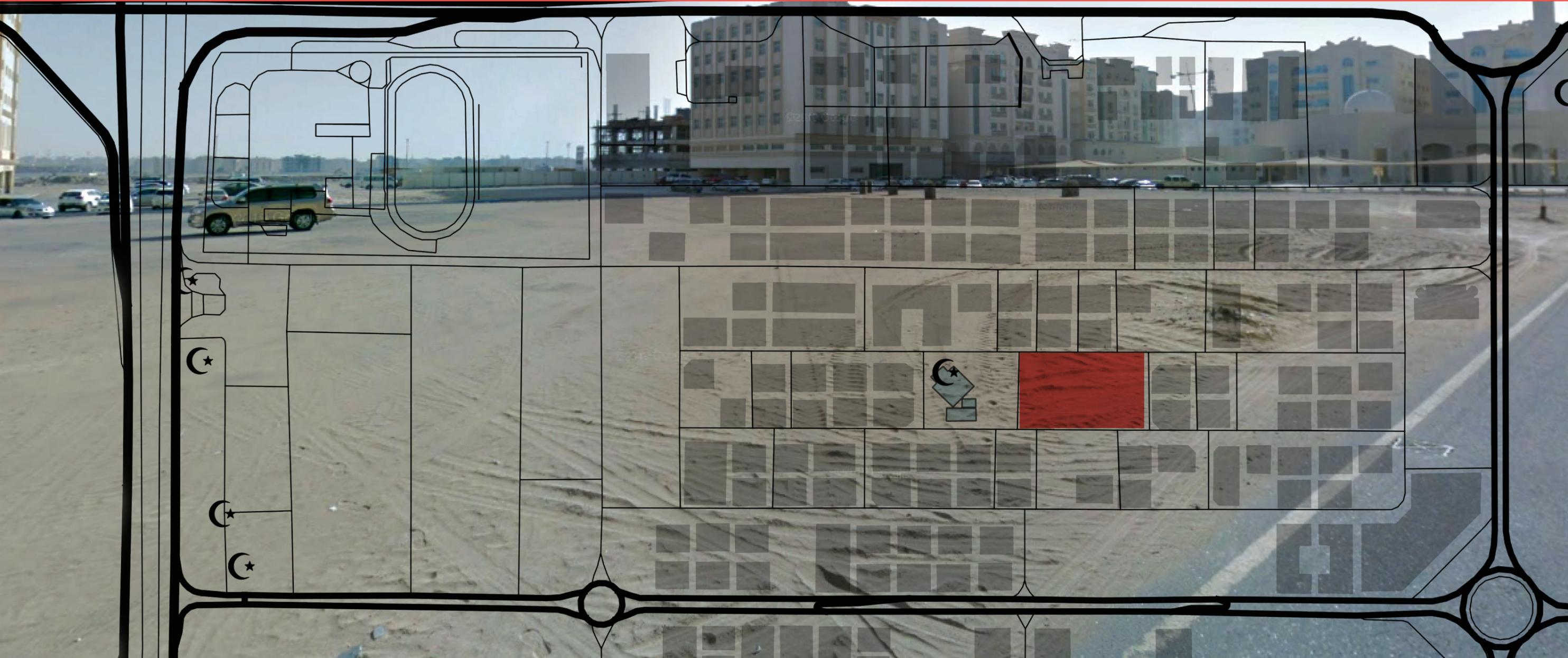




مكتب  
الشارقة صديقة للطفل  
SHARJAH  
CHILD FRIENDLY OFFICE

# TOWARDS A CHILD SITE-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT

## THE CASE OF MUWAILEH, SHARJAH - UAE



التخطيط  
الصديق  
للطفـل  
CHILD FRIENDLY  
URBAN  
PLANNING



مجلس الشارقة للتخطيط العمراني  
Sharjah Urban Planning Council



BLOCK BY BLOCK



Child  
Friendly  
Cities  
Initiative



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Sharjah, UAE

Tel: +971 65065962

<https://sharjahchildfriendlyoffice.ae/en/>

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Cover photo: Muwaileh, Sharjah © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud



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Cultural event in a public space in Sharjah © UN-Habitat / Jose Chong





Public space in Al Qasba, Sharjah © UN-Habitat / Jose Chong

# 01

## INTRODUCTION

# 01 INTRODUCTION

## THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME



**“By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities”**

- SDG 11.7

Launched in 2011 and currently active in around 40 countries, UN-Habitat’s Global Public Space Programme aims to improve the quality of public spaces worldwide. Despite a recent tendency to overlook and undervalue them, public spaces are again being recognised by cities as a key element of inclusion and sustainability. UN-Habitat adopts a definition of public spaces as sites that are accessible and enjoyable by all without a profit motive and take on various spatial forms, including parks, streets, sidewalks, markets and playgrounds. Good public spaces enhance community cohesion and promote health, happiness and well-being for all citizens.

The Programme helps cities become more sustainable by providing policy advice, capacity building, knowledge sharing and support for public space regeneration and improvement. More concretely, it maps public spaces and works with cities to develop city-wide public space strategies and urban development frameworks. Good policies and practices are shared through its global network of around 100 partner organizations.

UN-Habitat has developed an integrated approach to public space that covers cities, neighbourhoods and individual sites and applies a targeted approach to each scale.

The iterative approach includes normative and operational tools, methodologies and practices to support governments and other organizations to make public spaces more safe, inclusive, accessible and green. The tools include city-wide and site-specific assessments, design principles, strategies and policies, digital participation and action planning and monitoring.

The programme believes that a multi-scale approach creates the greatest impact for community quality of life.

Ideally, the approach begins with a city-wide public space assessment to understand the status quo as well as gaps and needs. By collecting data, we can inform the local government of the city’s performance who can then develop and adopt relevant policies, strategies and design principles to improve the public realm.

The network of public spaces is reinforced by implementing a public space action plan that comprises a list of pilot projects to be implemented in the short, medium and long-term. Such an action plan provides authorities with a tool to guide, prioritize and manage public spaces while contributing to the long-term transformation of the city. Sometimes this results in the need to review laws and by-laws for the use of public space as well as the protection of spaces.

Upgrading and regeneration can be undertaken with different types of public spaces, including parks, streets, sidewalks and markets. The Programme uses a variety of participatory methods so that the community’s needs are considered and reflected in the final design. In recent years, digital participation has gained traction and proven to be effective in including the voices of vulnerable populations in the planning process. Two examples are the Minecraft video-game and the Kobo toolbox mobile application.

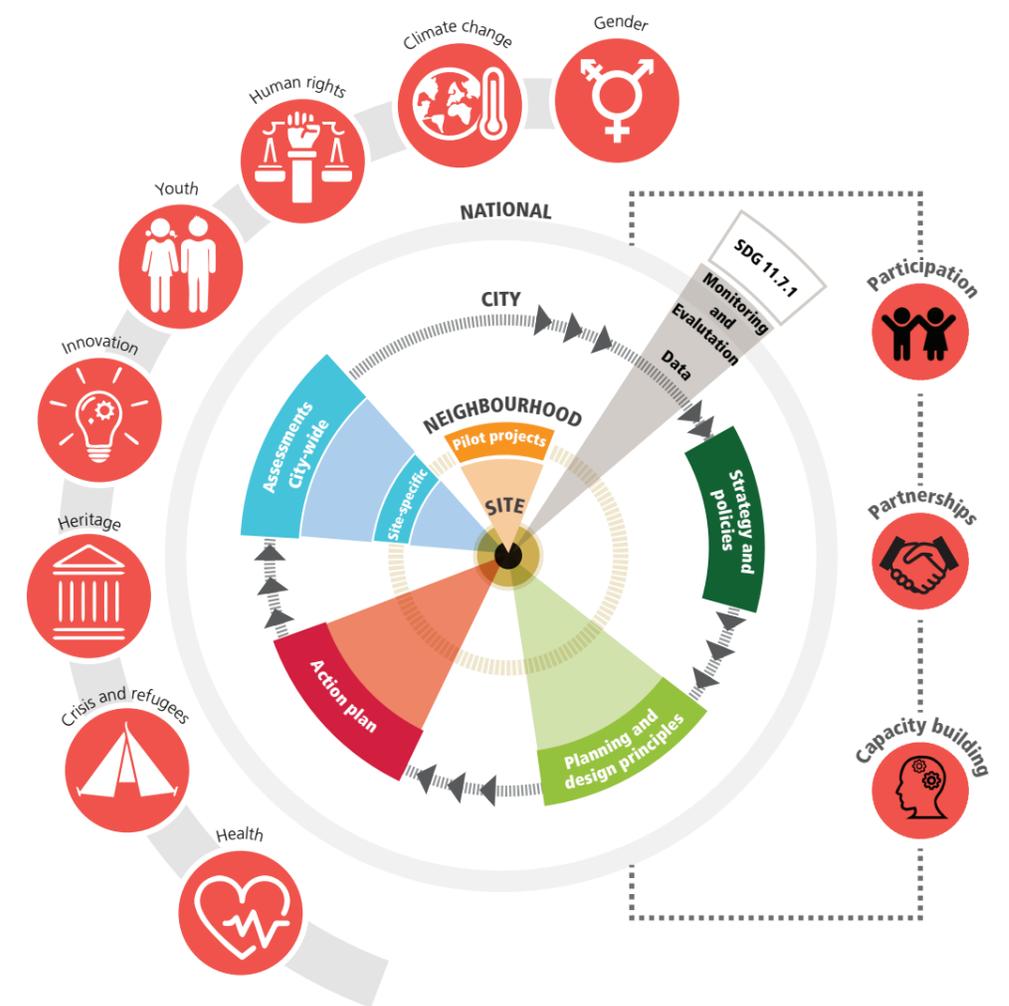


Fig. 1: The Global Public Space Programme : How we work?

