

---

## Title

**Addressing Urban and Peri-Urban Slums in Low and Middle-Income Countries: A Comprehensive Framework analysis for Equitable Development. Final**

---

## Purpose of the Report

This report identifies **priority issues for slum dwellers** to be addressed during the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy convergence process on Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems**. It provides a comprehensive framework that integrates key challenges and solutions, emphasizing food security, gender equality, human rights, and the role of international donors in urban and peri-urban contexts.

---

## Authors and Date

Prepared by Pat Mc Mahon and Alice Incarde - **Mothers First**

Date: **11th December 2024**

---

## Purpose and Context of the Paper

This paper has been developed as an **input to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy convergence process on Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems**. The rapid urbanization of **low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)** has fueled the growth of informal settlements, or **slums**, projected to house over **2 billion people by 2030**. Concentrated in **Asia, Africa, and Latin America**, these settlements face stark disparities in access to **food, housing, and essential services**, disproportionately affecting **women, children, and marginalized groups**.

The paper recognizes the intertwined challenges slum dwellers experience, including **food insecurity, malnutrition, gender-based inequities, and human rights violations**. To address these issues, the paper synthesizes insights from the **HLPE Peri-Urban Food Systems Paper** and layers them across 3 different UN and Civil Society policy frameworks

**WFP Urban Strategy, Global Action Plan on Wasting, and Cities for Children** frameworks.

By combining these perspectives, the paper proposes a comprehensive approach centered on **gender sensitivity, human rights, and international collaboration**. The aim is to demonstrate that a comprehensive set of policies that prioritise slum dwellers, who are the poorest of the poor, exist but remain largely unimplemented.

We hope that the Policy convergence process will mandate itself to comprehensively address bottlenecks to implementation and in doing so foster equitable and sustainable urban development globally.

---

**Section 1** [HLPE Report 19](#): Strengthening Urban and Peri Urban Food Systems to Achieve Food Security and Nutrition in the context of Urbanisation and Rural Transformation.

## **1. Urbanization and Peri-Urban Food Systems: Focus on Slums in LMICs (HLPE Focus)**

Slums in **LMICs** are characterized by poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and a lack of access to essential services, leading to severe food insecurity and malnutrition. The **HLPE peri-urban paper** emphasizes the need for **sustainable food systems** that integrate **urban and peri-urban agriculture** to ensure food access for rapidly growing urban populations.

### **Challenges in Slums:**

- **Food Insecurity:** Slum dwellers often spend a significant portion of their income on food, yet face **limited access to nutritious options** due to high food prices, inadequate storage, and lack of affordable markets.
- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Lack of access to sanitation, water, and electricity compounds food insecurity and malnutrition.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** The urban poor, particularly women, children, migrants, and refugees, are disproportionately affected by food insecurity and lack of access to essential services.

### **Solutions:**

- **Promote Peri-Urban Agriculture:** Investing in peri-urban agriculture and local food production systems reduces dependency on external markets and strengthens the resilience of urban food systems.
  - **Shorten Supply Chains:** Building localized food systems within slum areas can reduce the reliance on ultra-processed foods and increase access to fresh, nutritious food.
  - **Integrated Urban Policies:** Create urban food policies that integrate food production, water, sanitation, and housing, emphasizing **inclusive governance**.
- 

## **2 Gender and Human Rights Lens in Slums of LMICs**

In slums, **gender inequality** and **human rights violations** are rampant, and women, children, and marginalized groups face disproportionate challenges related to food security, housing, and health. A **gender-sensitive, human rights-based approach** is crucial for addressing the needs of these vulnerable populations.

### **Gender and Human Rights Challenges:**

- **Women's Rights:** Women in slums often face **gender-based violence** and are excluded from property rights and decision-making processes, affecting their ability to

secure housing and livelihoods. They also bear the primary responsibility for family food security.

- **Children's Rights:** Malnutrition, poor sanitation, and overcrowding disproportionately affect children, violating their right to health, education, and adequate living conditions.
- **Migrants and Refugees:** Migrants in urban slums are often **excluded** from public safety nets and essential services, leading to heightened vulnerabilities.

