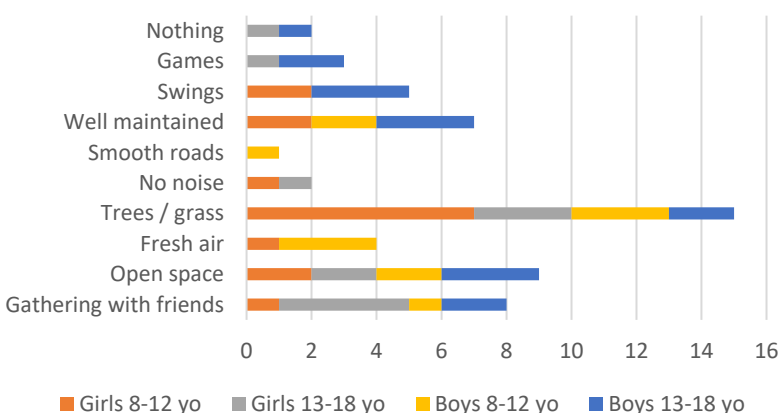
“There are some of the places which are unsafe for playing especially along the roads because of passing motor vehicles and motorbikes. So many children have died from accidents in this area.” (Girls & Boys, 8-12 yo, urban slum Kenya)



## 2.3 Cleanliness and comfort

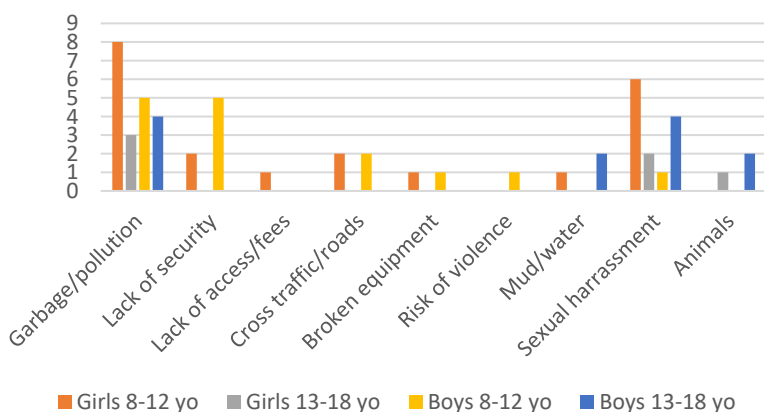
Children's responses to what they most liked about their play space referred more to what they wanted rather than the reality of the spaces they use. Where the following things exist, the children feel relaxed, safe and able to gather with friends: natural beauty, clean air, no noise, play equipment and well-maintained open spaces. A boy and a girl aged 13-18 mentioned that they like nothing about their hangout or play spaces. Children from the IDP camps in Afghanistan reported that they sometimes encroach on private land to play, as no public spaces exist.

Table 5: What do you most like?



Many of the challenges voiced by girls and boys in the safety section also affected their response to what they liked least about where they play. Children cited the lack of maintenance, garbage and pollution as among their greatest dislikes. They spoke of broken play equipment, garbage strewn over playgrounds, and polluted air because of traffic, dust or open sewers.

Table 6: What do you like least?



## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The playgrounds where we are playing belong to people, not the government. Sometimes the landowner punishes us for playing in their lands." (Boy, 16 yo.)

"When I cannot go outside for playing, how can I say anything about the outside playgrounds?" (Girl, 15 yo.)

"My father prefers my brothers over me. He does not like girls. He used to give gifts and incentives only to my brothers". (Girl, 14 yo.)

"We do not have any playing tools like string and swing to play with." (Girl, 11 yo.)

"We are not happy in here because we are not free to play also there are fights between neighbors in the camp." Girl, 11 yo.)