**SHARJAH IN NUMBERS**



**2,600 km<sup>2</sup>**  
Area



**1.4 million people**  
2015 population estimate



**+2.7% in 2019**  
Growth Rate

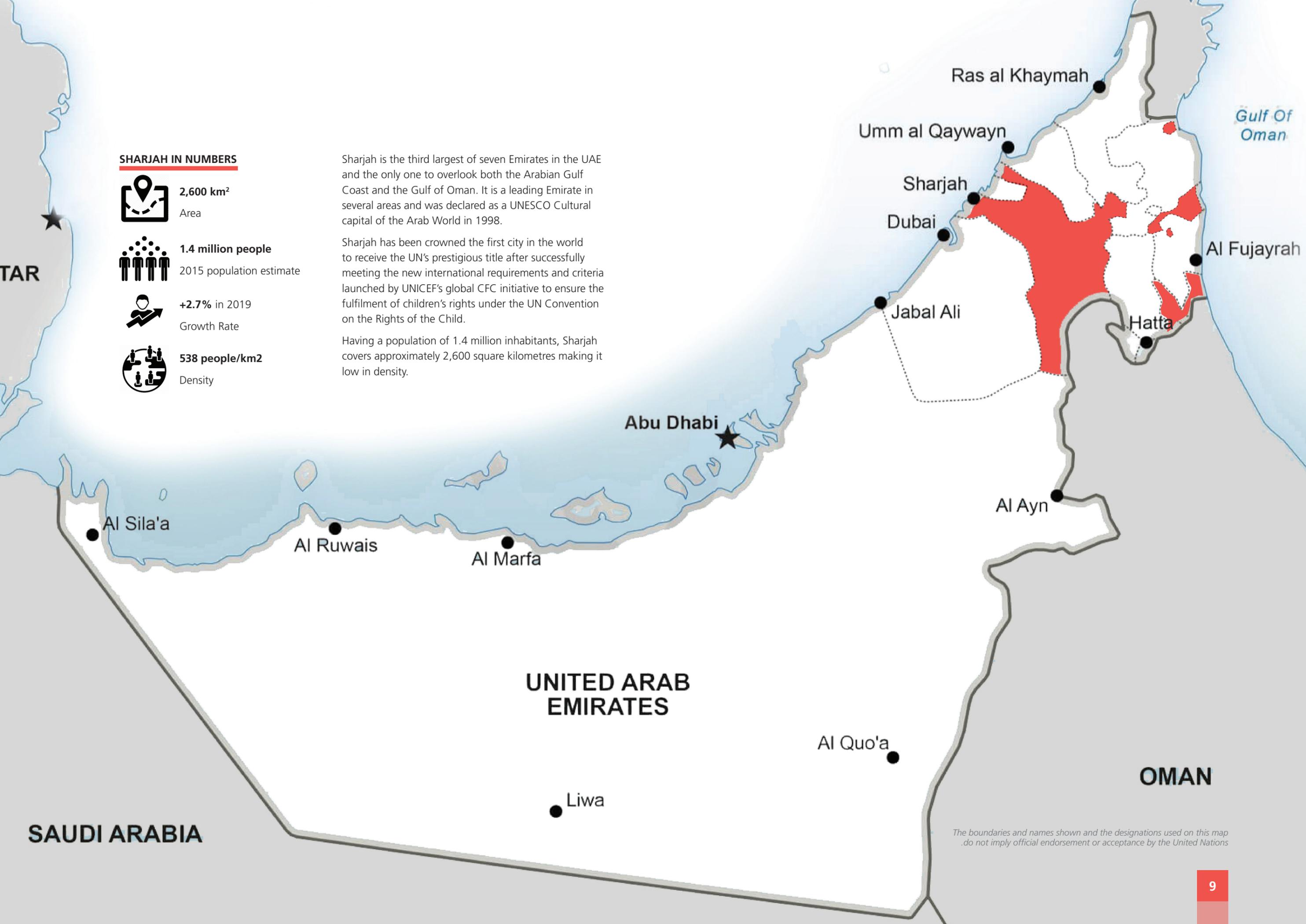


**538 people/km<sup>2</sup>**  
Density

Sharjah is the third largest of seven Emirates in the UAE and the only one to overlook both the Arabian Gulf Coast and the Gulf of Oman. It is a leading Emirate in several areas and was declared as a UNESCO Cultural capital of the Arab World in 1998.

Sharjah has been crowned the first city in the world to receive the UN's prestigious title after successfully meeting the new international requirements and criteria launched by UNICEF's global CFC initiative to ensure the fulfilment of children's rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Having a population of 1.4 million inhabitants, Sharjah covers approximately 2,600 square kilometres making it low in density.



*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations*

# 01

## INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT CONTEXT

According to the 2017 United Nations Population Prospects, 26% of the global population is under the age of 15 while in developing regions, where cities are growing faster, 40% of the population is under the age of 15. Notably, with the unprecedented rate of urbanization which has resulted in complex regional disparities, migration, many of the world's children are born into or already reside in poorly performing urban conditions (UNICEF, 2018). By 2030, it is expected that 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 (UNDESA, 2018). It has therefore become paramount to include children in decision making regarding the urban environment.

Public spaces are important for children and they impact their social, emotional and behavioural development. However, children have little influence over the development of public space as they do not have the opportunity to contribute their views on the design. UN-Habitat in collaboration with UNICEF are supporting the city of Sharjah to assess and plan their public spaces from the perspective of children. This is done at two scales; at the city level and the neighbourhood/site level. Muwaileh neighbourhood was identified by the local government as a potential public space upgrading project. UN-Habitat, with the support of UNICEF and Sharjah Urban Planning Council (SUPC), conducted several activities in means to provide spatial recommendations that can turn Muwaileh into a safer, more inclusive, better accessible and a child-friendly public space. Findings from the site-specific assessments and the participatory workshops will inform the development of a guide on *how to better engage children and youth in planning and design processes*.

#### UNICEF: Shaping Urbanization for Children, action plan urban planning towards a child-responsive Sharjah

In 2016, Sharjah Child Friendly Office (SCFO) and the UNICEF Gulf Area Office conducted a baseline assessment for the Emirate of Sharjah — mainly in the areas of health, education, participation, and social services to evaluate current practices and policies according to the original Child Friendly Cities Framework for Action. The assessment study highlighted the major achievements and a high-level commitment to children's wellbeing and how existing challenges are being addressed.

An action plan was developed with three main objectives:

- 1 Increase understanding and awareness of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative and child rights principles;
- 2 Address equity and introduce measures to overcome barriers that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of children;
- 3 Ensure that all children in Sharjah are actively participating in the community and that their views are considered in matters affecting their lives.

### “Child Friendly City”

According to UNICEF, a “Child Friendly City” is a city, town, community or any system of local governance committed to fulfilling child rights as articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a city or community where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. Thus, a “Child Friendly City” is a city that is fit for all.

#### A “Child Friendly City” is a city or community aiming to become a place where children:

1. Are safe and protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
2. Have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for;
3. Have access to essential services;
4. Experience quality, inclusive and participatory education and skills development;
5. Express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them;
6. Participate in family, cultural, city/community and social life;
7. Live in a clean, unpolluted and safe environment with access to green spaces;
8. Meet friends and have places to play and enjoy themselves;
9. Have a fair chance at life regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.



*Introductory session on the rights to the city and public space with children from Sharjah © SUPC*

# 01 INTRODUCTION

“

SHARJAH SETS AN INSPIRING MODEL FOR OTHER ARAB CITIES TO ADOPT ITS APPROACHES AND POLICIES THAT SEEK TO BOOST CHILDREN'S POSITION AND DEFINE THEIR RIGHTS, AS WELL AS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND SHARE WITH THEM EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD.

”

Dr. Hessa Khalfan Al Ghazal  
Executive Director of SCFO

## SHARJAH CHILD FRIENDLY OFFICE (SCFO)

In 2016, Sharjah Child Friendly Office (SCFO) and the UNICEF Gulf Area Office conducted a baseline assessment for the Emirate of Sharjah - mainly in the areas of health, education, participation, and social services to evaluate current practices and policies in these areas according to the original Child Friendly Cities Framework for Action. The assessment study highlighted the major achievements and a high-level commitment to children's wellbeing as well as addressed existing challenges. An action plan was developed with three main objectives:

- Increase understanding and awareness of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative and child rights principles;
- Address equity and introduce measures to overcome barriers that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of children;
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## CHILD FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR SHARJAH [APRIL 2018]

- > **Goal 1: Every child and young person is valued, respected and treated equally within their communities and by local authorities**
  - There is increased awareness and understanding about child rights
  - All children and young people feel that they are valued, treated equally and respected
  - Children with disabilities enjoy their rights on an equal level with other children
- > **Goal 2: Every child and young person has their voice, needs and priorities heard and taken into account in public laws (if applicable), policies, budgets, programs and decisions that affect them.**
  - The right to participate is protected by laws and policies
  - Children and young people are aware of their right to be heard and taken seriously
  - All children and young people have access to spaces and opportunities to express their views and priorities
  - Children and young people have access to complaint and redress mechanisms if their rights have been violated
- > **Goal 3: Every child and young person has access to basic essential services**
  - All children and young people in Sharjah have access to quality protection services

- No child or young person is excluded from equal access to services
- Tests and homework have been decreased and stress levels have reduced
- Time for rest and friends during the school day has increased significantly
- Young children's health and wellbeing have been improved
- > **Goal 4: Every child and young person lives in a safe, secure and clean environment**
  - No child or young person experiences violence (including corporal punishment and bullying) in home and school
  - Children and young people are aware of the risks involved in using the digital environment and know how to protect themselves
  - Bullying in schools and online has significantly reduced
- > **Goal 5: Every child and young person has opportunities to enjoy family life, play and leisure**
  - Unstructured play and leisure are recognized as vital for the child and young people's development and happiness
  - Parents are more aware of and engaged in children and young peoples' school life

## SHARJAH URBAN PLANNING COUNCIL

Sharjah Urban Planning Council was formed in 2014, by virtue of the Amiri Decree No. 5 issued by His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, within the framework of the efforts being made to keep pace with the overall development in the Emirate of Sharjah. Another law was issued by His Highness to delineate the council's objectives, powers and competencies.

The board's membership is comprised of directors of government departments and authorities, including the Department of Planning and Survey, the Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority (SEWA), the Roads and Transport Authority, and Department of Public Works.

SUPC's role is to develop and oversee the preparation, execution and follow-up of comprehensive urban planning strategies and infrastructure projects in the emirate, in-line with the Emiri Decree and directives of the Ruler. Cooperate and coordinate with the different stakeholders to implement joint plans and policies in the field and provide the government entities with support in areas of urban planning, infrastructure, and environmental affairs by conducting strategic studies or assigning these studies to international consultancies. Assess development plans and make recommendations to ensure alignment with the overall Emirate wide vision. Establish a database of all strategic studies, plans, regulations and data related to Urban Planning. Create and issue design specifications and manuals for urban planning, infrastructure and environmental projects.

## CITY VISION AND STRATEGIES RELATED TO PUBLIC SPACES

### Public Realm:

- Enhance the public realm to improve social interactions, community cohesion and city identity
- promote connectivity, comfortable environments for walking and cycling, active use of public spaces as well as the informal use of spaces by the local community.

### Placemaking:

- Provide accessible quality spaces at specific locations across the city.
- Provide and manage a diverse mix of quality spaces that are easily accessible to people of all ages and abilities to enjoy, play, shop, exercise, learn and socialize. This will be achieved by providing specific types of public realm in key location across the city. Including the waterfront, key multi-functional streets, and major public plazas.

