

Empowering communities to define, measure, and take action on creating a good life in Dar es Salaam

The Institute for Global Prosperity, in partnership with the Centre for Community Initiatives, is launching the Maisha Bora Index for Dar es Salaam. This document summarizes how the project has been co-designed with citizen scientists, community members, community leaders and government officials, and how the citizen-led evidence is being used by the communities to develop new interventions with entrepreneurs.

About the Maisha Bora Study

The Maisha Bora ('Good Life') Study is an innovative, community-led research project exploring what prosperity means to people living in three unplanned settlements in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa.

The goal of the research is to develop new ways of understanding and measuring prosperity that reflect peoples' lived experiences and what supports and what prevents people from living good lives. Residents, community leaders, and NGOs are using the findings to identify priorities for action, develop community-led interventions, and to work with municipal and city officials and public agencies to change policymaking.

The Maisha Bora Study has been co-designed and co-produced by community members and leaders from Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa, working with the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) in Dar es Salaam, and the Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP) at University College London (UCL). The research has been carried out by a team of citizen scientists - people who live and work in the three settlements - trained by the UCL Citizen Science Academy and employed by the CCI.

As citizen-led research to define, measure, and act to generate shared prosperity, this is the first project of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Maisha Bora Study has five stages.

Stage One: Understanding what a good life means for people in Dar es Salaam



In 2019, community members from Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa were trained to be 'citizen scientists' – researchers in their own communities – by the IGP and CCI.

The citizen scientists received training in research ethics and qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and focus groups. The citizen scientists worked with CCI, the IGP, community leaders and local officials to design a research programme to investigate what the good life (maisha bora) means to people, and to identify what supports and what hinders people to live well.

The citizen scientists carried over 160 interviews with people living in Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa, and with community leaders and local officials. The research was designed to collect detailed information about the lived experiences of community members from all ages and backgrounds, including groups whose voices are often less heard, including people with disabilities and older residents.