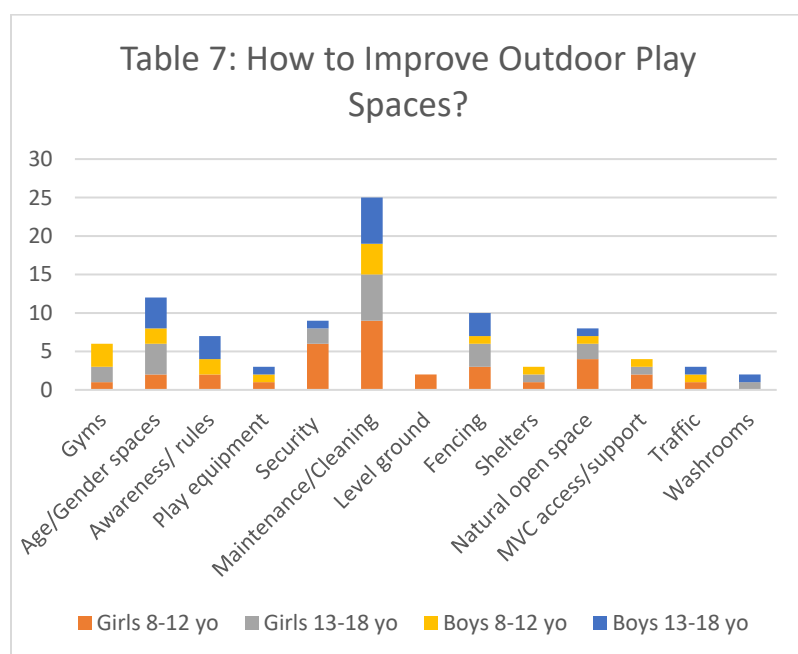
All quotes above from IDP camps, Afghanistan

"They stay in cramped places hence love to go out where there is more space." (Girls 13-18 yo urban slum India)

Girls and boys complained about a lack of street sweepers and maintenance workers. They stated their commitment to help maintain spaces, but only if authorities provide security.

Unsurprisingly, children felt that authorities and the community could improve public play spaces by addressing the following issues:

- Structural fixes like fences, lighting and benches;
- Creating and maintaining spaces accessible only to specific age and gender groups especially in IDP camps or settlements;
- Planting trees and painting walls with murals that raise awareness on appropriate behaviour in public spaces;
- Providing shelters against the rain and sun;
- Providing amenities such as washrooms and play equipment;
- Developing more open play spaces within reach of their homes;
- Diverting and controlling traffic; and
- Taking into consideration the special needs of the most vulnerable children (MVC).



Children living in IDP camps or slums stressed the importance of access to safe and local play spaces. These could be small pieces of wasteland. They suggested that children’s clubs and the community could rehabilitate and maintain these with support from camp or local authorities.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Create a beautiful environment for children. Neat and clean space maintained by the local authorities. Helped by community children leaders.” (Girls, 13-18 yo, urban refugee camp, Bangladesh.)

“Children like well organised places because that place is well maintained with rides and neat and clean having so much play equipment to play.” (Girl 12 yo, urban slum, Bangladesh.)

“As a leader of our children’s association, children can join the Malabon Children’s Association (MCA) so we can tell the village leaders to improve the areas where children play.” Boy, 17 yo, urban slum, Philippines.)

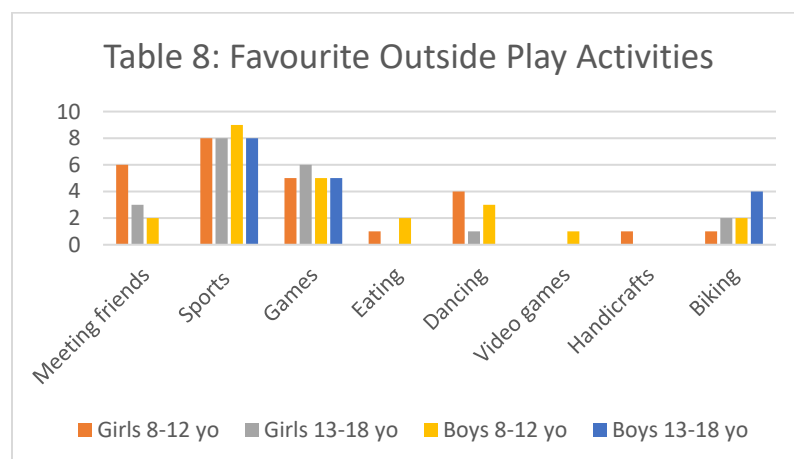
“The areas where we play can be improved if there are local village leaders who will maintain the order in the community always.” Boy, 16 yo, urban slum, Philippines.)

## 2.4 Stability/Usability and Playfulness

Children manage to make the most of public spaces. The challenges and frequently hostile conditions they face do not stifle or inhibit their desire to gather, play, explore their environment and use their imagination. These conditions do create risk, but a degree of risk and unstructured space also leads to imaginative play.

The play space is where children can fully exercise their right to participate and take decisions that affect their lives. Most activities are child led: they create their own rules, games, worlds and competitions.

When asked about their favourite outdoor play activities, girls and boys of all ages ranked sports – football, cricket, basketball, volleyball and badminton – and games – hopscotch, skipping, chase or tag, and local games like kabaddi – as their preferred options. These are games that they self-organise and manage in the spaces they use.



