

Children's Rights to Child Friendly Cities

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This chapter applies key principles in the evolution of children's rights to conditions for children in cities, and traces the history of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative of UNICEF. It discusses implications of a capabilities approach to children's rights for city governments' responsibilities to young citizens, and describes different approaches to the evaluation of child-friendly cities. Accounts of children's lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Delhi, India give examples of the chapter's principles in action, and the conclusion identifies processes of urban governance that can strategically support children's rights to survival, healthy development and participation.

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Introduction

In 1874, at age 10, Mary Ellen Wilson stood in a New York court room, dressed in ragged clothing, undernourished and bruised, testifying to a history of abuse and neglect. Her case was brought to court by Henry Bergh, a leader of the animal humane movement in the United States and founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). His action must be seen in the context of the absence of a formal child protection system at a time when prevailing statutes still called for neglected, poor and vagrant children to be indentured with a master or placed in an almshouse. The case attracted extensive media coverage, resulting in intense public indignation and catalyzing promulgation and enforcement of legal approaches to child protection. It became an impetus for the children's rights movement in the U.S. (Watkins 1990, pp. 501, 503).

In her testimony of many examples of maltreatment, Mary Ellen noted:

“I have no recollection ever being on the street in my life”

Her exclusion from the street, and hence from public space and the city at large, relates directly to children as city residents today. Historically, city residents in Medieval Europe were granted privileges that included aspects of governance and individual freedoms not available to those living outside cities. Being a resident of a city conferred certain legal rights.

Critical analyses of inequities resulting from private, profit-oriented urban development have spurred renewed interest in “rights to the city” (Attoh, 2011; Harvey, 2003; Lefebvre, 1968; Mitchell, 2003). As Harvey (2003, p. 939) defines them, “The right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart's desire.” To be just, this change must be collective and inclusive. It must aspire to “a new urban commons, a public

sphere of active democratic participation” (p. 941). However, attention to children as city residents with rights is noticeably absent from these discussions.

This chapter addresses this gap. It first briefly traces historical antecedents of child-focused rights and then connects this development to the emergence of rights-based approaches to child friendly cities (CFCs). This discussion leads to the view that children are actors with rights *and* responsibilities in the public sphere, appropriate to their competencies. We further develop this point by highlighting children’s participatory abilities, and the need to mainstream their involvement in urban development. We orient this discussion to children’s experience of physical and place-based aspects of their communities, and emphasize that governments must create processes and structures to support the fulfillment of children’s rights and the development of their capabilities.

Emergence of Child-Focused Rights

The rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, can be traced back to Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government* with its doctrine of natural rights of the individual to be safeguarded by government. Locke’s ideas contributed to the Enlightenment, which further elaborated emancipation from absolute authority, liberation to build one’s own life, and expression of self-awareness (Gay, 1969). The notion of a social contract between sovereign individuals and a governing authority is relevant to children’s rights to the city in at least two ways. First, it assumes rough equality: that people are free and independent agents in the formation of their government, with general equality in their physical and mental powers. When comparing children with adults, this is clearly not so. Therefore

children require special support to enable them to experience their rights (Dixon & Nussbaum, 2012).

Second, Locke's social contract accentuates the personal aspects of freedom and self-determination. This orientation to more *individualistic* perspectives also entered the realm of education, initially through Rousseau's notions about education through personal experience and self-discovery. Tolstoy, who, in his own words, "admired Rousseau with more than enthusiasm" (Bullitt, 1979, p. 13), was deeply influenced by these ideas which he sought to implement in his school for peasant children, where pupils had the right to self-direct their education. The Polish pediatrician Janusz Korczak embedded children's rights in a *collective* context in a Jewish orphanage he established in Warsaw in 1912. As young citizens, the children had responsibilities for daily tasks, ran their own parliament, court of peers, and newspaper. Korczak believed that in the process of working together, they would learn consideration and fair play, and develop a sense of responsibility toward others which they would carry with them into the adult world (Lifton, 2006). Important to note here is the coupling of individual rights and responsibility to others. Korczak demonstrated his personal commitment to this moral principle by declining a chance to escape from the Warsaw ghetto, choosing instead to stay with the orphans when they were taken to the Treblinka death camp, where he perished with them (Lifton 2006).

Korczak and Eglantyne Jebb, a British reformer, played leading roles in drafting the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the International Save the Children Union and the General Assembly of the League of Nations. This document became the basis for the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1959. It was superseded by the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that the U.N. General Assembly adopted in 1989 (www.unicef.org/crc/). All rights guaranteed in the CRC can be seen

as extensions of four key principles. Article 2 states the principle of *nondiscrimination*: that children's rights will be respected regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, ethnicity, disability or other status. Article 3 requires that, in all actions that concern children, the *best interests of the child* should be a primary consideration. Article 6 requires governments to provide optimal conditions for the *survival and development of the child*. Article 12 notes that children have a right to *participation* in all matters that affect them, through opportunities to express their views freely in accordance with their capabilities. Associated rights to freedom to seek and share information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of association and peaceful assembly are guaranteed by Articles 13, 14 and 15. These principles became the impetus for the Child Friendly Cities Initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the 1990s.