### Places for people:

- Sharjah continues to develop as a safe and secure environment, through the integration of CPTED principals.
- Sharjah City will be recognized as a safe and family-friendly place, with design of neighbourhoods, institutions, public spaces and infrastructure applying the principles of Crime prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

### Active Transport:

- There is a high percentage of residents and visitors that continue to use walking and cycling as modes of active transit to get around in some locations at Sharjah city. This presents a unique opportunity to design and construct future streets with better consideration of all users including pedestrians, cyclists, people with wheelchairs or prams, and people using public transport and private vehicles.
- Implement a balanced approach to the design of all streets and to ensure a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motor vehicle drivers and passengers.



THE PROJECT FALLS WITHIN SUPC'S MISSION AND VISION TO ENGAGE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN AND YOUTH, IN SHARJAH'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS, SO AS TO FIRMLY ESTABLISH THE EMIRATE'S STATUS AS A SAFE AND INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT.



Eng. Khalid Al Ali  
Secretary General of SUPC

# 01 INTRODUCTION

## MAIN OBJECTIVE

The objective of participatory child-friendly public space planning is to evaluate, together with the children, the state of public open spaces in Sharjah through their lenses. This process will ensure that the voices of children are not left out and their needs are reflected in the urban form. Looking at quality, accessibility, urban facilities and other urban features will help us propose strategic recommendations, particularly to improve safety and security and increase inclusion of children in the public realm.

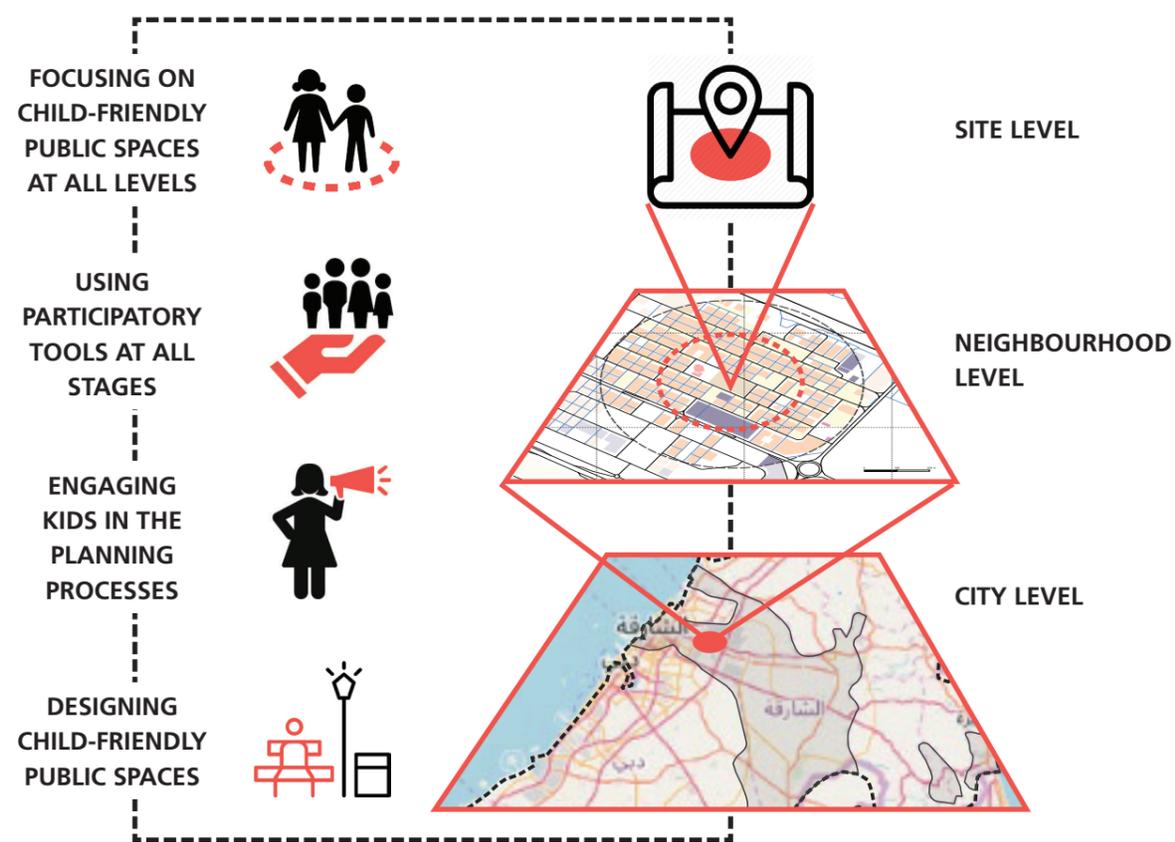


Fig.2: Multiscalar approach adopted for the project in Sharjah with the different objectives

## ABOUT THE SITE

Muwaileh, located near the city centre, is a quiet neighbourhood with low-rise buildings ranging from three to seven floors. The area is mostly residential with commercial activities on the ground floor. The neighbourhood is slightly less developed when compared with other areas in the city. Located at a high water table, Muwaileh is still not equipped with drainage system. However, in the past years, and due to its strategic location, more people are starting to move into the neighbourhood. Ten years ago, the area was quite empty with no activities, today Muwaileh offers new rental apartments at below average rates within Sharjah and few places to hang-out.

For the purpose of the joint-collaboration between UNICEF, SCFO, SUPC and UN-Habitat, a pilot site was selected in Muwaileh. The purpose is to design a child-friendly public space using participatory planning approaches. The selected site is currently vacant and is surrounded by residential buildings with commercial activities on the ground floor, and a Mosque from the western side. Residents, visitors and users are using the site as a parking lot, an informal playground and as an outdoor praying area.

## TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

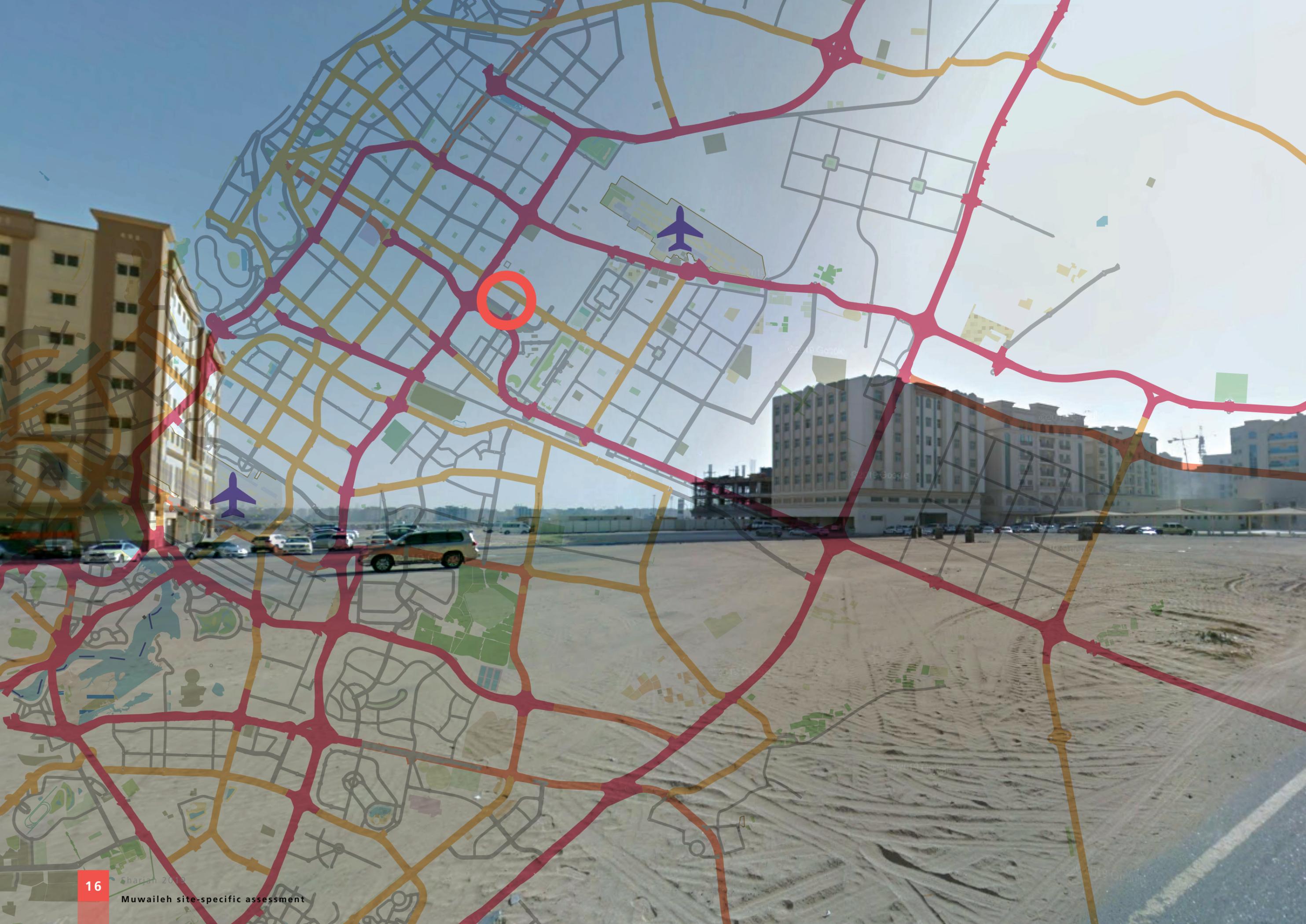
Main activities conducted in 2019 are:

March	<b>Preliminary work</b>
April	<b>Mission 1:</b> Block by Block Public space training Site-specific assessment training
May-June:	<b>office work</b>
September	<b>Mission 2:</b> Site-specific assessment Field work Counting and observation Design experts' studio
Oct-Nov	<b>Data cleaning and analysis</b>
December	<b>Final report</b>
January 2020	<b>City-wide public space assessment</b>

Fig.3: Timeline of activities in 2019 conducted by UN-Habitat in collaboration with UNICEF and SUPC



Shaded area of Muwaileh Public Space, Sharjah  
© UN-Habitat





# 02

## PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

*Sharjah plan overlapped with Muwaileh site location and picture © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud - source: google*

# 02 PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

## THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

It is estimated by the UN that 60 percent of the world's children will live in cities by the year 2025. Following the current global urbanisation trend and the growing attraction of cities for families with children, urban and spatial planning is essential to address children needs in the built environment. The people who know best what the city needs is the community itself. Therefore, an improved contextualized understanding of children's problems and needs in the city is vital. Some cities have considered different mechanisms for children's participation in decision-making, however in many cities, participation is still seen as a new concept and not fully endorsed.