Some activities depend on cultural and gender preference. Girls showed a preference for space to dance, and meet with friends. Boys enjoyed games, sports and biking, but also dance in certain contexts.

All the children, bar two girls from Kenya agreed that they needed different hangout or recreational spaces than those they currently use. They advocated for spaces with the following characteristics:

**Age appropriate spaces:** safe play spaces where children of different ages and gender can play together without harassment.

**Larger open spaces:** safe, green, park like areas where they can hang out, play games, enjoy competitions and events to raise awareness about issues they care about, walk with friends and family and enjoy fresh air and nature.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Government, political leaders, social leaders should think about our wellness, we need open spaces to play for our better growth.” (Boy-15 yo, urban slum Bangladesh)

“Yes, we like to have a separate space to play because people say bad things when girls play outside.” (Girls 8-12 yo, IDP camp, Afghanistan)

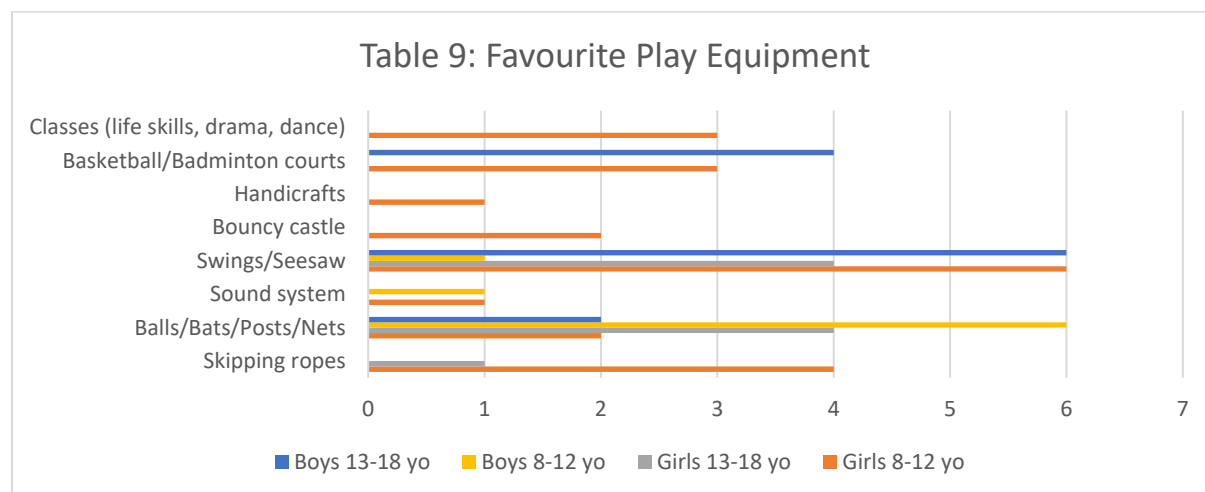
“We need the county government to equip what already exists, but also ensure that the public beaches are accessible for children. Park entry fees should be waived for children to enable many children access these beautiful places.” (Girls, 8-12 yo, urban slum, Kenya)

“There are a lot of slum areas in my community, narrow alleyways and sidewalks do not have street lights, making children passing by more prone to danger.” (Boy, 18 yo, urban slum, Philippines.)

**Inclusive spaces** that banned any sexual or physical harassment, bullying and discrimination of boys and girls, especially children with disabilities. These spaces should ensure access and play options for the disabled and the most vulnerable children.

**Free spaces:** removal of entrance fees for parks or playgrounds to those who cannot afford to pay.

**Equipped spaces:** authorities should invest in playground swings and ‘rides’, opportunities for life skills and expressive arts classes, and provide access to sports equipment, including balls, bats, rackets, nets and posts, as well as badminton, basketball or volleyball courts for girls and boys (see table 9 below for a breakdown of their favourite play equipment).



### 3. What role can children play?

Children reflected on what they can do to shape and influence the management of public spaces in their neighbourhoods and cities. All responses quoted verbatim.