The assertion of rights-based approaches to children in cities aligned with two broader approaches to urban development that emerged in the mid-1960s. The first of these was the rise of advocacy planning and citizen participation in North America and Europe. During the same time, the urban poor in many Latin American and Asian countries turned to self-help approaches (Turner 1977). Coinciding with this trend was the academic articulation of "rights to the city," advanced initially by Henri Lefebvre (1968). Children's rights *to* cities and *in* cities must be seen in this context.

Children's rights to the city do not merely refer to their individual access to urban resources such as schools, medical care, play spaces, libraries, museums, and transportation, but also to their ability to affect urban decision making with a common voice. Two forms of participation in city life are implicated. The right of access involves children's *informal participation* in the culture and spaces of their society, through their presence in places that

adults have made, and through opportunities to colonize and transform spaces for their own uses. The right to affect decision-making requires *formal participation* through opportunities for civic engagement and shared decision-making with adults. Both kinds of participation form a foundation for democratic attitudes and behavior Hart (2014).

An individualistic orientation to children's rights to the city loses sight of two important points. First, rights stand in reciprocal relation to responsibilities. Rights are meaningless unless there's an actor with assigned responsibility for their fulfillment. On this point the CRC is unequivocal: It makes State Parties responsible (Article 2). On the other hand, just as State Parties have responsibilities to children, so also do children have responsibilities to the communities and societies in which they live. The 1959 Declaration made this clear, stipulating that the child must be brought up "in full consciousness that his energy and talents must be devoted to the service of his fellow men" (United Nations, 1959, p. 20). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child carries this idea forward in Article 31. Although the CRC dropped this explicit language, the principle of reciprocal responsibilities remains implicit in Article 29, which requires that children's education shall be directed to the development of their fullest potential, preparation for responsible life in a free society, respect for nature, and respect for their parents, cultural identity, national values, and the value of other civilizations.

A second, related and often overlooked point concerns *collective* aspects of rights to the city. Children's right to participate in decision-making processes that shape cities is as fundamental as their right to individual access to city resources. This right implies a need to empower children to become partners in deliberative democratic practices, teaching them skills of collaboration and empathy, and imparting to them recognition of interdependence as both an inescapable fact and a positive principle.

The Emergence of a Child Friendly Cities Framework

In 1991, shortly after the United Nations' adoption of the CRC in 1989, UNICEF organized a 'Mayors for Children' Conference in Rome. It led to a network of Mayors-Defenders of Children that gathered annually in the early 1990s to involve municipal authorities in implementing children's rights (Riggio, 2002). Like many organizations involved in international aid, UNICEF had been primarily working in areas of rural poverty; but recognizing the rapid pace of urbanization, lead staff realized the need to address children in conditions of urban poverty as well, and that local authorities were essential allies to achieve this.

In preparation for Habitat II, the UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1996, UNICEF convened experts to create a guiding document on the implications of the CRC for the governance of cities and to ensure that children's issues would be included in the Habitat II agenda and its action plans. Entitled *Children's Rights and Habitat: Working Towards Child-Friendly Cities*, the document lined up articles of the CRC in one column, next to implications for city policies, services, and physical facilities that would support children's realization of these rights in a parallel column (UNICEF, 1997). A book that elaborated these connections followed, *Cities for Children: Children's Rights, Poverty and Urban Management* (Bartlett et al., 1999).

Children's Rights and Habitat identifies in detail what it means to embody the CRC at the local level, with attention to supportive physical environments and particular attention to children in poverty and other difficult circumstances. A major part of the document identifies "Obstacles and Constraints" to municipal action for children. To create better conditions for children, recommendations advocate better information that involves communities in determining CFC indicators, children's inclusion in community decision-making, education

regarding children's rights, legal frameworks that conform to the CRC, and better government coordination. The book *Cities for Children* (Bartlett et al., 1999) maintains an emphasis on reaching children in situations of disadvantage, with examples of responses that even resource-poor municipal governments can achieve.

This work laid a foundation for the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) at UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre in Florence in 2000 (Riggio, 2002; Malone, 2006). By the time the International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities launched its website and published its booklet on *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action* (UNICEF, 2004), the emphasis on children in poverty and conditions in low- and middle-income countries had been removed in favor of more neutral language that could apply to any city, rich or poor. Critical remarks about obstacles were dropped in favor of discrete steps that municipal authorities or child advocacy organizations could take to increase awareness of children's rights and cultivate political sympathy for child friendly policies. Children's rights to participation, however, remained salient. According to the definition on UNICEF's CFCI website:

A child friendly city is the embodiment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level, which in practice means that children's rights are reflected in policies, laws, programs and budgets. In a child friendly city, children are active agents; their voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence decision making processes (www.childfriendlycities.org).

The Initiative has since moved from Florence to UNICEF's New York headquarters.

The CFCI organizes steps for developing a child friendly city around nine building blocks: children's participation; a child friendly legal framework; a city-wide children's rights

strategy; a children's rights unit or coordinating mechanism; a child impact assessment and evaluation; a regular State of the City's Children report; a plan for making children's rights known; and support for independent advocacy for children. Each building block is associated with a checklist of questions that a sponsoring agency or organization can use for self-assessment. The aim of this framework is to establish a structure of governance that will be responsive to children's rights. In the process, references to physical places in children's lives that were prominent in *Children's Rights and Habitat*, such as housing and public spaces, have disappeared—perhaps with the assumption that they will re-emerge through the recommended governance processes. The result, nevertheless, is that a CFC becomes primarily a procedural and organizational concept, no longer physically grounded in the places of children's lives.

