



**United Nations Trust Fund
for Human Security**

Global: UN-HABITAT SAFER CITIES

Making Cities and Human Settlements
Safer after COVID-19: Strengthening
Awareness of Safer Cities Tools applying a
Human Security Framework

Background information

Today, half the world's inhabitants reside in cities, a phenomenon driven by the continuous migration of people from rural to urban areas and the rapid demographic expansion of urban populations, especially in the poorest countries. Cities attract people through the promise of economic dynamism, access to services, and expanded economic, social and cultural opportunities. Yet hundreds of millions of people live far from this promise, facing urban poverty and exclusion, and increased vulnerability to crime, violence and insecurity as well as to economic shocks, climate change, natural disasters, and health pandemics. As evidenced by Covid-19, these shocks and their multidimensional impacts amplify pre-existing inequalities, accentuate vulnerabilities, and erode the capacity of local and national governments to protect and empower residents. As a result, many cities on the frontlines of these challenges are rethinking how to ensure public safety, opportunity and dignity for all, particularly those in the most vulnerable situations.

Goals and objectives

The programme aims to (i) promote the application of the human security approach in cities, develop an urban safety and human security monitoring tool to prevent and respond to urban risks and challenges, and build the capacity of local governments to utilize these frameworks and tools; and (ii) accelerate citizen engagement for urban safety by establishing working groups to carry out local appraisals, collect lessons learned, and exchange local knowledge on community safety and resilience.



DURATION

March 2022 – April 2024



UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

UN-Habitat, UNODC, UNODA,
World Bank, OHCHR, HSU



OTHER KEY PARTNERS

Global Network on Safer Cities,
Africa Forum for Urban Safety,
Canadian Municipal Network on
Crime Prevention, European Forum
for Urban Security, Global
Parliament of Mayors, Institute of
Security Studies, International
Centre for the Prevention of Crime,
London School of Economics,
National Institute for Urban Affairs
in India, United Cities and Local
Governments, and Universidad
Alberto Hurtado Chile



BENEFICIARIES

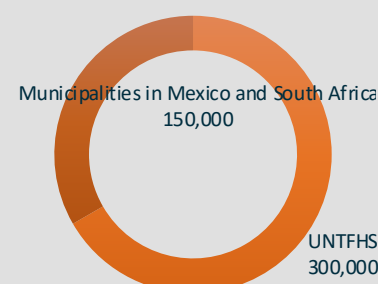
5,200,000



TOTAL BUDGET

450,000

POOLING OF RESOURCES



Beneficiaries

The programme directly benefits 150,000 people in selected cities in South Africa and Mexico, including 46,000 women, 60,000 youth, persons with disabilities, and municipal officials. In addition, the entire population of the participating cities, approximately 5.2 million people, will benefit from more proactive decision-making at the local level on crisis prevention as well as opportunities to engage in local dialogue and planning on public safety and economic and social opportunities.

Applying the Human Security approach

The programme will utilize the human security approach to develop an urban safety and human security monitoring tool to support local governments to better prevent and respond to urban risks and challenges through more integrated, inclusive and participatory monitoring at the local level. The tool will capture comprehensive data on the diverse and interconnected challenges facing communities, including crime and violence as well as other risks that impact populations and can exacerbate safety and security issues. Through capacity-building training on human security and the monitoring tool, the quality and timeliness of local government policy and programming to address urban safety challenges will be improved. Together this will enable more proactive and anticipatory decision-making to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to the multifaceted challenges faced by those in cities.

In addition, with a focus on people, the programme prioritizes participatory strategies that create opportunities for systematic dialogue between residents and local officials as well as avenues for community engagement in local monitoring by providing information to a web-based portal and sharing practical knowledge on how to make cities and communities safer. This builds the capacity of communities to be active agents of change in co-creating urban safety initiatives and exploring mitigation strategies that help improve resilience at the local level. In addition, this approach helps enhance transparency and the accountability of local governments and ensures that decision-making is reflective of local realities thereby building trust between communities and local officials.

Through pilot initiatives in urban centers in Mexico and South Africa, as well as the input of an extensive range of partners led by the Global Network of Safer Cities, the programme will provide a platform to exchange ideas and showcase how human security can support the development of monitoring frameworks that are comprehensive, people-centered, context-specific and prevention-oriented. By engaging with other cities and partners that are part of the safer cities network, the programme will further contribute to reinforcing a multisectoral approach to policies and initiatives to promote urban safety at the global and local levels.

Achievements

- The programme has strengthened urban safety by developing key frameworks and tools that support evidence-based policymaking and community-driven solutions. A major milestone was the launch of the E-Learning Curriculum on *Urban Safety and Human Security in Cities* on the UN-Habitat Learn platform, equipping municipal safety practitioners, public servants, and NGOs with practical tools to enhance urban security.
- To support data-driven decision-making, the programme developed the *Urban Safety and Human Security Monitor* (USM) in consultation with mayors, city officials, academics, UNODC, and urban safety practitioners. Grounded in the human security approach, this tool consolidates existing measurements, stakeholder insights, and data gaps to strengthen municipal safety strategies at local, national, and global levels.
- At the city level, the programme facilitated community engagement through Working Groups in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and Durban, South Africa. These groups, composed of local authorities, civil society, and residents, conducted *Human Security Participatory Appraisals* to assess urban safety challenges, municipal protection capacities, and community-led solutions. This co-creation process led to the development of *Human Security Plans*, which focus on multidimensional strategies to reduce urban vulnerabilities, with particular attention to at-risk populations.
- On a global scale, the programme fostered collaboration and knowledge exchange through the Global Network on Safer Cities, linking pilot and learning cities, including those in Mexico and South Africa, to share best practices and develop integrated urban safety solutions. By advancing these tools and partnerships, the programme enhances the capacity of local governments and communities to prevent and respond to urban challenges, ensuring safer and more resilient cities.



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