*“If the NGO and government established a playground, we need some people to plan how to use the playground and protect the playground. Girls must use these environments as well, so the planner has the responsibility to set different times for girls and boys to play. At the end, we want to ask again NGOs and the government to establish our playgrounds, provide us with gyms and sports clothes and shoes. We are playing soccer with bare feet or sandals (boys). Please talk with our parents to let all girls go to school and avoid discrimination. We want our parents and other people of our communities to accept girls playing positive activities. Parents should advise their boys not to annoy girls.”*



Figure 2: FGD with two girls in Shamal Darya IDP Camp in Qala-e- Naw Village of Badghis Province, Sep22, 2020

**Girls and Boys FGD, 13-16 yo, IDP camp, Afghanistan.**



*“Children need to be heard and their voices taken into consideration. Planners should involve children in planning and implementation of projects that concern children.”*

**Girls FGD, 13-18 yo, urban slum, Kenya.**

*“Children also can be involved with ensuring open spaces with the children. City authorities can ask opinions from children on what types of spaces they actually need. Opinions from disabled children also should be collected. Children will clean on their own initiative. [We need] well planned open spaces for children.”*

**Girls and Boys FGD, 13-18 yo, urban slum, Bangladesh.**



*“Making people aware and monitoring. Conserving places. Taking care of the environment.”*

**Girls and Boys FGD, 13-18 yo, poor urban neighbourhood, Brazil.**



*“As child leaders, we can talk to our local village officials to hear our suggestions to make our community more child-friendly.”*

**Boy, 16 yo, urban slum, Philippines.**

*“Be responsible. Give our recommendations to village leaders.”*

**Boys FGD, 13-18 yo, urban slum Philippines.**



*“They need to involve us in planning for our activities. We know best what we want.”*

**Girls FGD, 13-18 yo, informal settlement, Zimbabwe**

*“Asking us what we want like this is important for us, so the city council should come down here and ask us how best to create places to hang out”.*

**Girl, 9 yo, poor urban neighbourhood, Zimbabwe.**

Drawings of the ideal outdoor play space.

**Girls and Boys, poor urban neighbourhood, El Salvador.**



## 4. Discussion

The story of Bruno and Amos is fiction but based on fact. Bruno and Amos' experience of public spaces in an urban environment typifies those of the children consulted for this project. All the experiences and descriptions used in the story came from the data.

The story is told through the lens of the boys. The majority of boys go out to play every day, and with greater autonomy as they get older. Girls experience a very different reality, especially those over 10 years old. For some girls, the story begins and ends inside the house. In Afghanistan or Bangladesh only rarely would a girl leave her house and be in a public space with friends. Girls say that playing in public would bring shame to the family. Even when girls do go out and play, they suffer 'Eve teasing'<sup>4</sup>, sexual harassment and name-calling. Girls mostly remain in the home. They take on the burden of household chores. They care for the younger children. They obey more rules than boys do if they go out. They never go out alone. In the Latin American countries, the Philippines, Kenya and India girls do go out to play but less frequently than boys, often because of fears for their security and chores at home.

Girls and boys with disabilities share similar challenges. The children we consulted told us that they remain hidden at home and rarely come out to play. Parents sometimes take them to the playground or park, but the children get teased or shamed. Public spaces rarely consider their needs.

All girls and boys, especially younger girls and boys, identify bullying from older boys and gangs as their primary safety challenge. Girls and boys in the IDP camps in Afghanistan emphasised the limited space to play and hang out, and the desire for separate safe spaces for girls to avoid harassment or public shaming. However, the majority of girls and boys wanted multi-generational spaces where there was 'no discrimination among children', 'security for girls', and they could 'play without fear.'<sup>5</sup>

Children make the most of their surroundings. Research shows that children, especially in slums, often prefer to play in streets, sidewalks, back alleys and empty lots rather than in formally designed playgrounds<sup>6</sup>. They feel safer due to proximity to their home, caregivers or friends, and feel ownership over their own spaces. They turn a dusty scrap of wasteland into a camp, a football or cricket pitch, a fort or a place to hang out and tell stories. Children creatively turn scraps of string, metal, cardboard, plastic bags, and construction materials that lie around in their neighbourhoods into skipping ropes, dolls, balls, and gym equipment.

This belies a deep sense of dissatisfaction with existing public spaces. Children often feel excluded, unsafe and unheard. During the KIs and FDGs, children shared their frustration at the lack of care and attention spent on parks and playgrounds. Where clean, well-maintained parks do exist, they require a fee to enter. To get to these parks, children need to take public transport. The costs make this prohibitive and caregivers may take them there only on special occasions.

Otherwise, they go to a park or open space close to their house. These often overflow with people, traffic, garbage and broken equipment. Girls and boys in the Kenyan slum of Soweto were grateful for a space created by a CBO in the slum. A clean and well-equipped small space that enabled them to play and carry out activities together. Children in IDP camps or temporary settlements told us that where no public space exists they trespass onto private land, and risk the ire of local landowners.

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<sup>4</sup> [Eve Teasing](#) is a euphemism used throughout South Asia for public sexual harassment of women or girls by men.