#### Solutions:

- **Inclusive Urban Governance:** Ensure the participation of women and marginalized groups in **urban planning** and **decision-making processes** to address their specific needs.
- **Land Tenure and Housing Rights:** Secure **land tenure** and **housing rights** for women and slum dwellers to ensure they have the legal protections needed to invest in their homes and livelihoods.
- **Targeted Social Protection:** Implement **cash transfers**, **microfinance initiatives**, and **nutritional subsidies** that empower women, reduce their financial burdens, and improve food access.
- **Access to WASH:** Improve **water, sanitation, and hygiene** (WASH) infrastructure to mitigate health risks and improve living conditions for women and children.

### 3 The Role of International Donors in Addressing Slum Challenges

The **international donor community** plays a crucial role in supporting LMICs in addressing the challenges of slums. Donors can contribute financially, technically, and in terms of knowledge transfer, helping countries implement the solutions outlined above.

#### Key Roles:

- **Financial Support:** Provide funding for **slum upgrading projects**, **WASH infrastructure**, and **food security interventions**.
- **Capacity Building:** Support **local governments** and **NGOs** in building capacity to design and implement **inclusive urban policies**.
- **Technical Assistance:** Offer expertise in **urban planning**, **food systems**, and **healthcare services** to improve outcomes in informal settlements.
- **Partnerships for Innovation and Sustainability:** Facilitate **public-private partnerships** to scale up innovative solutions for food security, urban resilience, and infrastructure development. These partnerships can enable resource sharing, foster community-driven initiatives, and ensure the longevity of interventions in informal settlements.

---

**Section 2 Insights from Multisectoral frameworks of WFP Urban Strategy, UN Global Action Plan on Wasting and Cities for Children by Save the Children and partners.**

#### 4. [WFP Urban Strategy](#): Addressing Malnutrition in Slums

The **World Food Programme's (WFP) Urban Strategy** highlights the need to build urban resilience in LMICs by improving food systems and addressing malnutrition. This strategy is particularly relevant in slums, where the **triple burden of malnutrition**—undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and obesity—is a growing concern.

### Key Challenges in Urban Slums:

- **Nutrition Transition:** The increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods, high in sugar and fat, contributes to rising obesity rates in slums.
- **Under-nutrition and Micronutrient Deficiencies:** Despite the availability of food, **undernutrition**, particularly among children, remains a critical issue in informal settlements.

### WFP's Recommendations for Slums:

- **School Feeding Programs:** Expand **school meal programs** to ensure children in urban slums have access to nutritious meals.
  - **Nutrition Education:** Implement **nutrition-sensitive education campaigns** to inform slum residents, particularly women, about healthy diets and the importance of breastfeeding.
  - **Inclusive Social Protection:** Strengthen social protection schemes such as **food vouchers** and **cash transfers** to improve food access for vulnerable households.
  - **Rural-Urban Linkages:** Build **stronger linkages** between rural food producers and urban markets to reduce food insecurity and ensure access to diverse, affordable, and nutritious food.
- 

## 5. Global Action Plan on Wasting: Addressing Child Malnutrition in Urban Slums

The [Global Action Plan on Wasting \(GAP\)](#) outlines strategies to combat child wasting, particularly in urban settings where food insecurity and poor health outcomes are prevalent. The framework's focus on prevention, treatment, and integrated healthcare services can be directly applied to slums in LMICs.

### Challenges in Slums:

- **High Prevalence of Wasting:** Slums, characterized by overcrowding and poor sanitation, are hotspots for child malnutrition and stunting.
- **Health System Weaknesses:** Urban slums often lack adequate healthcare services, leading to poor early detection and treatment of wasting.