Through participation, children are giving the voice to express and have equal opportunities in planning processes. Quality of public spaces and safety are elements that can be address through a good participatory planning design process. Within advocating for child-friendly practices, the role of urban design and planning can be crucial for creating safer, inclusive and good quality spaces for all.

## PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING POLICIES: THE CASE OF SHARJAH

SUPC is committed to strategic planning, implementing and maintaining projects through proper regulations and guidelines that perceptibly improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Sharjah. At the centre of these developments is a child-friendly city carefully customized to facilitate the lives of its younger generations. The optimal integration of family values, education and the environment, to create a healthy and distinctive lifestyle.

The convenience and safety of Sharjah, with a deep consideration for the environment it empowers, are all made viable through diverse, mutually- coordinated public developments. The "smart city infrastructure" is the key to sustainable urban planning and development. From mobility to energy, water, communications and IT platforms, every area is essential in building the model that best supports Sharjah's strategic plan.

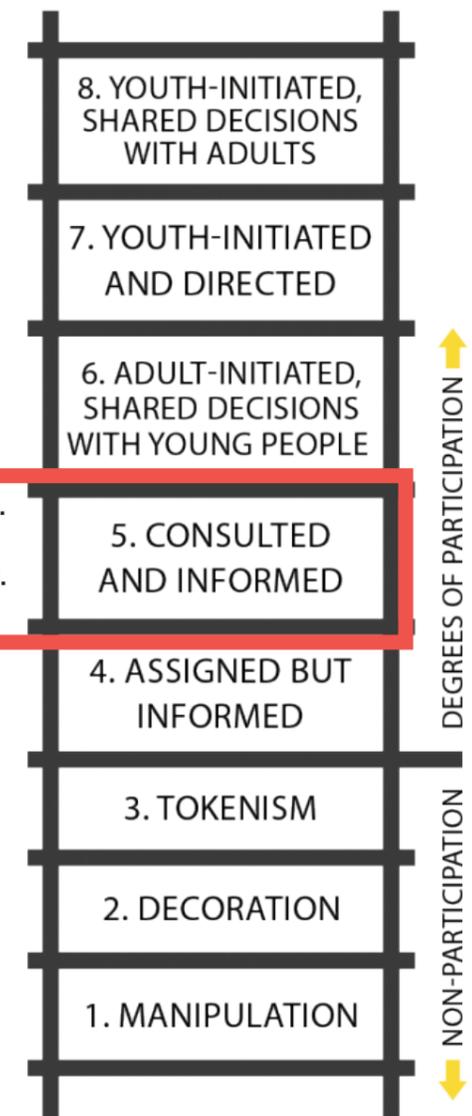
SUPC's primary objective is to meet the public's needs and values and deliver convenience and wellbeing to the highest standards possible. This comes with constant adaptation to changes in the global and urban environments. SUPC work to achieve and optimize a well-balanced synergy between a range of perspectives, social and cultural to economic and environmental. The city of Sharjah offers all the resources needed to continue evolving its thinking, and therefore their prospects. It all comes down to finding the best possible ways to link the city's resources with the city's offerings. Creative thinking is essential to maintaining perfect harmony between these resources, because the outcome affects people daily, and the ultimate goal remains: "making those people happier by making their lives easier".

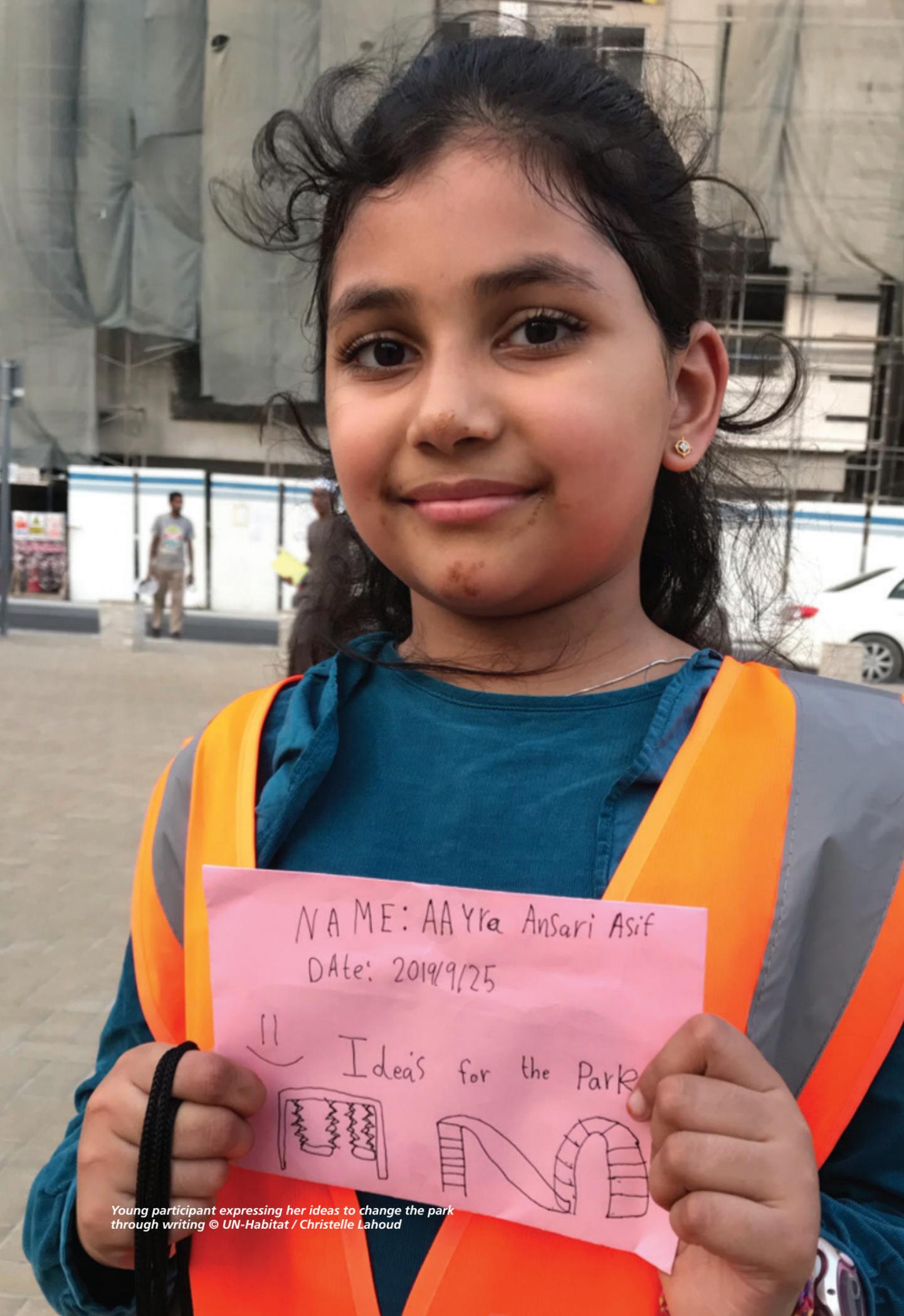
## DEGREES OF PARTICIPATION

The "Ladder of Children's Participation," also called the "Ladder of Youth Participation," is a tool by Roger Hart incorporated in Book 'The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care' for UNICEF in 1997. The Ladder of Participation diagram is designed to serve as a beginning typology for thinking about children's participation in projects, examining to what degree an action is initiated and controlled by children.

### MUWAILEH DESIGN: DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

- > **Adults decide on the project and children volunteer for it. The children understand the project, know the project facilitators and why they have to and should be involved. Adults respect their views.**





NAME: AAYRa Ansari Asif  
Date: 2019/9/25

!! Ideas for the Park



Young participant expressing her ideas to change the park through writing © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud

# 02 PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

## TOOL 1

## BLOCK BY BLOCK

Community engagement and participation has been an important element of the Global Public Space Programme and is something that is central to all city-level projects. Throughout the years, the innovative Block by Block methodology has engaged nearly 20,000 people of all ages in participatory public space design.

Starting in 2012, UN-Habitat developed the Block by Block methodology in which Minecraft, the video-game- is used as a simple sketching tool that enables anyone to design neighbourhoods or public spaces with limited training. Since 2013, UN-Habitat has used the Block by Block methodology in nearly 100 projects in 36 countries and territories. Through two-day participatory design workshops, UN-Habitat and partners bring people together to visualize their urban design ideas in Minecraft and present these to city authorities and local government officials. The Minecraft designs are then used as part of the process of implementing real public space improvement projects.

Minecraft is a sandbox computer game originally launched in 2011 by the Swedish gaming studio Mojang, later bought by Microsoft. By late 2018, over 154 million copies had been sold across all platforms, making it the second best-selling video game of all time. The creative mode of Minecraft allows players to easily build structures out of textured cubes in a three-dimensional generated world, with the benefit of being

able to construct together through the multiplayer setting. Minecraft can perhaps best be imagined as a sort of 'digital Lego' which the gaming community uses to build different structures and games, including cities. In Minecraft, players interact with the game world by placing various types of coloured blocks in a three-dimensional environment with the purpose of building creative structures, such as buildings and cities.

Observations carried out from the conducted projects indicates that using technology as a participatory tool for planning and design is a successful means to include non-traditional stakeholders in a bottom-up decision-making processes. The lessons and experiences from using Minecraft showcase how inclusive the tool can be by making sure youth, girls and children with special needs are involved in the planning process from the onset. The game promotes creativity, innovation and visual learning, helps encourage dialogue between different groups and opinions and contributes to the development of important skills such as collaboration, public speaking and negotiation as well as giving vulnerable groups a voice.

The Block by Block Workshop for community engagement and participatory design was done over a period of two days engaging 60 students between the age of 7 and 15. Among the participants were kids with special needs who were given the opportunity to express their needs.



“ WE WANT TO MAKE SURE UNIVERSAL DESIGN IS CONSIDERED IN THE PLANNING OF THE PARK, ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRITY ”

Rida Ismael  
Participant

Participants playing on Minecraft during the Block by Block workshop © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud

# METHODOLOGY

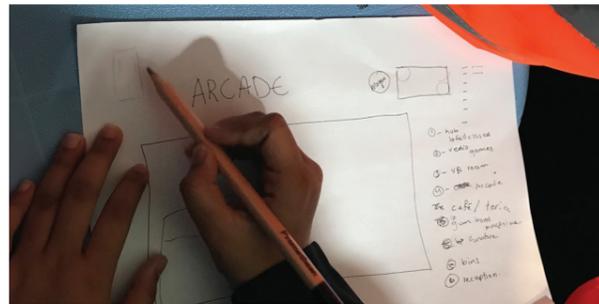


**Introduction to public space**  
The importance, the different types and the challenges related to public spaces.

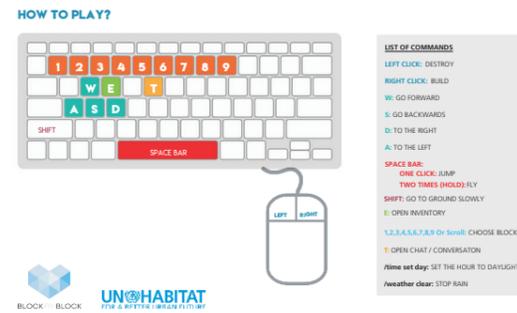
**Introduction to the project**  
General information about the site as well as highlighting the issues and challenges related to the selected public space.