A Capabilities Approach to Children's Rights

At the same time as UNICEF was organizing meetings of mayors as a foundation for the CFCI, the economist Amartya Sen and philosopher Martha Nussbaum were convening scholars from around the world at the invitation of the United Nations University to articulate the capabilities approach to human development (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). A capabilities approach emphasizes that it is not enough for states to grant citizens abstract rights under the law. Governments at every level must also create conditions where citizens are able to make choices regarding what they can do and be—in the process, developing their capabilities and realizing their rights. Denying people opportunities to fulfill their potential is inconsistent with respect for human dignity, which is the cornerstone of the philosophy of human rights.

The capabilities approach is rooted in the philosophy of Aristotle, who argued in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that happiness is the ultimate goal of human life—that for the sake of

which people pursue other goals—and it is achieved through people’s full and balanced realization of their capabilities. Although the development of capabilities requires self-initiative, it also requires supportive conditions. Nussbaum and Sen (1993) gathered scholars to adapt Aristotle’s principles to a challenge that the United Nations faced: how to respond to member nations that claimed that human rights are an inappropriate imposition of Western ideas incompatible with cultures that value hierarchy and authority. Nussbaum and Sen (1993) acknowledged that different cultures express human potentials “to do and to be” differently, but contended that basic capabilities are universal, defining what it means to be human, and no government is justified in treating any person as less than human. Sen (1999) also noted that every region of the world has a history of famous figures who spoke for human beings’ inherent dignity and need for freedom to pursue happiness, using the language of their time and place, even if their voices were often over-ruled.

Nussbaum (2011) proposed 10 “Central Capabilities” of a flourishing life worthy of human dignity, noting that every society should debate what belongs on this list but arguing that these 10 form a basic minimum. Although her list emerged from her work with women’s collectives in the developing world, connections can be drawn to articles in the CRC. Some elements on her list relate directly to statements in the CRC: the ability to live a life of normal length—not to die prematurely; to enjoy bodily health; to develop the senses, imagination and thought, which requires access to education and participation in cultural life and the arts; to affiliate with others; to have time for leisure and play; to develop a relationship with the natural world. Other items on her list have special meaning in the context of children’s urban experience. Bodily integrity, which for Nussbaum includes the ability to move freely from place to place, can be applied to children’s need for independent mobility. The capability to feel a

range of emotions that are not constrained by fear and anxiety is relevant to children's need for safe communities where they can engage in diverse activities. Control over one's environment can be extended to opportunities for children to create special places, find privacy, and play a role in shaping their environment. Practical reason—being able to form a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life—is promoted by children's participation in decisions that affect their communities.

Arguing that the conceptual basis for children's rights has been under-theorized, Dixon and Nussbaum (2012) considered contributions that a capabilities approach can make to the implementation of the CRC, particularly with regard to giving special priority to addressing children's needs. They observed that children benefit from protection and support in ways that are particularly “fertile,” in the sense that basic capabilities developed in childhood form a foundation for the flourishing of further capabilities later in life, and enable children to become productive members of their society who can in turn support others in their development. Disadvantages in childhood can be particularly “corrosive” of lifetime chances, with correspondingly high costs to society (Dixon & Nussbaum, 2012; Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007). Early childhood is central to the realization of a wide range of human capabilities, and therefore a capabilities approach affirms the status of even newborns and the very young as rights-bearers. It also recognizes autonomous agency as an essential part of human dignity from the earliest years, although children may need support to express their ideas in ways appropriate to their age.

Applying principles of the capabilities approach to human rights, it follows that a child friendly city must do more than just provide protection, services and suitable places for children, important as these provisions are. It must also give children opportunities to make choices regarding the experiences and competencies that they want to pursue, and it must enable them to

participate in envisioning and working toward conditions for a good life for themselves and their communities. Although young children may have small spheres for decision-making, it is important to enable children to practice thinking and decision-making at every age, as a measure of respect for their inherent dignity and as preparation for their expanding capacities for meaningful agency, up to young people's full assumption of political rights and powers in adulthood. The participation rights of the CRC are therefore core expressions of a capabilities approach.

Evaluating Child Friendly Cities from Different Perspectives

A capabilities approach to human rights encourages attention to how children live their lives in the here-and-now of local spaces, as this is where children find opportunities for action and experience that are essential to their realization of their capabilities and rights. A similar conclusion emerges from efforts to evaluate cities' child-friendliness. Three conceptual approaches to evaluating the child-friendliness of cities can be distinguished: functional assessments based on principles of environmental and ecological psychology, the extension of findings in child psychology regarding children's developing friendship with peers to understand the meaning of friendship with a city, and children's own assessments of community features. Each approach makes a distinct contribution to understanding a CFC, but as there is a great deal of overlap in their conclusions, they form complementary perspectives that reveal different facets of a CFC.