### GAP Recommendations:

- **Prevention:** Prioritize maternal nutrition programs and ensure pregnant and breastfeeding women have access to essential nutrients.
  - **Integrated Health Services:** Expand community-based health services in slums to provide early detection and treatment for child wasting.
  - **RUTF Access:** Ensure that **ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs)** are available in urban health centers and community clinics to treat malnourished children.
  - **Community Engagement:** Engage **community health workers** to raise awareness about nutrition, healthcare, and sanitation in slums.
- 

## 6. Cities for Children: Addressing Vulnerabilities in Urban Slums

The [Cities for Children](#) framework emphasizes the need for **child-focused solutions** in urban planning, especially in informal settlements where children's rights are often

neglected. Slum children face numerous challenges, including inadequate housing, lack of education, and poor nutrition, which violate their rights to development and survival.

#### Challenges:

- **Malnutrition and Stunting:** Many slum children suffer from undernutrition and **micronutrient deficiencies**, which hinder cognitive and physical development.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Overcrowded conditions, poor sanitation, and lack of clean water increase children's vulnerability to diseases such as diarrhea and respiratory infections.
- **Exclusion from Services:** Slum children are often excluded from **formal education** and **healthcare services**, limiting their opportunities for development.

#### Solutions:

- **Child-Friendly Urban Planning:** Ensure that urban planning in slums includes **children's needs**, such as safe spaces for play, schools, and healthcare centers.
  - **Improve Access to Education:** Invest in **school infrastructure** and **nutrition programs** to improve educational outcomes for slum children.
  - **Integrated WASH Solutions:** Address the WASH needs of slum households to reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases and improve child health outcomes.
- 

## Section 3 Summary of the Report and report background.

This report addresses the critical challenges and opportunities in urban and peri-urban food systems, with a specific focus on slums in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It integrates insights from the HLPE peri-urban paper, WFP Urban Strategy, Global Action Plan on Wasting, and Cities for Children frameworks, emphasizing a gender-sensitive, human rights-based approach and the role of international donors.

### Key Themes and Recommendations

1. **Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems:**
  - Rapid urbanization is straining food systems, particularly in slums, where food insecurity and malnutrition persist.
  - Solutions such as peri-urban agriculture, shortened supply chains, and integrated urban food policies are essential to address these challenges.
2. **Gender and Human Rights:**
  - Women, children, and marginalized groups in slums face disproportionate risks, including poor nutrition, insecure housing, and lack of access to services.
  - Addressing these issues requires securing land tenure, empowering women through targeted social protection, and improving WASH infrastructure.
3. **Nutrition and Health:**
  - The Global Action Plan on Wasting provides a framework to prevent and treat child wasting, emphasizing maternal nutrition, early detection, and community-based interventions.
  - Nutrition-sensitive policies, such as school meal programs and education campaigns, are crucial for improving outcomes in slum settings.
4. **Role of International Donors:**

- Donors play a pivotal role in funding infrastructure improvements, strengthening local governance, and fostering public-private partnerships to build sustainable food systems and urban resilience.

### **Importance of Informing Policy**

The report underscores that slums represent the intersection of some of the most pressing global challenges, including food insecurity, malnutrition, gender inequality, and human rights violations. As such, it is **hoped that this paper may help inform the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy convergence process on urban and peri-urban food systems**. By aligning existing global, national, and local policies with the Sustainable Development Goals, the CFS can catalyze inclusive urban development that prioritizes slum dwellers and ensures no one is left behind.

This report serves as a call to action for policymakers, practitioners, and donors to collaboratively address urban challenges through integrated, evidence-based strategies.

### **About this report**

The report demonstrates that across the multi sectoral framework we both comprehensively understand the nature and root causes of context specific extreme poverty. It means to the furthest behind in our societies, we see you and we know how to effectively reach you.

The report did not delve into finance in a meaningful way because analysed reports themselves have not comprehensively addressed the issue as a bottleneck for policy implementation.

In itself this is surprising but perhaps not surprising considering the chronic underfunding across all UN agencies and civil society is the single biggest impediment to policy implementation.

We hope that the significance of finance on policy implementation will be adequately addressed in the policy convergence process.