The Five Stages of the Maisha Bora Study

Stage One

Understanding what a good life means for people in Dar es Salaam



Stage Two

Co-designing the 'maisha bora' (good life) model



Stage Three

The 'maisha bora' survey of over 1,000 households



Stage Four

Africa's first co-produced prosperity Index

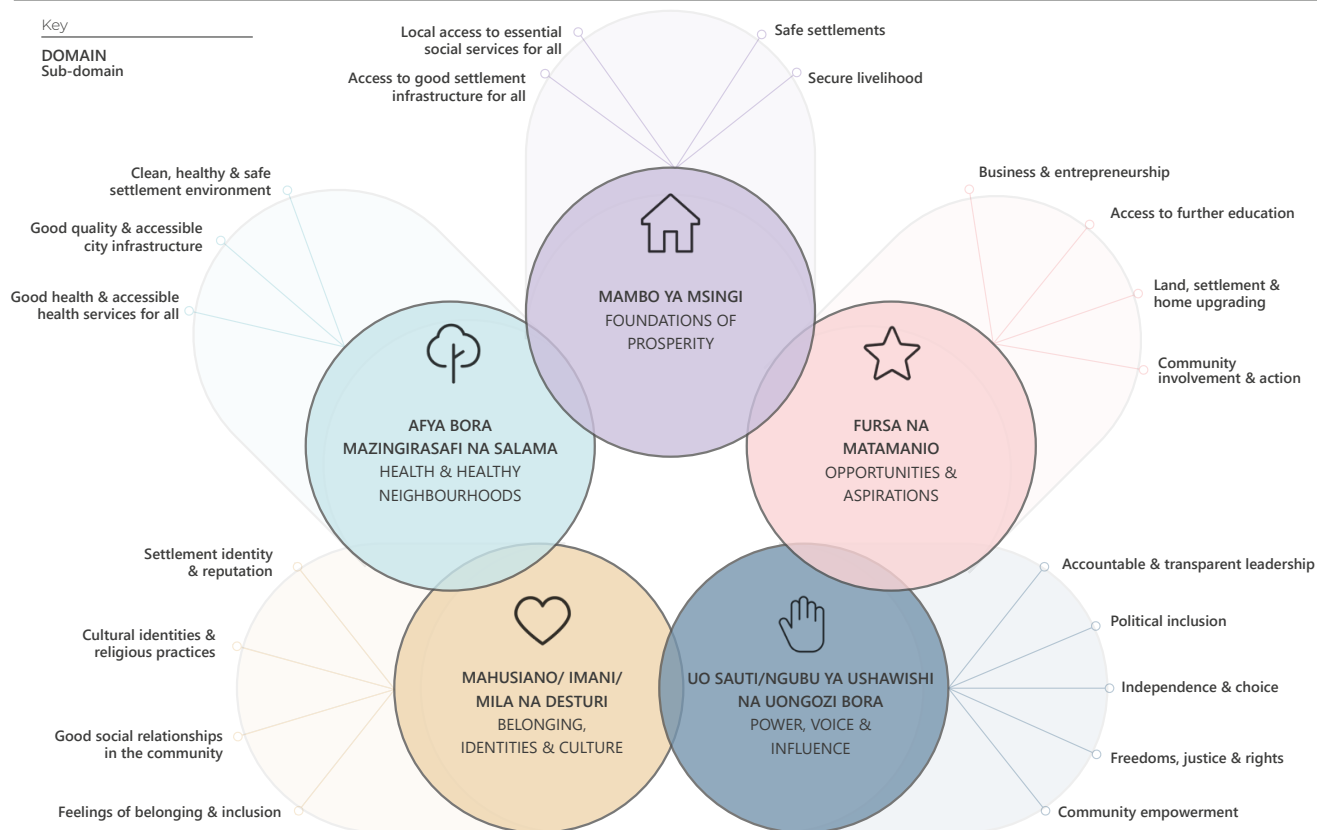


Stage Five

Acting on the Index findings – community-led interventions in Mji Mpya

Stage Two: Co-designing the 'maisha bora' (good life) model

What supports prosperity (maisha bora) in informal settlements in Dar es Salaam? Community-led conceptual model of prosperity (maisha bora)



In November 2019, the citizen scientists, CCI and the IGP took part in a five-day co-production workshop starting with training in how to analyse data, followed by participatory exercises to discuss the research findings and agree on the factors that are most important for living a good life in Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa.

Based on these factors, the citizen scientists, CCI, and the IGP then co-designed the 'Maisha Bora Model' which includes five 'domains' and 20 'sub-domains' that support a good life.

Community feedback workshops were organised by the CCI and the citizen scientists to share the research findings and to invite feedback from the wider community.

Stage Three: The 'maisha bora' survey of over 1,000 households

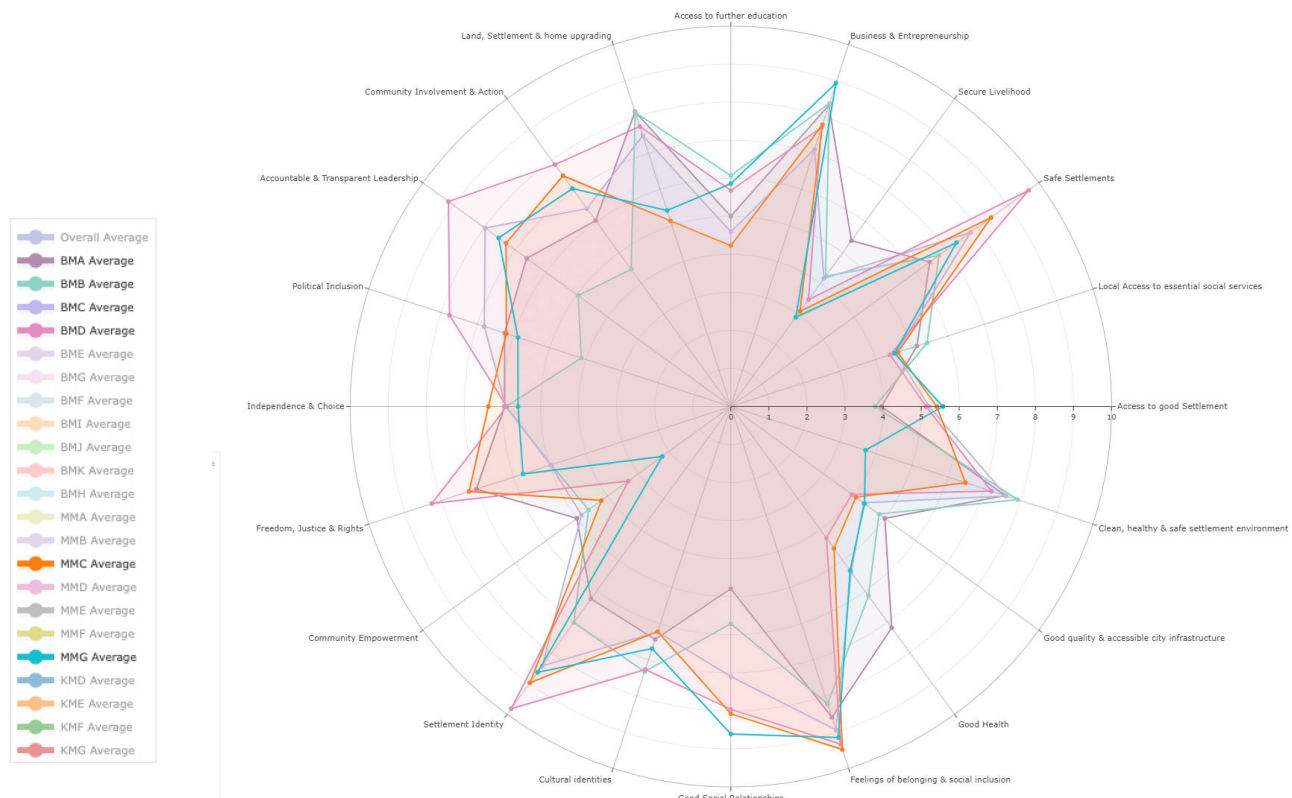
The next stage of the project involved a survey of 1,081 households in Mji Mpya, Bonde La Mpunga, and Keko Machungwa, carried out by the citizen scientists and CCI. The goal of the survey was to collect data to measure the experiences of a good life for people of different age, gender, and employment, and for people living in different settlements.