<sup>5</sup> Bangladeshi Girls 13-18 yo., Brazilian Girls 13-18 yo. Indian Boys 13-18 yo. FDGs

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



Children lament the lack of security. Parks do not have fencing to keep out animals or restrict entry to undesirable youth and adults. The lack of security guards and lights in parks, basketball courts and streets also leave children feeling vulnerable. They want to see clear messages painted on walls or posters that lay out the terms by which people can use the park. They also want the local authorities to remove informal vendors or construction firms who leave trucks and equipment in their play areas. Most of all, they want to see traffic controlled. Spaces with shelters and benches, trees and fresh air also help families go out together. Parental presence or proximity makes a big difference.

Boys and girls of all ages know what they like, but they feel that no one wants to hear it. However, they do recognize the potential contribution that their clubs or child forums can make. They see the need to organize themselves so that they can influence planning and decision making about public spaces for children. They are prepared to play their part to maintain these spaces, develop park and playground rules and raise awareness in the community about behaviour and safety.

## 5. Considerations

The following considerations for developing “Principles and Guidance for Public Spaces for Children” can inform both municipal level planning decisions and neighbourhood planning and design in any city or settlement.

***Within each neighbourhood identify and address locally specific barriers that prevent girls and boys from accessing public spaces:***

- Before developing a play space, identify barriers that prevent girls and boys from leaving the house.
- Listen carefully to the concerns and fears of parents, and girls and boys of different ages.
- Develop creative solutions to mitigate risk and address those concerns.
- Partner with families and communities to address endemic gender stereotypes or harassment based on harmful gender norms.
- Create partnerships with schools, faith communities and youth groups to address gender based discrimination, harassment and sexual violence.

***Take into consideration the play and recreation needs of different age and gender groups:***

- Listen carefully to the specific needs that different age groups have.
- Create multipurpose public spaces that enable and empower girls and boys of all ages to both meet their own social and physical recreation needs.
- Understand the different needs of girls of different ages, especially safety, access to amenities such as washrooms, and recreational equipment that meets their needs and interests.
- Consider the needs of families or caregivers who accompany young children to public spaces (e.g. benches, shelters).

***Take into consideration the play and recreation needs and access of the most vulnerable children especially those with disabilities:***

- Address stigma and harmful attitudes towards children with disabilities or special needs in the community.
- Create accessible spaces that take into consideration the special needs of those children and their families.
- Ensure that children with special needs are included in planning processes.

- Appoint a municipal ‘friend’ for children with disabilities on all local planning initiatives.

***Focus on establishing norms around behaviours in public spaces:***

- Develop clear rules along with campaigns to raise awareness about how to behave in public spaces (e.g. littering, spitting, harassment, respect).
- Paint these rules on colourful murals in the public space, preferably designed and painted by children.

***Create institutional space for children to engage in urban planning decision-making:***

- Leverage local children’s clubs and groups to participate in planning and decision-making bodies or initiatives at local or municipal levels.
- Link to or join a Child Friendly City network to make city services and provisions more child friendly.

***Identify and protect community spaces for play and recreation:***

- Work with community groups and local authorities to establish safe protected spaces accessible only to children and families.
- Incentivize local groups (e.g. young people and CBOs or faith groups) to take ownership of and rehabilitate those spaces.
- Negotiate the use of shared public spaces near homes where children play e.g. alleyways and streets, so that children feel safe and welcome.
- Locate spaces away from dangerous pollution or traffic, or redirect traffic away from alleyways where girls and boys play.
- Identify spaces in nearby municipalities if there is no space in the neighbourhood.

***Invest in and develop green spaces:***

- Create more options for children to access spaces of natural beauty.
- Reduce or eliminate fees to access parks or botanical gardens for those who cannot afford it.
- Initiate tree-planting projects with children’s groups.
- Do not over plan a recreational space but leave options for children to explore nature and create their own worlds.

***Maintain and manage existing public spaces:***

- Establish clear responsibility for the management and maintenance of the space.
- Follow safety regulations when establishing new play spaces and equipment.
- Ensure that all fields and play areas are clear of debris, garbage and animals.
- Provide guards and security measures such as fencing, lighting and CCTV where possible.
- Consider how children access parks from their houses. Find ways to enable safe passage through traffic and other obstacles.
- Link up with local children and youth clubs or schools to adopt a park or play space, or encourage community service learning projects to maintain, upgrade or create new play spaces.

## Appendix I: Consent Form; Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Protocols

Consent form:



**Consent Form**

Consultation concept and questions:



**Consultation  
Concept and Questi**

Key Informant Interview Protocol:



**KII form**

Focus Group Protocol:



**FGD**

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