

Institution: University of Birmingham		
Unit of Assessment: 14 – Geography and Environmental Studies		
Title of case study: Enabling children and young people to shape sustainable urban change		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr. Sophie Hadfield-Hill Professor Peter Kraftl	Senior Lecturer Professor	March 2014 – Present September 2015 – Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: January 2014 to December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>We have shaped international policy by influencing the metadata used to monitor progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically to ensure that young people's voices are heard, and their needs considered, in government agendas for sustainable urban change. In the UK, we have directly input into the development of Homes England's national toolkit for Garden Villages, ensuring that child-friendly planning decisions are made for all new developments. Ultimately, our research has changed perceptions of urban planners and developers and influenced how places are designed for and by young people to improve their quality of life.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>We have led multiple projects seeking to understand the everyday lives of children and young people living in urban developments. Our research, co-produced with children and young people, has investigated the diverse ways in which children participate in community building and the importance of this for cohesion, sustainability and designing safer, better places for all. We sought to understand their experiences of sustainable urban change and ensure they play a key role in the development of new urban spaces.</p> <p>Since 2014, we have worked with UN-Habitat, Homes England, and UK local authorities to adapt our research to their key challenges. This included secondments to feed into strategic plans, inputs to policy consultations, public workshops and aiding with the engagement of children and young people as stakeholders. Hadfield-Hill also worked with Humara Bachpan (an Indian NGO which works on participatory urban planning, advocating for change in children's local environments) to develop tools to support community-based interventions for urban transformation in informal settlements in Delhi, India. Here, we co-produced with Humara Bachpan a local version of 'Map my Community', an app to support community-based interventions in informal settlements in Delhi.</p>		

Taking the research outputs and findings as a whole and working closely with policymakers, architects, developers and planners, this research programme has **enabled children and young people to shape sustainable urban change** across multiple contexts and communities.

Key findings (KF) include:

KF1: Spaces that are designed for children and young people often work for *all* residents. Children and young people, therefore, hold significant knowledge about what does and does not work — but are rarely involved in the planning process of building new communities [Linked to Refs 1, 2, 3, 4].

KF2: Many newly built communities foster increased levels of mobility and feelings of safety among children. Yet connectivity with other parts of the urban fabric — including neighbouring communities — is often problematically poor [Linked to Refs 1, 4, 5].

KF3: Sustainable buildings and technologies are well-regarded by children and young people; however, misinformation and urban myths mean that many would not want to live in a “sustainable home” because of perceived prejudice [Linked to Refs 1, 2, 5].

KF4: Complex master-planning processes have led to ambiguity about who “owns” public spaces in newly built communities, leading to a range of tensions, especially between adults and children. Being clear about the ownership of spaces in communities helps to resolve tensions [Linked to Refs 1, 3, 4, 5].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Ref. 1: Christensen, P., **Hadfield-Hill, S.**, Horton, J. and **Kraftl, P.** (2017) *Children Living in Sustainable Built Environments: New Urbanisms, New Citizens* (Abingdon: Routledge).

Ref. 2: Horton, J., **Hadfield-Hill, S.** and **Kraftl, P.** (2015) Children living with ‘sustainable’ urban architectures, *Environment and Planning A*, 47 (4): 903–921. DOI: 10.1068/a140401p

Ref. 3: **Hadfield-Hill, S.** and Christensen, P. (2019) ‘I’m big, you’re small. I’m right, you’re wrong’: the multiple P/politics of ‘being young’ in new Sustainable Communities, *Social & Cultural Geography*. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2019.1645198

Ref. 4: **Kraftl, P.**, **Hadfield-Hill, S.** and Laxton, A., (2018) *Garden Villages and Towns: Planning for Children and Young People* (Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham).

Ref. 5: **Kraftl, P.** and **Hadfield-Hill, S.** (2019) *Build a community in a day: Resource pack* (Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham). <https://www.planning4cyp.com/>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Through our direct involvement with developing the metadata for Sustainable Development Goal 11.3.2 (participation of civil society), we have ensured that the views and experiences of children and young people are included in urban planning and governance across the world. **Our research evidence has directly influenced both the content and processes of planning policy and design** at international, national, and local levels. This has subsequently led to changes in practice which have ultimately **improved the quality of life of young people**.

Changes to international policy to mandate reporting on the inclusion of marginalised groups in the urban planning process

Our **advisory role on the UN-Habitat Global Expert Group** for Sustainable Development Goal 11.3.2 has been key in transforming the policy to include young people's voices [KF1; E1]. As a new Tier 2 indicator, national governments are now **mandated** to report on the 'participation of women, young men and women, and/or other marginalised (i.e. young people) groups' in urban planning and governance, ensuring that previously marginalised groups are not side-lined in making 'cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.' [E2: SDG 11.3.2.] Our research was instrumental in this change, as attested by the Programme Manager for the United Nations Settlement Programme:

[Hadfield-Hill's] work has made a significant contribution to the development of the metadata, most notably with regard to the inclusion of young people in the definition [...] this input will improve the participation and voice of young people, and organisations representing young people, in urban planning and governance [E1].