The IGP and CCI designed a questionnaire exploring all the factors that people identified as important for living a good life. IGP trained the citizen scientists in survey sampling and data collection. In 2022, after delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the citizen scientists carried out the survey using Kobo Toolbox, a free tool for collecting data.

IGP and CCI researchers analysed the survey data, providing training in survey analysis for some members of the citizen science team. The IGP and CCI then worked together to write up the initial findings, which were shared with community members, government officials, and researchers during workshops in November 2022.



Stage Four: Africa's first co-produced prosperity Index



Using the household survey data, IGP researchers created the Maisha Bora Index, which reports on levels of prosperity in each settlement, and for people from different socio-economic backgrounds. The Index 'scores' levels of prosperity from 0 to 10, with 0 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. The Index was created by researchers at the IGP and will launch officially in January 2025.

The Maisha Bora Index is a radical innovation: citizen scientists, community members, community leaders, and local officials are involved in every stage of its development and work together to interpret and act on the findings.

Stage Five: Acting on the Index findings – community-led interventions in Mji Mpya

CCI and citizen scientists are now running a pilot project in Mji Mpya to co-design community-led interventions responding to the Maisha Bora Index data.

Three priority areas have been identified by the community for action: infrastructure focused on drainage and solid waste management; social services focused on safe water and affordable health insurance; and clean cooking energy.

CCI and the IGP are supporting working groups involving citizen scientists, community leaders, municipal officials, utilities organisations, and entrepreneurs from Fast Forward 2030 Africa to develop interventions in these areas.



About the Institute for Global Prosperity

The Institute for Global Prosperity aims to rethink what prosperity means for people around the globe. The vision is to help build a prosperous, sustainable, global future, underpinned by the principles of fairness and justice, and allied to a realistic, long-term vision of humanity's place in the world. The IGP undertakes pioneering research that seeks to dramatically improve the quality of life for current and future generations. Its strength lies in the way it allies intellectual creativity to effective collaboration and policy development. Of particular importance to the IGP's approach is the way in which it integrates non-academic expertise into its knowledge generation by engaging with decisionmakers, business, civil society, and local communities.

About the Centre for Community Initiatives

The Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) is the national support NGO formed by Tanzanians with a desire of providing technical and financial assistance to the community living in informal settlements and the Tanzania Urban Poor Federation (TUPF).

CCI, established in 2004, facilitates processes that develop organizational capacity at the local level and promote pro-poor policy and practice in Tanzania urban development focus.

CCI strives to create inclusive cities with united and empowered communities of the urban poor who have the capacity to voice, promote, and negotiate for their collective interests. In partnership with organized communities of the urban poor, CCI Tanzania works to increase access to secure land tenure, adequate shelter, and provision of basic services such as water and sanitation for the slum communities and public services. The key to these services is innovation in terms of technologies and affordable costs to ensure sustainability.

About the UCL Citizen Science Academy

The UCL Citizen Science Academy is an ambitious new initiative to deliver community-based, practice-led research training to empower communities to lead change through social action and shaping policies that impact their livelihoods.

The UCL Citizen Science Academy offers high-quality, practice-based education and training programmes to equip people with research knowledge and practical skills to get involved in social action and local decision-making.

The UCL Citizen Science Academy is based at the Institute for Global Prosperity and has been designed in partnership with the UCL Office for Open Science and the cross-faculty Citizen Science Working Group in order to make participation in research inclusive and accessible to people from all backgrounds.

About Fast Forward 2030 Africa

Established in Kenya in 2020 within the IGP's Prosperity Co-Laboratory (PROCOL) Africa, Fast Forward 2030 Africa is a community of social entrepreneurs dedicated to offering market-fit solutions for social, environmental and economic challenges in African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia.'

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Find out more about
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