**Brainstorming**  
The participants were divided into groups of mixed ages and gender in means to raise the issues related to the site and find solutions



**Training**  
How to use Minecraft (basic commands) and how to design public spaces



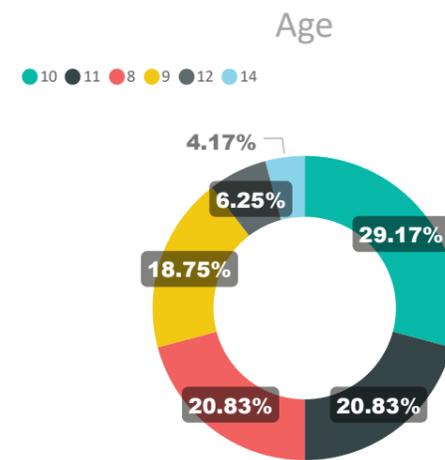
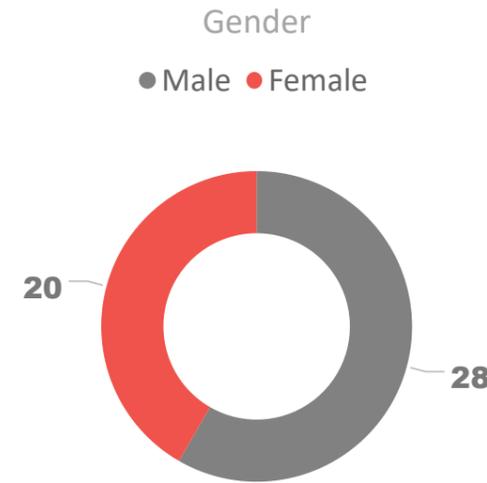
**Designing**  
The participants were divided into 16 teams with 3 to 4 people each. They addressed the challenges of the site through designing on Minecraft.



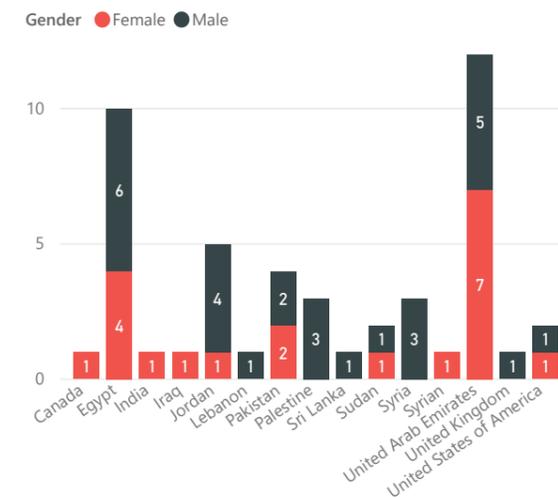
**Presentation of ideas**  
The kids presented their ideas to UN-Habitat, UNICEF, SUPC and the wider audience.



# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



Nationality and gender distribution



Name / Surname	Grade
Aaliya Asif	G-9
Aamina Farooq Muhammad Farooq	G-5
Abdelrahman Abubakr Ahmed Abubaker	G-2
Adel Mohamed Adel Makramalla Noufal	G-4
Afra Sultan Humaid Sultan Alholy	G-3
Ahmad Fouad Al Jammaz	G-5
Alenoud Moustafa Kamel Abdelghafar	G-10
Alia AbdelRahman Ahmed Abdalla AlHammedi	G-4
Alyamama Mohammed Kamil Kamil	G-4
Asma Saleh Mohamed Ahmed Al-Ali	G-5
Aya Asif Samad	G-6
Bader Mohammad Subhi Nasrallah	G-4
Gana Mohamed Ahmed Ahmed	G-7
Hamad Saeed Hamad Saeed AlRiyami	G-3
Hamzah Fouad Al Jammaz	G-5
Hana Mohamed Adel Mohamed Mohamed Dawod	G-2
Hani Abdel Rahman Hani Albutham	G-4
Huda Zeeshan Zeeshan Yousuf	G-5
Kareem Mohamed Adel Mohamed Dawoud	G-5
Khadeejah Syedah	G-9
Khaled El Hajj	G-5
Khaled I. Y. Badra	G-2
Khalifa Ahmed Ali Mohamed A Almarzooqi	G-3
Lama Sayed Youssef Ali Dawood	G-3
Latifa Mohamed Abdelrahim M.Abdalla	G-4
Majid Saeed	G-3
Malek Mohamed Ahmed ElSayed Emam	G-5
Malik Fadi Abdoul Hammed Sawalha	G-2
Mariam Ahmed Mohammed Alyarwan Alshamsi	G-5
Mariam Omran Mousa Ramadan Mousa Sajwani	G-6
Mohamed Moustafa Mohamed Abdellatif Bekhit	G-2
Mohammad Raed Saed Opid	G-4
Mohammed I.Y. Badra	G-6
Mohib Ahmad Karamat Ullah	G-2
Mostafa Amer Shawa	G-3
Muhaimin Gul Khattak	G-4
Muhammad Zakariya Hamza Chudhary	G-4
Nada Ahmed Ibrahim Mahmoud AlMarzooqi	G-5
Noureldin Mohamed Adel Makramalla Noufal	G-2
Omar Ifthikar	G-2
Omar Saif Ali Al Mutawwa Almazrouei	G-3
Ryaan Khan Kamran Khan	G-2
Shahad Abubaker Ahmed Mohamed	G-7
Sultan Ahmed	G-6
Tala Anas	G-2
Taleen Amro Nabil Jarrad	G-4
Tamim Momen Nemer Ahmed	G-3
Yassin Abdelrashid Ibrahim Abdelrashid Noseir	G-4

# 02 PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

During the two-day workshop, the kids worked on Minecraft to come up with design elements for Muwaileh site. Some of the ideas were repeated by most of the groups and are considered of high priority. The kids presented their design interventions to the wider audience including the Sharjah Urban Planning Council, the local government and other relevant stakeholders.

SHARJAH PRIORITY LIST		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8	Group 9	Group 10	Group 11	Group 12	Group 13	Group 14	Group 15	Group 16	TOTAL
Priorities	Lights																	14
	Greenery / Grass ground																	11
	Fountain / Waterscape																	11
	Benches																	10
	Kiosks / Food concession / Café / Stores																	10
	Flowers																	10
	Trees																	10
	Train / Roller Coaster / Dino Coaster																	9
	Safe Crossings / zebra crossings																	7
	Trampoline																	7
Other Considerations	Fence																	6
	Tables (Outdoors)																	6
	Zoo / livestock farming																	6
	Swings																	5
	Sidewalk / Pathways																	5
	Sand pit																	5
	Toilets																	5
	Slides																	4
	Pool																	4
	Defined Entrance / Gate																	4
	Playground																	4
	Sports area / Outdoor Gym / Yoga																	4
	Cycle Lane																	4
	Monkey bars																	3
	Trashbins																	3
	Expression area / Exhibition / Painting																	3



Participants presenting their ideas © UN-Habitat / Jose Chong.

## FINAL MODEL: PRIORITIES ON MINECRAFT

The priority ideas were drafted in a final Minecraft model which was given to the expert to begin the technical proposals. The architects were present during the presentation and they were aware of the reason behind the children's creations.

- 1 Lights
- 2 Greenery / Grass ground
- 3 Fountain / Waterscape
- 4 Benches
- 5 Kiosks / Food concession / Café / Stores
- 6 Flowers
- 7 Trees
- 8 Playground
- 9 Safe zebra crossings
- 10 Trampoline



Minecraft final model with the priorities from the children © UN-Habitat

# 02

## PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

### TOOL 2

### SITE-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT

The Site-Specific Assessment Tool defines a methodology to assess the quality of a space, understand its alignment with UN-Habitat standards and highlights the gaps between community needs and physical environment. The analyses focus on a target place and a 400 meters buffer zone, which represents 4-6 minutes walking distance around it and highly influences the perception and the physical conditions of the site.

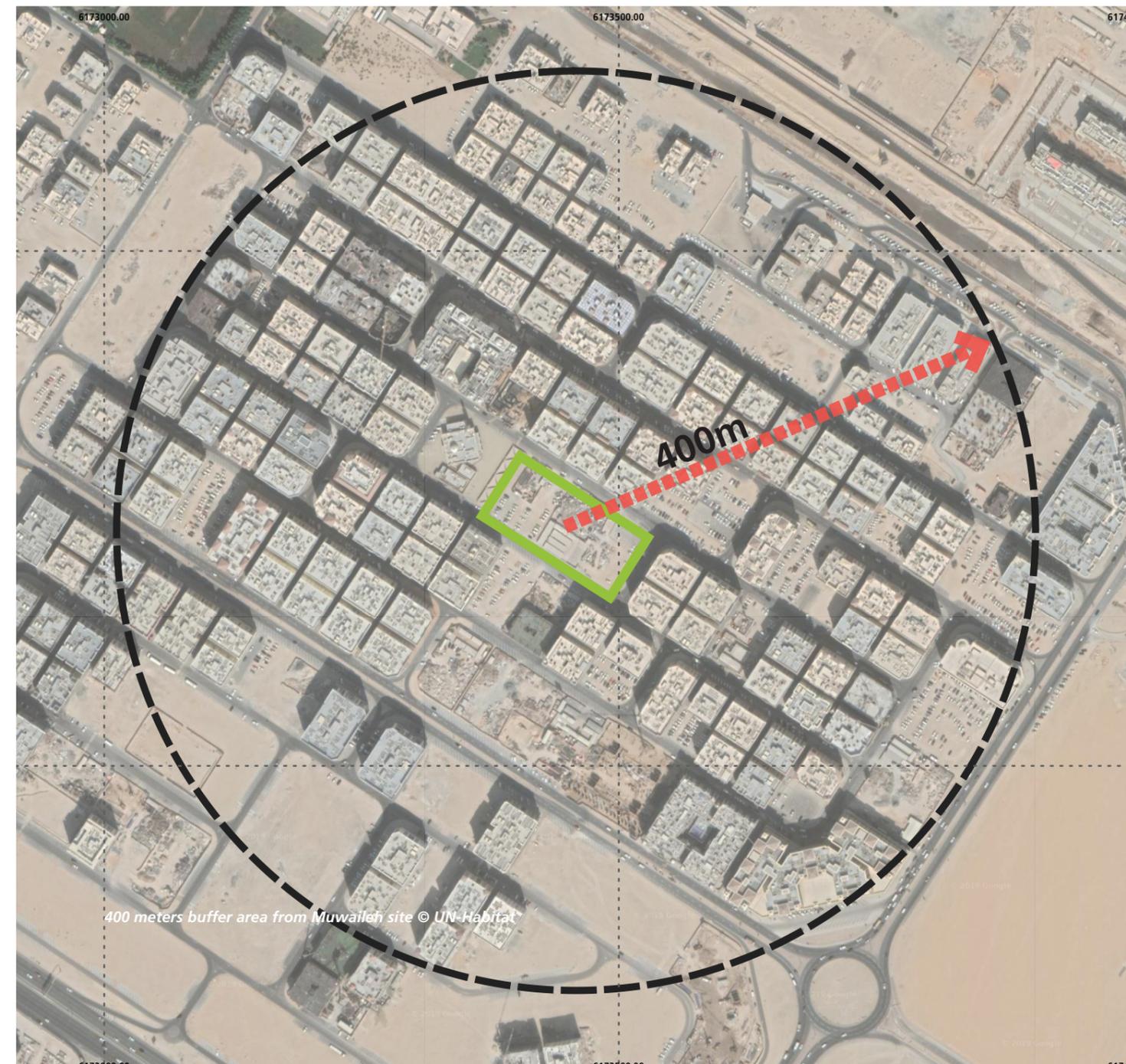
The quality of a public space affects the overall urban environment, by strengthen social interaction and cohesion, boosting formal and informal economies, attracting new investors and increasing land value, improving physical and mental health of inhabitant, providing clean green and resilient environment and encouraging outdoor activities.

