




**Quality of Life Initiative**  
*Valuing what matters*



# Quality of Life Initiative





**Over the past several decades (until the COVID 19 pandemic), the world went through a period of massive growth, accompanied by overall decreasing levels of poverty and improved livelihoods for millions.**

At the same time, this period has seen the rise of global challenges such as the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss), increasing inequalities, natural disasters, pandemics, armed conflict and more. The digital revolution has upended nearly every aspect of life, presenting a double-edged sword of unprecedented opportunities as well as unresolved challenges.

*In cities, where some 56% of the global population resides (with the urban population expected to double by 2050), grappling with such rapid change has led many to redefine their needs and expectations about what is meant by a good quality of life.*

Access to services, public space, social and family interactions, and belonging are elements which billions of urban residents across the globe have factored into their definition of the 'good life'.

The Quality of Life Initiative is a global project implemented by UN-Habitat, and was designed to accompany such a rapidly shifting urban landscape. It is people-centred and aims at redefining conventional approaches to assessing and monitoring the quality of life in cities through innovation. It will equip local decision-makers globally with a practical measurement tool (Index) which integrates measures of individuals' experiences in their environment, approved by the United Nations and used by countries and cities across the world, thus contributing to accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



## Quality of Life Initiative

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**At its core, the Initiative features the development of an innovative, globally relevant, locally applicable index to evaluate and accelerate progress on local and global policy agendas around improving the quality of life in cities.**



The Initiative encompasses institutional depth, partner engagement, communication, and the creation of an overall knowledge ecosystem to drive a narrative around a revamped, holistic and inclusive quality of life concept.

By integrating innovative measures that reflect people's own experience in their neighbourhood and city, into a dedicated monitoring mechanism, the Quality of Life Initiative gives value to what matters to individuals and communities. Doing so will inform decision-making processes that positively impact their lives.

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# *Key Principles of the Quality of Life Initiative*

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- 1.**  **Human First**  
Integrating what people value
- 2.**  **Globally Relevant, Locally Applicable**  
Advancing a universal measure of quality of life in cities combined with local perspectives
- 3.**  **Evidence-Based Decision Making**  
Actionable insights for change
- 4.**  **Pioneering**  
Learning from a process of co-creation to scale up actions



# 1. Human First

## *Integrating what people value*

Unlocking a deeper understanding of individuals' true priorities goes beyond conventional metrics. The Quality of Life Initiative ventures into the realm of both objective and subjective factors that shape people's values, impact their daily lives, and ultimately contribute to their satisfaction. Local leaders can gain valuable insights into what truly matter to their communities, enabling them to make informed decisions that enhance opportunities and choices for everyone involved.





## 2. Globally Relevant



### ***Establishing new global standards for local change***

*The Initiative and resulting index will capture those important aspects of quality of life that are considered universal, but also offer the flexibility to bring in local values and*

The Initiative aims to provide local governments with a tool that will help them assess their own performance and progress, supporting the localization of the SDGs, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. The Quality of Life Initiative emphasizes the importance of understanding local contexts in order to tailor urban policy decisions.



### 3. Evidence - Based Decision Making

#### ***Actionable insights for change***

Embracing a data-driven approach, the Initiative strives to bridge gaps in crucial drivers of sustainable development and bolster cities' capabilities in data collection and analysis. Pioneering advancements in data collection, organization, and visualization, the initiative seeks to redefine conventional methods. By enhancing the connections between performance measurement, decision-making processes, and the overall wellbeing of communities, the initiative aims to create a more informed and impactful framework for driving positive change.

### 4. Pioneering

#### ***Learning from a pro- cess of co-creation to scale up actions***

Expanding upon the foundation laid by the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF)<sup>1</sup>, the index is taking shape through a collaborative and inclusive process. Governments, partners, development actors are actively invited to participate, fostering a meaningful and diverse range of contributions. Following this consultative phase, the index will undergo rigorous field testing and validation across cities in various regions. The ultimate goal is to craft a high-quality, user-friendly, and adaptable index that can be seamlessly implemented and scaled-up in cities worldwide, promoting widespread accessibility and effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2022 for implementation as part of the Harmonized Global UN Systemwide Strategy for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA) and other regional, national, and subnational urban programmes. More information: <https://data.unhabitat.org/pages/urban-monitoring-framework>





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