The metadata (and associated training module developed by the UN [E2]) are now used to standardise how individual countries monitor and report on Sustainable Development Goal 11.3.2. Data to this effect has since been reported from 200 cities worldwide.

To further aid UN-Habitat with their strategic work with national governments, additional **new international guidelines have also been informed by our research evidence**. The National Housing Profile is one of UN-Habitat's 'tools for evidence-based policies used to assist countries and cities to improve access to adequate housing and achieve sustainable urbanisation.' [E3] Their guidelines and processes used for developing the national housing profile and strategy used KF1 and KF4 to ensure that UN-Habitat's 'policies and strategies are more sensitive and supportive of youth housing needs, especially in view of the (housing) affordability crisis.' [E3]

Impacts on national and local planning practitioners to enhance the development of child-friendly urban spaces

We have been pivotal in ensuring that our **research-based critical evidence has been used to shape planning policy** in the delivery of new Garden Villages and Towns in the UK. Our research [KF1–KF4] has led to an explicit reference to the development of child-friendly urban places [E4] in the Homes England toolkit [E5] which means that the development of over 49 new communities (350,000 homes) are now required to consider young people's views and experiences. The toolkit draws on KF1–KF4 to define **new professional standards and guidelines to be used by planning and design practitioners** to ensure that new communities are safe, accessible and well-designed in meeting the needs of children and young people (as well as the wider community). The Head of Garden Communities at Homes England stated:

the toolkit has attracted circa 8500 views and [your] input was very helpful in shaping [the toolkit ...] it also includes a link to [your] activity resource pack which has been of use to local authority officers planning engagement in a number of the garden community projects [E5].

Beyond our work in assisting the development of the toolkit, our work with Homes England 'has been influential in ensuring that engaging with young people was a key theme in [Garden Communities] engagement strategies' to ensure that 'young people are proactively and

meaningfully engaged' [E5]. We have used this influence to provide direct input into 12 Garden Village masterplans across the UK, impacting on around a quarter of the homes to be delivered through the Garden Communities agenda (88,200 homes) [E5]. For example, Tresham Garden Village (1,500 homes) [E4] changed their plans to "[ensure] every house is within less than 5 minutes' walk from open space" and that "streets would connect directly from the centre to the edge, to ensure that access out to that wider landscape is as easy as possible" [KF1 and KF4].

Improving quality of life through inclusive planning processes

Our research in the UK has contributed to a **wider public understanding of quality of life** by facilitating workshops between urban professionals and children as well as developing resource packs that have been distributed nationally with Local Authorities. For example, our work 'directly fed into our educational programme for the Dunton Hills Garden Village' [E6] (4,000 homes), enabling the Local Authority to embed their relationship with other delivery partners to ensure that the planning and design process is meaningful (e.g. informing their design guides for the community). 70 young participants were in attendance at the Dunton Hills Garden Village engagement workshops, where it was explicitly commented that it afforded them "the opportunity to input on a future of a developing village" [E6].

In India, we have influenced planning decisions which have had a **direct positive impact on the quality of life of children and their families**. Through our work with Humara Bachpan, and the 'Map My Community' mobile app tool, we were able to influence planning decisions regarding the building of new community infrastructures: for example, the implementation of a sewerage system, the building of a toilet infrastructure and, importantly, the opening of a playground in Delhi (reach over 300 families) [E7, E8; KF1]. The Executive Director of Humara Bachpan Trust testified:

The project provided a platform for mapping the aspirations and needs of children and young people in low income communities. There were several notable impacts to infrastructure provision in several of the communities that we worked in [...] our joint work led to the successful campaigning of a sewage system in one of the communities [...] this was a major success, leading to improved quality of life for over a hundred people in that community. [E7]

These changes represent a significant **positive impact on quality of life, especially young people's lives**: "I am so happy to use Map My Community [...] after coming [the research has made] so many changes in our own slum like park, road, sewer. Thank you very much" [E9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

E1: Testimonial from David Thomas, United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 12 September 2017.

E2: UN Sustainable Development Goals – [Indicator 11.3.2: Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically, metadata](#)

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UN-Habitat – [Monitoring and reporting on the SDGs, Module 4: Civic Participation in Urban Planning and Management](#)

E3: Testimonial from Christophe Lalande, Leader, Housing Unity, Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch, UN-Habitat, 16 October 2018.

E4: Testimonial from Amy Burbidge, Design Action Manager, North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (for Tresham Garden Village), 22 August 2018.

E5: Testimonial from Fionnula Lennon, Head of Garden Communities, Homes England, 24 June 2020 (toolkit available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/garden-communities>).

E6: Testimonial from Lucy Gill, Leisure, Community and Wellbeing Officer, Brentwood Borough Council (for Dunton Hills Garden Village), 7 October 2019.

E7: Testimonial from Aripita Pattnaik, Executive Director, Humara Bachpan Trust, 12 August 2020, and photographs taken at the site of the sewer by Hadfield-Hill.

E8: Testimonial from Happy Child Club, Inderdhanish Child Club and Humara Bachpan Campaign.

E9: Young people's testimonies about the impacts of the developments of the sewerage system and playground.