The Assessment Tool is addressed to local governments, practitioners, NGOs, community leaders, representatives of academia or any individuals aiming to improve the quality of an existing place or learn basic principles for designing new public spaces. It requires a participatory approach, to reach an agreed and detailed picture, based on community needs. In the case of Sharjah, activities with the children were planned to understand better how we can make the Muwaileh a child-friendly neighbourhood.

The quality of the public space is monitored through five key dimensions: use, accessibility, facilities, comfort and green coverage. To gather information around these components, the site-specific assessment proposes a multi-methods approach by utilising different activities, such as observation, discussion groups, exploratory walks, interview, etc that requires variate levels of participation. To ensure a detailed picture of the current status of the public space, it is important to engage different stakeholders in the process, including decision-makers, urban practitioners, academia and civil society.

Finally, the information gathered are carefully analysed and interpreted to define the main gaps between community needs and the physical environment. The output of the Site-Specific Assessment will inform the public space design and the next steps of the implementation process.

UN-Habitat in collaboration with name of SUPC and UNICEF has conducted a Site-Specific Assessment to assess the quality of Muwaileh public space in Sharjah. The public space has been observed and analysed in different days and different times of the day (morning, midday and afternoon) throughout the week. A variety of stakeholders have been engaged, with a specific attention to vulnerable groups such as children and youth.



400 meters buffer area from Muwaileh site © UN-Habitat

## ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

During October 2019, different activities have been conducted, specifically:



### DESK RESEARCH



### EXPLORATORY WALKS



### DIGITAL SURVEY



### COUNTING



### PHYSICAL MAPPING

## FIVE DIMENSIONS

The quality assessment of the public space looks at five main dimensions: use, accessibility, facilities, comfort and green coverage. Through these dimensions, it is possible to have a comprehensive understanding of the area considering its quantitative, qualitative and spatial features.

The Site-Specific Assessment Tool analyses physical elements of the space and available services, but also qualitative aspects, community perception and user's attendance. Specifically, each dimension identifies indicators to observe and evaluate, considering the presence/existence and the current condition. These indicators could be tangible elements such as the amount of seating, the percentage of green areas or number of bus stops, but also non-physical aspects such as safety, smells and sounds.

#### > Use

This dimension focuses on the use of the space, specifically considering who, when and how. A good quality public space is a well-designed space for all, where people enjoy spending a considerable period doing many activities. Users from different ages can visit the site, especially people with special needs and vulnerable community groups. Everyone should feel welcomed and no person should be restricted from enjoying an open public space. The assessment looks how much time people stay in the space as well as what are they doing as activity in the space.

#### > Accessibility

Accessibility of a public space is defined by the presence of physical, sensorial and psychological barriers that might limit the access and the use of the space to certain groups of people. For instance, adequate facilities and infrastructures for pedestrians, bikes and public transport, should be analysed. Moreover, universal design is an essential component to create accessible public spaces for older persons and people with disabilities (PWD). The presence of ramps, tactile paving surfaces and audio pedestrian crossing devices should be observed, to ensure safe and inclusive environment. Finally, imposing opening hours or fees are restrictions or limitations that reduce the accessibility to the site.

#### > Amenities

The quality of a public space is strongly correlated with the availability and the conditions of amenities and furniture in the area. For instance, playgrounds, benches, waste bins, toilets and water taps are basic elements to ensure an inclusive environment that caters the needs of different people. Lighting and signages are also important to increase visibility and improve the perception of safety. Finally, decorative elements such as sculptures or fountains could act as a landmark in the public space.

#### > Comfort

This dimension of Comfort focuses on how people feel in the space. Non-physical elements such as smells, and sounds can play a great deal when

it comes to scoring. Also, the indicators around cleaning and presence of vandalism particularly influence the attachment of people to a space. Presence of shades during heat hours or rainy days can increase the sense of comfort. Visual appeal of the urban facilities and their condition can either invite people in or keep people out of the space. Finally, security and perception of safety strongly defines comfort of a space and elements such as hot-spots, guards, CCTVs and natural surveillance should be taken into consideration.

#### > Green coverage

While assessing a public space, it is crucial to measure environmental elements such as the percentage of green surface within the area, the biodiversity, the temperature, the presence of shadowed areas, the air quality and exposure to environmental risks such as flooding. These particularly define the quality of a public space in terms of variety of fauna, resilience to climate change and impact on human health. The green components of a specific site have also an impact at the city-wide scale, by reducing the temperature of the urban heat island, by absorbing carbon emissions and purifying polluted air, and by naturally controlling water drainage.

# 02 PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

## 1 EXPLORATORY WALKS

This participatory tool, also called Jane's walks, is a method developed by the sociologist and urbanist Jane Jacobs and aims to directly experience the space with the community and to gain their perception about the quality of the public space. During the walking activity, participants look, listen, smell, observe and perceive all the various components of the public space.

UN-Habitat adopted this methodology and combined a digital survey to it where participants stop three times to fill it in with the help of a facilitator or their parents. The Digital questionnaire (see in Annex) is a set of questions that are contextualized to understand how children are feeling in the space but also documenting digital photos about their perception.

In Muwaileh, participants were divided in 5 groups of 10 children and walked through predetermined paths, covering the site and the 400 meters buffer zone. Three stops were defined to facilitate in depth observations, discussion openly and compile the digital questionnaire. The overall activity should not last more than 90 minutes. It is recommended to run the exploratory walks after school hours or during the weekend to ensure good number of participations.

- Time :** Thursday afternoon 4.30 pm
- Duration :** 90 minutes
- Weather condition :** sunny and warm
- Number of participants:** 50
- Number of groups :** 5 groups (10 people each)
- GENDER BALANCE:** 50 - 50%
- AGE RANGE:** 12

*"There is nothing to do here, I would never come back!"*

Female kid, 13

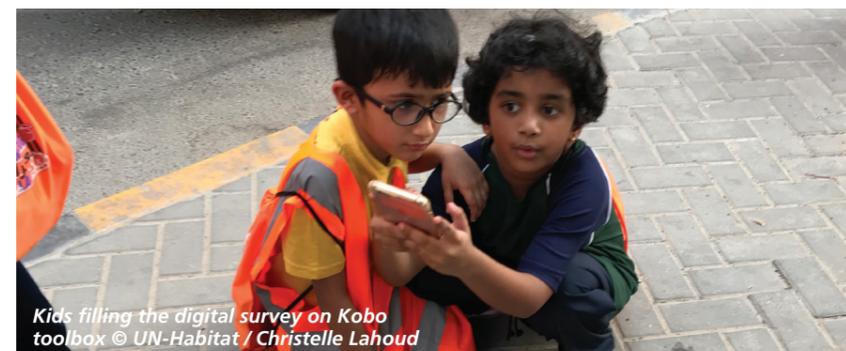
*"I don't like the smell of this place"*