Functional approaches to environmental child-friendliness

As a contribution to a theoretical foundation for the CFCI, Horelli (2007) sought to understand environmental child-friendliness by applying ideas from environmental and

ecological psychology. Building on work by Lewin (1939), Wicker (1972), Michelson (1977), and Stokols, (1979), she proposed that the concept of *person-environment fit* or *congruence* can be evaluated by investigating whether urban places support people's pursuit of personally significant projects. (Little, 1983; Wallenius, 1996). Personal projects change with age, and therefore cities need to include environmental choices and spaces that children can adapt to their changing needs. A related concept, *affordances* (Gibson, 1979), describes fine-grained relationships between people and their place. An affordance refers to the physical opportunities and risks that a setting presents to a child, or any other living creature, relative to an individual's intentions and capabilities for action. A push-button signal to stop traffic on a busy street, for example, affords street crossing for an older child who can reach the button and heed the signal to cross in time, but the street remains an impassable barrier and serious threat to the safety of young children who do not know how to use the signal and cannot reach the button. Horelli (2007) drew on the work of Kytta (2003), who observed that children's use of affordances in their environment is regulated not only by the qualities of the environment and their individual characteristics, but also by social and cultural rules and practices.

Horelli noted that, whereas individuals are the holders of rights in human rights theory, urban planning seeks to create environments for groups of people. Therefore, the concept of person-environment fit needs to be complemented by *collective environment fit* that refers to the relationship of a group of people with their environment (Stokols, 1979). The concept of a *behavior setting* (Barker, 1968) is relevant here: a prescribed pattern of behavior in a specific setting such as a classroom, youth center, or playground. Horelli suggested that the availability of behavior settings that afford many opportunities for meaningful action, including settings that

children themselves can influence, forms an indicator of collective environment fit (see also Chawla & Heft, 2002).

One of the most important functions that a city can afford is free movement through a rich array of places and behavior settings. Whitzman, Worthington and Mazrachi (2010) argued that children's right to the city, in the form of freedom to move through public spaces, is essential for their realization of other rights. They illustrate the importance of autonomous movement by telling a story about the Danish urban designer Jan Gehl, who recalled that his mother could not understand why it took him eight minutes to get to school when he was a boy, but two hours to get home. "The eight minutes was a trip," he explained, "but what happened in the two hours was the stuff of life" (p. 483). Free movement is necessary for children's informal participation in their society, as it enables them to learn about a variety of people and activities, encounter different environments, access services, make choices, manage challenges, build self-confidence, and find places for privacy, sociability and creative play. Churchman (2003), as well as Freeman and Tranter (2011), identified how these opportunities depend not only on adults' permission and protection, but also on the physical affordances of neighborhoods.

Kyttä (2004) also put independent mobility at the heart of children's realization of their rights in a city. To evaluate child-friendliness, she developed a model of four types of environments in towns and cities. The *most child friendly community* enables children to move freely across a wide territory *and* find dense and diverse affordances where they can develop expanding spheres of competence and learn about their physical and social world. In some communities, however, children find themselves in a *glasshouse* where they can see that the environment contains a multitude of affordances but they are prevented from engaging with them, a *cell* where their mobility is so restricted that they are unaware of the wider world beyond

their home, or a *wasteland* where even if they are free to move around, there is little to discover. Kyttä found that these categories effectively distinguished different types of communities that she studied in Finland and Belarus.

Friendship with a place

From the perspective of child psychology, Chatterjee (2005) explored the question, what does a friendly relationship between a child and city mean? In early childhood, she notes, attachment relationships with caregivers who provide security are primary, but as children grow, so does their capacity for friendships with peers based on interdependence, mutual sharing, doing things with each other, and doing things for each other. Childhood friends give each other confidence to explore their surroundings, meet new people, learn new skills, and acquire new knowledge. Chatterjee suggested that place friendship implies similar reciprocity. A city is friendly to a child when it promotes the child's exploration, self-actualization, and self-expression. Children reciprocate when they find opportunities to participate in maintaining and caring for their city, enhancing the city through their energy and creativity.

The policy goal of a child friendly city, Chatterjee (2005) concludes, can only be successful if a city is "made up of numerous and interlocking child-friendly places that children themselves explore, engage with and develop emotional and affective relationships with through their own experiences" (p. 18). Policy makers can facilitate these experiences by providing safe access to a city's resources and by establishing guidelines for healthy settings in all the spheres of children's lives. This means, Chatterjee observes, that policy makers cannot solely rely on health and education statistics to measure children's well-being, but must facilitate the creation of physical settings where children can flourish.

Children's self-assessments of city quality

A close “cousin” of UNICEF’s CFCI is the Growing Up in Cities program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which was revived in preparation for the Habitat II Conference in 1996 with a focus on implementing the participation articles of the CRC (Articles 12-15). The Committee on the Rights of the Child ruled that participation rights extend to children’s expression of their views regarding their physical environment (Hodgkin & Newell, 1998). It follows that children must be involved in assessing city quality and planning for change. During preparations for Habitat II, leaders of the CFCI and leaders of the revival of Growing Up in Cities collaborated closely and served as advisors for each other’s initiatives.

