

# Growing up in the City

Designing and building child-friendly urban settings

*A child-centred approach to urban planning and design can help tackle urban challenges in a more holistic and integrated manner, leading to actions that can contribute to the creation of more inclusive, liveable and safer cities that work better for everyone.*

## About Arup

Arup is an independent multi-disciplinary firm with more than 14,000 specialists working across every aspect of today's built environment. Our mission to shape a better world is driven by our commitment to deliver quality work, to make a real difference, stretch the boundaries of what is possible, help our partners solve their most complex challenges, and achieve socially valuable outcomes.

The International Development team partners with organisations operating in the humanitarian and development sector, to contribute to safer, more resilient and inclusive communities and urban settings in emerging economies and fragile contexts throughout Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East, where the impacts of today's global challenges are felt most acutely.

Arup is committed to advocating for, and supporting the achievement of, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other key international commitments and agreements, including the Paris Declaration on Climate Change (2015), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), and the New Urban Agenda (2016).

## The need for child-friendly urban settings

Cities have a big impact on millions of children. By 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities, and the majority of those people will be children under the age of 18. Within vulnerable communities, children are among the most vulnerable of all.

Children stand to be disproportionately impacted by the decisions made today to address a wide array of issues, such as the impacts of climate change, transportation, crime and safety, socioeconomic inequality, education, and public health.

Cultivating a quality of life that caters for the most vulnerable groups in cities and human settlements by answering children's needs, and enriching their development from childhood to adulthood, will determine our global future.

## Our Approach

A child-friendly approach to design and planning has the potential to unite a range of progressive agendas – including health and wellbeing, sustainability, resilience and safety – and to act as a catalyst for urban resilience and innovation. In addition, when provided with adequate support and protection, children can be powerful agents of change, with new perspectives to offer on many of the challenges we face in the built environment and beyond.

## Contacts

For additional information, please contact:

### Sara Candiracci

Associate Director | International Development  
sara.candiracci@arup.com

### Sachin Bhoite

Associate | International Development  
sachin.bhoite@arup.com

# Our Work

*Planning urban environments to meet the needs of children and their caregivers is one of the best investments a city can make, but is often overlooked. Arup is committed to creating healthier and more inclusive, resilient and competitive cities for all of us to live, work and grow up in.*

## Child-centred urban resilience framework



The [Child-Centered Urban Resilience Framework](#) was developed by Arup with [Plan International](#) to guide efforts to build urban resilience that support children and youth. The Framework integrates child and human rights into resilient urban development, enabling children to become agents of resilience. Public and private stakeholders can use this guide to assess and adapt current efforts to build resilience; identify opportunities; promote co-ordination; and develop pathways to greater resilience for children through new initiatives.

## Designing for urban childhoods



The research [Designing for urban childhoods](#) was conducted by Arup to present a coherent vision for child-friendly cities, with a set of key principles and specific recommendations on how to achieve this. It sets out actions and opportunities for city stakeholders, including policy makers and city leaders, developers and investors, and built environment professionals, and considers how progress might be measured.

## Designing better places for early childhood



With the support of the [Bernard van Leer Foundation](#) Arup is developing a guide with design principles, methods, sets of standards and policy recommendations to assess, design and implement life-improving solutions for young children and caregivers in deprived urban settings, such as informal settlements and refugee camps. We are working with [Save the Children](#), [KDI](#) and [AVSI Brazil](#) in Beirut, Nairobi and Salvador. The approach was tested in Salvador, as part of Arup's work with the Rockefeller Foundation's [100 Resilient Cities Programme](#).

## Safer refugee camps for children



Arup is undertaking a research project to explore how safer environments, and an improved quality of life, can be created for children in refugee camps using Crime Prevention Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and strategies. CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour through environmental design. It looks at how the built, social and administrative environment influences the offender's decisions that precede criminal acts.

## Youth driven climate adaptation project in Bangladesh



With the support of the [Nordic Climate Facility](#), Arup is implementing a Youth-Driven Climate Adaptation project with Plan International, which aims to co-design and deliver sustainable solutions to strengthen the climate resilience of disadvantaged communities living in Dhaka slums. We have designed and tested effective and affordable climate adaptation solutions, encouraging youth in the community to become 'climate champions;' and monitor, document and understand the area's resilience dynamics as an advocacy tool for government. In 2018 the project received the 'Urban Climate Resilience Award' at the [National Conference on Urban Resilience to Climate Change in Dhaka](#).

## Urban95 Virtual Reality



In collaboration with the [Bernard van Leer Foundation](#), Arup has developed a virtual reality experience that gives people the chance to view the city through the eyes of a 3-year-old. The experience brings to life the challenges and realities of a city for young children, to question what could be done differently in order to make it better. This experience allows the user to fully explore the [Urban95](#) question "If you could experience a city from 95cm – the height of a 3-year-old – what would you change?"