Male kid, 12



*"I like walking but not in this weather"*

Female kid, 13

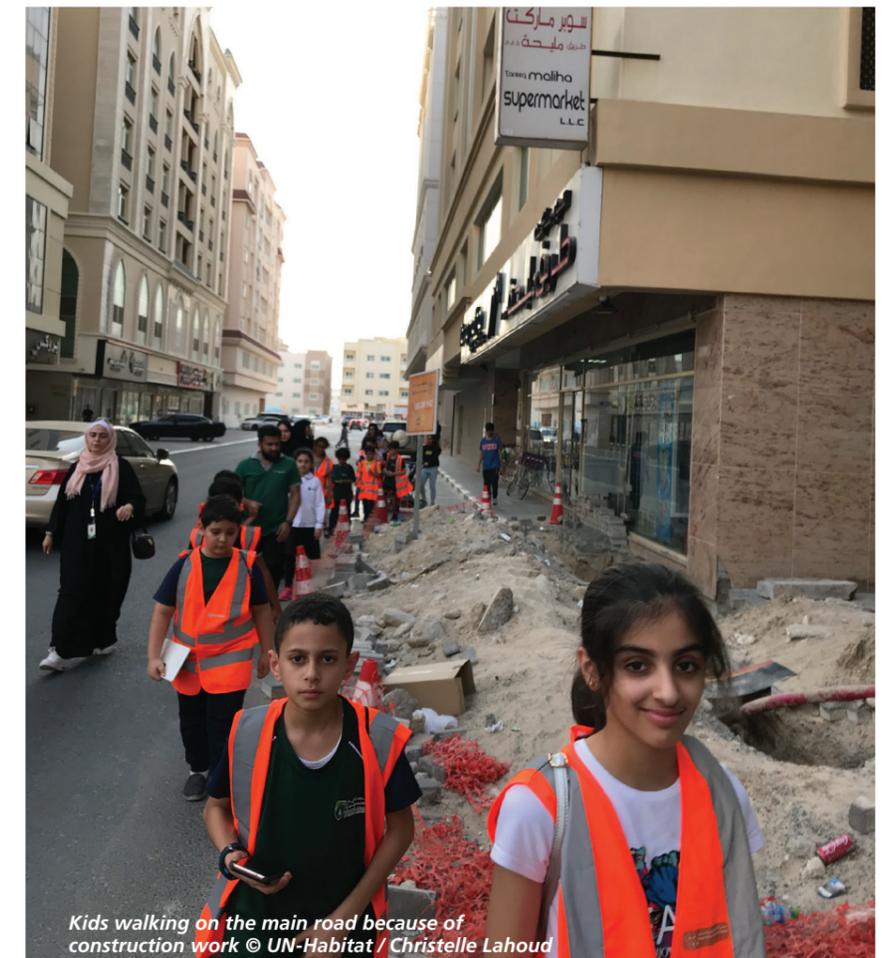


*"I feel safe because there are many cctv cameras"*

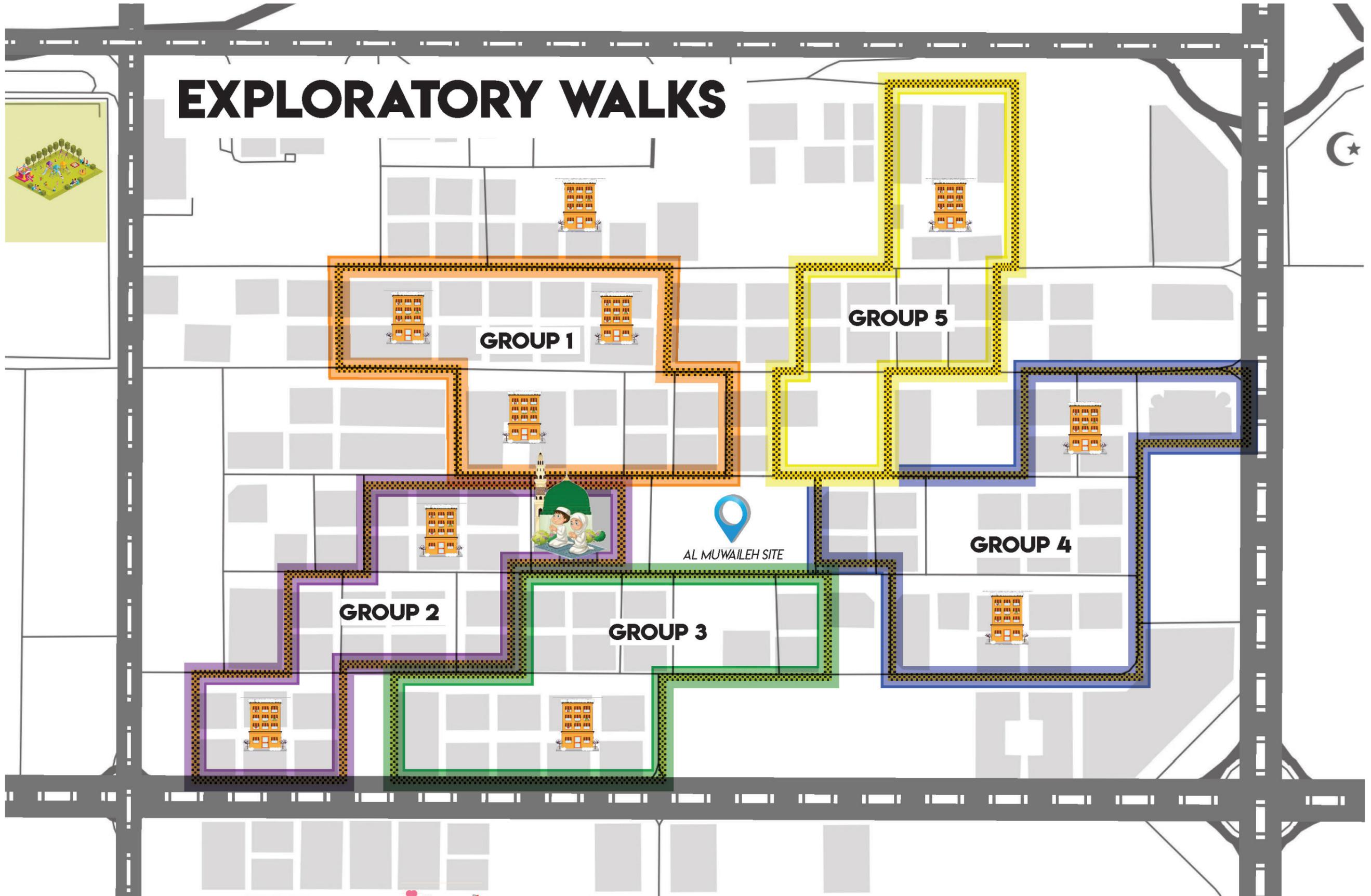
Male kid, 8

*"I don't feel safe crossing"*

Male kid, 9



# EXPLORATORY WALKS



Map of the exploratory walk routes © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud

# 02

## PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

### 2 DIGITAL SURVEYS

Site surveys and questionnaire gather qualitative and quantitative information about a specific area, by interviewing users on-site. It mainly focuses on people's perception and their use of the space but also the physical condition of the area. Digital site surveys' questions are closed and well-structured, requiring yes/no, multiple-choice or concise open answers. The formulation of questions and multiple-choices answers should be clear using simple words. The length of a questionnaire varies considering the kind of data needed to be gathered, however it should never require more than 10 minutes.

Two different digital survey has been prepared for the Site-Specific Assessment exercise: one for the exploratory walks and the second one for the in depth site survey. The first one was filled with children while the second one was filled with community members, experts and UN-Habitat staff. The list of questions as well as the data collected can be viewed in the Annexes. Digital surveys are geo-referenced and can provide the partners with a photo library taken by the collectors themselves.

Using the digital survey is easy and doesn't require any training unlike analysing and cleaning collected data. During the first mission in April, women were involved in a training session on site-specific data collection. Some of the trainees facilitated the walks with the children and supported with technical issues.



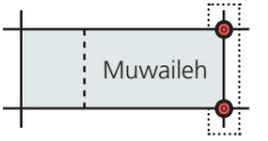
*Women getting trained on the use of Kobo Toolbox for data collection © UN-Habitat / Jose Chong*

### 3 COUNTING

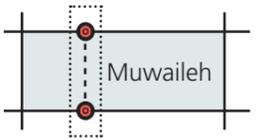
Observations aim to analyse daily life in public spaces and define a general understanding of people's activities and behaviours. It is the practice of getting involved in the social dynamics and embrace the community point of view, to gather detailed information related to the space and how people interact with it. There are several methods to observe and register the dynamics of the public realm, such as journal keeping, photography, counting people, measuring and recording and physical mapping. Counting people enables to analyse the flow of users, the type of user and the mode of movement. Nowadays, several digital systems and applications are available to monitor people movement flow. However, for the purpose of the Site-specific assessment, an analogical mode was enough.

In Sharjah the counting people activity was conducted using a smartphone application during different days of the week – Thursday (weekday) and Friday (weekend), and during different time of the day (morning, midday and afternoon) and from different position of the site. This enables to define an accurate idea of people's movement across the space.

The findings show that during a regular day of the week, the public space presents a higher number of cars than pedestrians - mainly male adults. On the other hand, during the Friday prayer, the public space is highly populated (almost 200 people) - also mainly male adults. The presence of the Mosque is considerable enablers for people's density during the weekend, otherwise during normal days - especially in hot hours - the selected site is considered almost empty.



	Child 0-5	Child 6-13	Child 14-18	Male adult	Female adult	Elderly person	Disable person	Family with children	Cars	Bicycles
<b>MORNING</b>	1	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	51	0
<b>MIDDAY</b>	1	2	0	19	9	0	0	3	78	2
<b>AFTERNOON</b>	1	0	0	29	6	0	1	0	65	5

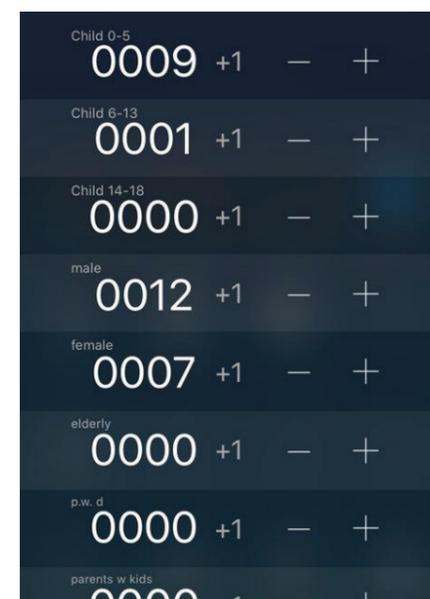


	Child 0-5	Child 6-13	Child 14-18	Male adult	Female adult	Elderly person	Disable person	Family with children	Cars	Bicycles
<b>MORNING</b>	0	0	0	19	4	0	0	0	47	4
<b>MIDDAY</b>	9	1	0	12	7	0	0	0	53	2
<b>AFTERNOON</b>	1	0	1	21	8	0	0	0	69	5

Table 1. Data collected from the counting exercise during different days and time © UN-Habitat



During week days at noon, the number of people is very limited, due to the high temperatures.



Friday Afternoon during prayer time, the site becomes very crowded, mainly by male adults.



Number of children increases in the afternoon after school hours and when the sun is down



# ANNEX

## KOBO TOOLBOX QUESTIONNAIRE

### TYPE OF ASSESSMENT

Specify the type of assessment you are conducting:

What day of the week are you conducting the assessment?

What time of the day are you conducting the assessment?

### SITE-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT

General Identification

Name of the Public Space

Take a geo-location of the public space

Scale of the public space

Name of Neighbourhood

Take a picture of the public space

Take a photo of the public space from different angle

Ownership of the public space

If city / Local government owned

if other, specify

If non-governmentally owned

if other, specify

Management of the space:

If government and government institutions

if other, specify

If non-government

if other, specify

Provide management authority contact detail

Is the space considering a formal or an informal public space?

Major adjoining land-use functions

if other, specify

What is the typology of the public space?

If public facilities

If market places

If other, specify

Local identity: How do the residents identify with the space?

if other, specify

When was this place designed and built?

How has the place changed over time?

Is the space associated with any accomplishments or conflicts?

if yes, specify

### Socio-Economic

What is the average value of the land adjacent to the public space?

Who are the main people living and working around the area of the public space?

### Urban furniture, artificial elements assessment

Which of the following urban furniture exist inside the public space?

what is the name of the monument/statue?