Growing Up in Cities was originally conceived in 1970 by Kevin Lynch, MIT professor of urban design, in response to the resurgence of the environmental movement and UNESCO’s establishment of the Man and the Biosphere Program. As a contribution to this new program, Lynch created Growing Up in Cities to explore people’s developing relationship with their city in childhood through simple techniques for participatory urban evaluation (Lynch, 1977). In an interview in 1976, Lynch told the environmental psychologist Florence Ladd (1985), “What is of most interest to me is what kind of an environment helps people develop into rich full human beings who reach their potential” (p. 6). He sought to enable children to document their experience of their cities, and then bring their recommendations for better urban spaces forward to city councils and planning agencies. To his discouragement, municipal authorities showed little interest in children’s ideas. The United Nations’ adoption of the CRC in 1989 created more favorable conditions, encouraging UNESCO to revive the program in 8 countries in 1996

(Chawla, 2002). The program still serves as a model for participatory planning and urban design with children (Derr, Chawla, Mintzer, Flanders-Cushing & van Vliet—, 2013; Malone, 2013).

Chawla (2002) synthesized the views that children expressed in Lynch's original nine sites and 10 revival sites. Children ages 9 through 15 described how they used their communities, their feelings about problems and resources, and their visions for improvements through a variety of media, including drawings, photography, role playing, interviews, group discussions, and child-led tours through their neighborhoods. There was general consistency in what children desired and feared across the years, and across diverse sites that included inner city neighborhoods in Poland, Argentina, the United States and Norway; communities built around industrial brown fields in Australia and the United Kingdom; informal settlements in India and Mexico; and a squatter camp in South Africa. Children talked about the social qualities of their communities as much as physical features, and these social and physical dimensions were inextricably related. Social relations influenced whether children were free to move about their communities safely, and physical surroundings were barren or inviting in different degrees.

On the social side, children evaluated their communities as good places in which to grow up when they felt welcomed by adults, integrated into community spaces, and safe from bullies and crime, and when they experienced a cohesive community identity, a tradition of community self-help, and secure housing tenure for their families. Physically, supportive communities provided places for peer gathering, a variety of activity settings that children could observe or join, safe green areas, basic services such as clean water and sanitation, freedom from physical dangers such as heavy traffic, and pathways for free movement. New program leaders had better success than Lynch and his colleagues in gaining the attention of municipal authorities to hear children's views, but still encountered barriers (Chawla et al., 2005).

Bringing Children's Rights Home to Localities

To bring the ideas in this chapter home to the places where children live, this section presents examples of real children making resourceful use of opportunities in their communities, and even leading efforts to improve community conditions. A major argument of this chapter is that the concept of child friendly cities cannot be left to abstract legal frameworks and structures for governance, essential as these measures are. Children experience a city as child friendly only if ideas about children's rights are translated into "numerous and interlocking child-friendly places that children themselves explore, engage with and develop emotional and affective relationships with" (Chatterjee, 2005, p. 18). The following examples from Rio de Janeiro and Delhi show that supportive places can be created even in difficult circumstances, and that they are vital for young people's well-being. These examples also illustrate children's agency through both informal and formal participation in their communities, and reciprocity between rights and responsibilities.

Beating the odds in Rio de Janeiro

The story of Thiago is part of a project on the everyday lives of children living in poverty (UN-Habitat, 2008). Thiago was 14 at the time of fieldwork to gather his story, living alone with his mother in a tiny apartment in Rocinha, one of Rio's most notorious favelas. It is estimated that young people 18 and younger form 60 percent of Rocinha's population of more than 250,000 people, who live in haphazard squatter housing that climbs a steep mountainside overlooking the Guanabara Bay. Residents lack adequate access to utilities, sanitation, trash collection and police protection. As a central location in the illegal export of cocaine, Rocinha was a haven for heavily armed drug gangs that ruled its narrow, twisting streets and alleys.

Fights between rival gangs and against police punctuated daily life. Boys like Thiago ran the risk of being mistaken for a member of a rival gang and killed if they ventured outside their neighborhood.

Thiago's ability to create a positive, hopeful life for himself despite such a setting is a testament to the "fertility" of investments in children by governments and community organizations (Dixon & Nussbaum, 2010; Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007). Thiago's mother Goretti came to Rio to work as a maid. When Thiago was two, his mother was fortunate to get a job in a daycare center so that she would no longer leave him behind when she went to work. The city-run center gave Thiago and his mother strong roots in their community. After Thiago became old enough to attend public school, he returned to the center as a volunteer when he was 10, and four years later, he continued to go three days a week to read and play with the children and lead art activities. "There are many children for the teachers to care for," Thiago explained, "and usually they don't have time to play with the kids so I play with them. ...It makes me happy to see them happy." This generosity is consistent with Thiago's self-assurance that, as he said, "I have a conscience of what is right and wrong."

Three evenings a week, Thiago attended dance classes in a two-room studio run by a young woman who raised money for the program herself, with the aid of a benefactor who paid the rent. Once a week, he took theater classes as well as flute. These nonprofit organizations were sanctuaries that took children and youth away from the dangers of the street. Participating in rehearsals and public performances gave Thiago pride and pleasure and took him to new places around the state. When he had time, Thiago played soccer with friends in their quiet one-block street that was too narrow for cars, or walked with friends to the public beach 2 kilometers away.