Take a picture of the monument/statue

Take the picture of the artificial water bodies (e.g.: fountain)

Take the picture of play furniture

Take the picture of seating furniture

Take the picture of the shade (artificial)

How many seating facilities are they?

rate the adequacy of seating facilities in the public space

Rate the condition of the seating facilities in the public space

What playing furniture exist?

if other, specify

Are the play-furniture usable for personal with disabilities?

Rate the adequacy of the play-furniture in the public space

Rate the condition of the play-furniture in the public space

Rate adequacy of the artificial shade in the public space

rate the condition of the artificial shade in the public space

Is there street lighting in the public space?

Rate adequacy of the street lights in the public space

Rate the condition of the street lights in the public space. Rate the infrastructure of the lighting system (e.g. the condition of the pole, the bulb and cables, the bulb cover) "

Rate the lighting condition during the night

Are there any trash-bins in the public space?

How many trash-bins are they?

Rate adequacy of the number of garbage bins in the public space

rate the condition of the garbage bins in the public space

Are there uncollected garbage around the space?

Are there public toilets/ablution facilities in the public space?

Are they demarcated and separated by gender

rate adequacy of public toilet facilities in the public space

Rate the condition of the public toilet facility(ies) in the public space

Is there any signage in the public space? (bicycle, stop sign, other)

Rate the condition of the signage in the public space

Is there any water tap in the public space?

Rate adequacy of the water fountain and or water tap in the public space

Rate the condition of the water fountain or tap in the public space

Is there any type of drainage, ditches in the public space?

Rate the drainage ditches in the public space

rate the condition of the drainage ditches in the public space

Is the surface of the public space covered with grass or vegetation?

rate the level of grass /vegetation coverage

Rate the condition of the grass / vegetation coverage in the public space

Are there trees in the open space?

Is there enough tree coverage?

Rate the condition of tree coverage in the public space

Count and insert the number of trees in the space

Take a picture to show the availability of trees and greenery in the Public space

Is there any urban agriculture taking place in the open space?

What type of plants are being cultivated in the space?

If other, specify

### Accessibility Assessment

Indicate the level of accessibility

If controlled hours, insert the opening hours

Entrance of the public space

Please record the GPS location of the entrance

Is the entrance convenient and accessible by all?

Is the public space fenced?

Which of the following describes the type of fence?

If other, specify

Which infrastructure exist to ACCESS the site

Rate the condition of the streets/roads

Rate the condition of the pedestrian sidewalk

Rate the condition of the cycle lane

If other, specify

Indicate if these inclusive infrastructures exist

Is there a designated parking next to the public space?

If yes, indicate the number of spots

is there at least one priority parking for the disabled rate adequacy of the vehicular parking next to the public space

Rate the condition of the vehicular parking in the public space

are there physical measures to segregate vehicular parking and pedestrian flow?

Is there any bicycle parking in the public space?

Rate the amount of the bicycle parking in the public space

Rate the condition of the bicycle parking in the public space

Are there any CCTV cameras in the PUBLIC SPACE?

If yes, how many?

Are there any obstacles for pedestrian movement in the public space? (e.g. potholes, etc)

is the space accessible by anyone outside of the neighbourhood?

If no, why?

### Use and users

Who are the users of the public space?

please tick on the number of girls at the time of survey

Girls mainly are

please tick on the number of boys at the time of survey

Boys mainly are

please tick on the number of young-female at the time of survey

Young-female mainly are

please tick on the number of young-men at the time of survey

Young-men mainly are

please tick on the number of women at the time of survey

Women mainly are

please tick on the number of men at the time of survey

Men mainly are

please tick on the number of elderly-female at the time of survey

Elderly-female mainly are

please tick on the number of elderly-men at the time of survey

Elderly-men mainly are

please tick on the number of people with disabilities at the time of survey

People with disabilities mainly are

People with disabilities...

Function(s) or activities in the public space Mandatory to interview 5 local people for this question

Classify the type of function(s) or activities

If organized or formal activities

If Non-organized or informal activities

Which of the following play related activities occur in the public space?

Do children, boys and girls have equal access to play in public space?

If yes, how?

If no, how?

With whom do children interact or use the public space?

Is the function of the public space the same during the night as of during the day?

If no, explain how different it is

### Comfort Assessment

Is there any unpleasant odour/smell (regarding air quality) that interferes with the user experience?

Rate the level of unpleasant odour/smell

Is the public space noisy and interfere with an enjoyable user experience?

Measure the "db." of the area and select from the list below

Sound pollution

Does the public space offer pleasant views in different directions?

What do you think are the THREE most important infrastructure problems facing this neighbourhood?

If other, specify

Are there any rules (posted or unspoken) about what is okay or not okay to do here?

if yes, what are the rules?

Does the weather influence the use of the space?

If yes, select the weather condition that limits the use of the space

### Safety Assessment

What do you think are the THREE most important social problems facing this neighbourhood?

If other, specify

Do you like coming to this public space?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

Have one or more accidents taken place "in or on the public space" over the last 3-4 weeks?

Have one or more traffic accidents taken place on the street adjacent to or leading to the public space over the last 3-4 weeks?

Has there been any noticeable anti-social behaviour happening in the public space?

How would you best describe the anti-social behaviour in the public space?

Have you ever heard of any of the below listed incidences taking place within the last 12 months in this public space?

Have you EXPERIENCED or KNOW SOMEONE who has experienced any of the incidences below within the last 12 months?

What is the safety level of the public space during the DAY for children?

What is the safety level of the public space during the NIGHT for children?

Is there presence of any security personnel?

Road safety: are there safe access/routes to the public space for children

If yes, which of the following?

Does the activities have clear sight-lines to the public space (see and be seen)

# ANNEX

## KOBO TOOLBOX QUESTIONNAIRE

### EXPLORATORY WALKS

#### SECTION 1: About the child

Please specify the group you are in.

What is your gender?

What is your age

Do you live in this neighbourhood?

What is your level of education?

What do you like doing outside your house

What do you like doing outside your house

#### SECTION 2: Stop ONE

Please record the GPS location of the FIRST stop

What is the NAME of this place?

Take a PICTURE of the stop using your phone

Take another PICTURE from a different angle using your phone

How does this place make you feel?

What do you LIKE most about this place?

What do you DISLIKE most about this space?

What is YOUR OPINION about this place?

Do you FEEL SAFE in this place?

Do you see any security guards around?

Can you see clearly what is up ahead?

Are there dark corners that you cannot see?

Are there places someone could hide without being seen?

Are there trees, bushes, or other structures blocking your view?

Are there activities happening in this area?

What KIND OF ACTIVITIES do you like/would you like doing here?

Are there many people using the space?

Are there people of different ages and gender using the space?

Is this area busy?

Do you like the SMELL of this place?

Are the streets dirty?

Are there things that are broken around you?

Are there places in the area where girls cannot go?

Do you feel like you are welcomed in the area?

Do you see people with special needs (parents with young children, people who are in wheelchairs or use walking sticks, elderly people, people who are visually or hearing impaired) walking around in the area?

What would you CHANGE about this place?

What would you LIKE TO SEE in this place?

#### SECTION 3,4,5: Stop 2,3 and 4 (same as previous)

#### SECTION 6: About the walk

Did you like doing the walk?

Was the street you used good for biking?

Was the street you used good for walking?

Did you find the route safe for walking?

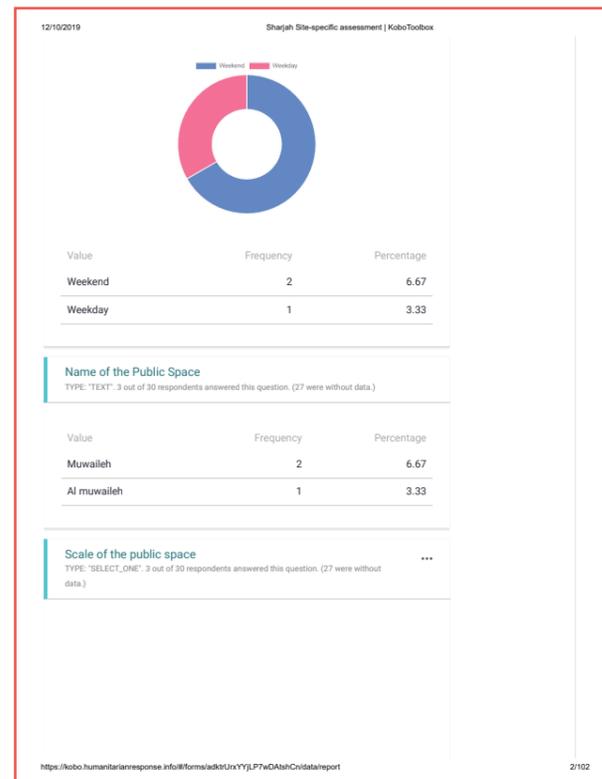
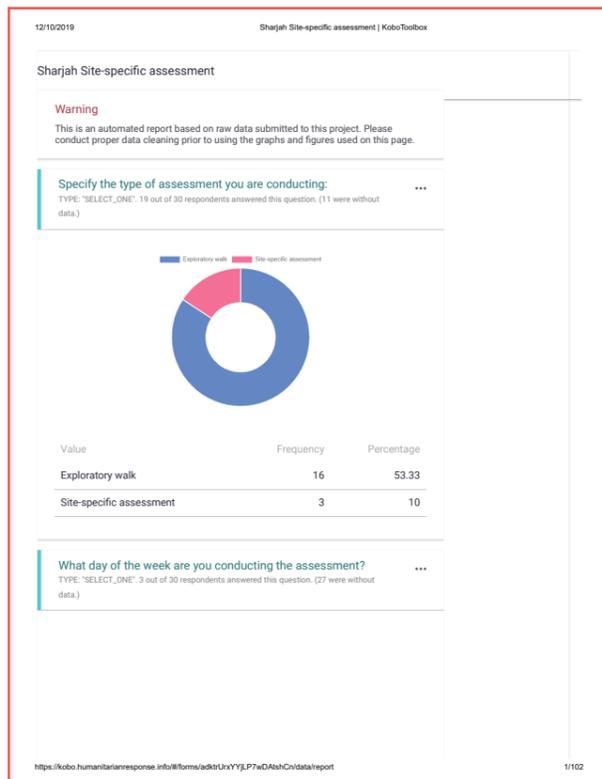
Were there enough signs along the street to guide your walk?

If you were in this area by yourself, would you be able to find your way home easily

Do you have friends and neighbours you can count on in the area if you need help?

If you had a choice, would you come back with your friends to this place?

# KOBO TOOLBOX ASSESSMENT





مكتب  
الشارقة صديقة للطفل  
SHARJAH  
CHILD FRIENDLY OFFICE

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Website: <https://sharjahchildfriendlyoffice.ae/en/>