A major advantage for Thiago was that when he was nine, he took an exam to enter Dom Pedro II, one of Rio's oldest and most prestigious public middle and secondary schools, and he came in second out of 350 applicants—despite the fact that he was attending an overcrowded public elementary school with minimal resources and competing against children attending private schools and taking special courses to prepare for the exam. Only 15 applicants were accepted. A nearby city bus and student bus pass enabled him to get to his new school. Success at Dom Pedro prepared him for a good chance of gaining admission to one of Brazil's universities, which are also entered through competitive exams. In Thiago's dedication to education, he was following the example of his mother, who earned a basic university degree in education at the same time as she worked and raised her son by herself. Today, she directs a day care center, and after graduating from Dom Pedro, Thiago dances professionally and teaches dance classes. He plans to take university admissions exams in the coming year, with the aim of becoming an architect.

Thiago's story illustrates key protective factors in the lives of resilient young people. On the personal side, he showed intelligence, self-control, self-efficacy, a motivation to succeed, a belief that life has meaning, and a close attachment to a loving parent. In his environment, he found relationships with other capable adults, friends, an effective school, and collective efficacy in the organizations that nurtured him (Masten, 2014). Within the limited circumstances of his life, he managed to realize most of the Central Capabilities that Nussbaum (2011) described: survival; bodily health; developing his senses, imagination and thought; social affiliation; leisure and play. Despite Rocinha's high level of violence, he was able to move through a network of safe spaces and exercise some control over his environment, experience a range of positive emotions, and feel confidence in his sense of right and wrong. These safe spaces—home,

neighborhood street, daycare center, dance studio, music and theater lessons, school—helped him grow into a young person who is an asset to his society. Government support in his life was limited but vital: the daycare facility, access to Dom Pedro II, public transport to get to school, the possibility of a university education. Also vital was the initiative and goodwill of the adults in his community who established and maintained the dance studio and free classes in the arts. Many other children in Rocinha, lacking the protective factors that Thiago enjoyed and unable to escape inadequate local schools, faced a foreclosed future or entered the ever-present drug world.

Children's role in humanizing forced resettlements in Delhi

Squatters gravitate to land near essential resources—food, water, opportunities to earn cash, schools for their children (Swart-Kruger, 2002). When they are evicted, they not only lose their homes and belongings but also vital networks. Article 16 of the CRC states that, “No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interferences with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence”; but as land values rise in urban areas, many governments remove the poor from their marginal spaces on short notice.

Children and their families suffer evictions as collective groups, and efforts to improve their lives need to involve them as collectives. Chatterjee (2007) tells the story of children from Gautampuri, a squatter settlement on the banks of the Yamuna River in Delhi that was in the view of a new secretariat building for the Chief Minister of Delhi. Soon after the building's construction, the government ordered Gautampuri flattened. With the support of a consortium of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the 529 families organized to get a stay of eviction at least until their children could complete their approaching school exams, but the petition was denied. After this failure, the adults decided to involve the children. Central to this process was

the NGO Ankur, which had been operating libraries and literacy programs in the slums along the Yamuna and organizing periodic *Bal Sabhas*, or large children's meetings. Ankur organized a three-day community workshop for all school-going children—258 7- to 16-year olds—where they created a plan to meet city officials to petition to stay in their homes until after their annual exams; and 100 representatives from the group staged a sit-in outside the office of the commissioner responsible for slums until he agreed to meet with them. He too refused their plea. The children were in despair, but at this point, an NGO took their story to the press, and three leading newspapers carried accounts of the children's struggle, along with their writings and drawings about the suffering associated with forced evictions. For the first time, the children felt that people with influence were listening to them.

The children's story attracted the attention of a senior advocate for the Delhi High Court, a lawyer, and an urban planner, who helped the community file legal notices on behalf of urban slum dwellers against the city government. The children were involved in every step of this process, and joined the picket line outside the Delhi High Court on the day of the ruling. The court ruled against the stay of eviction, but ordered that the state must first secure basic facilities at a site before resettling people. It was a limited victory for the children of Gautampuri, but a landmark case in the history of forced evictions in Delhi.

Families were taken by truckload to barren land in Bhalaswa, on the outskirts of Delhi where families were allowed to buy small plots with a five-year lease. A predetermined plan was going to be imposed on the community, but the NGO consortium supported women and adolescent girls in evaluating and rejecting the plan on the grounds that it was unsafe, and a modified layout was adopted. Ankur continued to work with the children, with the aim of nurturing their social, environmental and political learning, including awareness of their rights,

and improving the quality of their lives. Ankur staff trained the children in surveying baseline conditions in their own and other resettlement sites, which provided the only detailed documentation of living conditions in new settlements, as the government maintained no records. Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi invited the children to share their findings through an exhibit and theater performance, which enabled the children to reflect on their experience with university students, academics, activists and other concerned citizens.

As this process evolved, it moved from adult-initiated actions in which children were involved in decision-making, to child-initiated actions in partnership with adults (Hart, 1997), as the children became increasingly skilled at developing plans and strategies. Eager to improve their barren new settlement, they decided that it needed trees. Representatives of their group and an Ankur facilitator met with officials of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to get their planting scheme accepted, with success. The children invited the manager of a local nursery on a tour of their site and he helped them with their plant list. Children met again as a group to decide where the plants should go for the benefit of the community as a whole. With financial help and materials from Ankur, the Municipal Corporation and the nursery, they planted 225 trees, watered them, guarded them from grazing cattle and the hot sun—and maintained them so well that the nursery pledged more plants for the following year. Through ongoing advocacy with children at the core, Bhalaswa gradually acquired a primary school, a senior secondary school, buses to the heart of Delhi, water, electricity, and green surroundings.

In this example, supportive spaces were created by NGOS that brought rights-based advocacy into the children's community in defiance of government neglect and discrimination against the poor. Other sympathetic adults in the press, law, urban planning, and higher education gave the children confidence that they and their families had a right to decent living

conditions. With this encouragement, children were in the forefront of efforts to secure essential services for their resettlement site. Ankur focused on nurturing the children's capabilities for imagination, thought, social affiliation, and practical wisdom through the children's libraries and *Bal Sanghas* that it organized; and in these spaces the children could safely experience a range of emotions from despair, fear, pain and indignant anger to social solidarity, hope and the satisfaction of success. These spaces gave them a measure of control over their difficult environment. Empowered by the adults who came forward to help them, they developed leadership skills that fulfilled Ankur's aims: to promote an active citizenry by making the children aware of democratic ideals such as human rights, equality and social justice, and through this means, to contribute to the children's social and environmental learning and improve the quality of their community.

Governance Structures and Processes that Support Child Friendly Cities

The preceding examples illustrate a paradox of cities. On one hand, the dense populations, domination of space by adults, and inequitable economic regimes in cities expose many children to harsh conditions that violate their basic rights. On the other hand, the diversity of people and talents that cities bring together create conditions for human enterprise, creativity, problem-solving, and social justice activism. Children can be both beneficiaries and contributors in these initiatives to improve urban conditions. By focusing on children's resilient agency, the preceding examples do not mean to condone violent neighborhoods or evictions on short notice, which are undeniable violations of children's rights. These stories illustrate, nevertheless, the types of initiatives that can be supported and leveraged to create more child friendly spaces even in very difficult environments.

Major obstacles to CFC's that the document *Children's Rights and Habitat* (UNICEF, 1997) identified remain, including discrimination against the poor and a view of cities as engines for economic growth rather than environments for people. CFCI's cannot change these global structures. Nevertheless, strategies that bring different sectors of society and government together to make cities more supportive places for children can have a significant impact. The idea of a CFC functions much like the idea of sustainable development: as an idea that can mobilize action rather than a reality that is comprehensively achieved at one point in time. It is not a definitive outcome or product to be accomplished and done with, but an ongoing process of progressive realization, reflecting the dynamics of changing circumstances. This conclusion considers key steps to embed children's rights in the culture of city governments and governance more broadly.

Information collection, monitoring and communication

To create more child friendly cities, it is necessary to know how children are faring and whether initiatives to improve their lives are having intended effects. Many squatter settlements like Rocinha and Gautampuri are unmapped and therefore invisible on official city maps, or if data is collected, it is often not disaggregated by age or sex, or designed to include indicators that most directly affect children, such as the location of schools, student-teacher ratios, and the proportion of children attending school in a locality (Bartlett, 2005). Therefore, a major thrust of the CFCI has been developing indicators of child well-being, including data gathered by children and their communities. A partnership between UNICEF, the Children's Environments Research Group at the City University of New York, and numerous country-based research institutes and child-advocacy organizations created Child Friendly Places, an intergenerational assessment and

planning methodology that cities, towns and institutions such as schools can adapt to evaluate conditions for children, forge rights-based action plans, and assess progress (Wridt, 2015).

As the children in Bhalaswa showed when they surveyed conditions in resettlement sites, young people can gather and analyze data effectively when they have the support of advisors. Using hand-held tools that are now available for GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and GIS (Geographic Information Systems), young people can learn valuable social, political, and technical skills as they map their communities (UN-Habitat, 2009). Equally important is qualitative data about lessons learned from challenges, failures and successes in the process of trying to improve community conditions. The Child Friendly Places methodology includes all of these approaches.

Other ways to gather and apply information are Child Impact Assessments (Yates, 2005) and budget reviews through the lens of child rights (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2013). Some regional networks of countries and city networks are developing their own accreditation programs to establish formal mechanisms to gather data and assess progress in meeting CFC goals. A group of countries or cities decide on criteria that are relevant to their local conditions, create a monitoring system, and submit applications to a panel of judges for review. Accreditation is valid for a set number of years, when reapplication becomes necessary (Blanchet-Cohen & Torres, in press; Malone, 2010).

Sharing information strategically is as important as gathering it. The example of Gautampuri shows that children's voices and community surveys can strengthen the case for civil society groups that seek to pressure governments to fulfill their obligations under the CRC. When governments commit themselves to action for children, indicators of child well-being form

measurable goals to aspire to as well as markers of progress. One of UNICEF's most successful CFC initiatives has been the Municipal Seal of Approval, which was initially introduced in the state of Ceará in northeastern Brazil (Fuentes & Niimi, 2002). By introducing competition among municipalities and allowing city governments to use the Seal on official stationery and promotional material, the program encourages cities to collect, monitor, and publicize child-based indicators, resulting in dramatic improvement in some indicators. Measures include children's views on how well their city is serving them. City report cards, State of the City's Children reports, and local CFC websites are other ways to make information public (Bartlett, 2005).

Public and professional education about children's rights is also necessary. A space such as the day care center where Thiago volunteered, for example, had posters about the CRC on its walls. Such a space can be a locus for staff training regarding the implications of the CRC for daily practice, lessons about rights for children, and outreach to families. Responsibilities to communicate children's rights also rest in schools, police departments, court systems, social welfare systems, and health care systems (Bartlett et al., 1999). Government officials make decisions in distant offices that often impact the quality of children's environments in major ways, and they need to understand their impact in the context of the CRC. Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010) note that children's right to the city, as well as spaces that support their realization of all rights, cannot be achieved without integrating the language of children's rights into all levels of planning that govern land use, urban development and transportation, and training planners in how to consult with children of different ages.

Broad-based partnerships and coordinating structures

Gathering and promoting indicators of CFCs and training government officials and professional staff regarding children's rights require partnerships between governments and organizations in civil society, such as international NGOs like UNICEF, NGOs that work on national and local levels, universities, and community-based organizations. The private sector also plays a role: for example, by helping to provide affordable housing for low-income families. These types of partnerships among government, civil society and the private sector characterize effective initiatives to create livable cities for all ages (van Vliet—, 2008). Formal structures are needed to coordinate and sustain these partnerships. Structures of this kind include a Child Rights Advocate or Child Ombudsman in city government, Child Rights Committees that bring partners together, and Children's Councils (Bartlett, 2005). Children's Councils can be effective if they are representative, accountable to the children they represent, and have authority to review decisions that affect children, such as the allocation of resources for children's needs in the city budget (Flanders-Cushing & Van Vliet—, in press). Nevertheless, only a few children sit on a council, and to give as many children as possible practice in participatory democracy, children need to have a voice in the everyday spaces of their lives (Driskell, 2002; Hart 1997, 2014).

We close this chapter with reflections on a program to make our own city, Boulder, Colorado, more child friendly. Named Growing Up Boulder by a vote of the children who helped launch the initiative, it fuses participatory methods for urban evaluation and action, promoted by the Growing Up in Cities program of UNESCO, with the CFCI goals of UNICEF. Through a formal Memorandum of Understanding, the City of Boulder, Boulder Valley School District, and the Children, Youth and Environments Center of the University of Colorado agreed in 2009 to work together to bring participatory urban design and planning into classrooms and other sites in

children's lives, as a way to provide input of immediate relevance to the city, such as children's priorities for the city's Comprehensive Plan or Transportation Master Plan or children's visions for areas targeted for redevelopment. A Steering Committee includes representatives of the city, school district and university, as well as numerous community organizations that work with children and advocate for their interests. This broad alliance ensures that children from low-income and ethnic minority families, who are least likely to be heard in the political process, participate in a sustained way (Derr et al., 2013).

Growing Up Boulder could not function without a paid coordinator—or currently, two part-time coordinators who are based in the university. Their salaries come from the city's departments of Community Planning and Sustainability, Parks and Recreation, Open Space and Mountain Parks, and Transportation, as each department includes public outreach and participation in its mission, but busy staff do not have time or expertise to work directly with children on a regular basis. Growing Up Boulder coordinators collaborate with classroom teachers and staff in youth organizations, taking participatory activities into children's spaces. Because the coordinators are based in the university, they are able to enlist undergraduate and graduate students in design and education, visiting scholars, and design faculty, who engage whole classes in service learning through Growing Up Boulder projects. In the process, students who aim for careers in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning learn about children's rights, children's needs, and participatory processes for working in consultation with children. On their side, children have opportunities to understand their city better, learn how city government works, share their ideas with city staff and politicians, and see role models as they work with university students.

Like all alliances, Growing Up Boulder is in some ways fragile. It depends on funding from city agencies for the coordinators who hold the partnership together. It appears to be growing stronger with time, however, as the benefits of the partnership become evident to everyone involved. School teachers and university faculty see the advantages of student learning through real-world experiences, and city staff see that their projects are more responsive to the needs of children and their families. Community organizations have more open channels of communication with city government. The long term relationship has enabled participants to come to know each other personally, build trust, see the skills and talents that each group brings, and learn what works best through trial and error. The result is a perceptible change in the city's culture, as the integration of children into urban planning and design becomes an expected part of decision-making.

This chapter describes what Wridt, Atmakur-Javdekar and Hart (in press) termed the “spatializing of children’s rights”: recognition that children’s rights need to be embodied in the material forms of human settlements. This requires linking planning at different levels of governance to community-based initiatives to improve local conditions for children, including children as citizens who can contribute valuable ideas. Only then do rights to the city become, in Harvey’s (2003) words, “not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart’s desire” (p. 939). Achieving this goal, this chapter shows, involves a reciprocal view of rights and responsibilities. Responsibility rests on governments to ensure that cities comprise humane spaces where children can fulfill their rights and develop their capabilities, and by this means, children find opportunities to grow into full-fledged and responsible citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to manage their cities wisely.

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