

According to the International Convention on the Rights of Children, a child is a person under the age of 18. This part of the population is expected to grow in the coming years: in 2030, 60% of the urban population will be under 18. It is estimated that by 2050, 70% of the children of the world will be living in urban areas. This growth is explained by the general increase in the urban population, which will double by 2050, especially in low and middle-income countries, which account for 92% of this increase.

Despite the important representation of children in the urban population, **their presence in public space is diminishing**. This is particularly true in Europe and North America, where most of the studies on this topic are held.

In the UK, children have never spent so little time playing outside. In 2016, 75% of them spent less than an hour playing outside, according to a study reported by the Guardian which points out that even a prisoner in the UK spent more time outside.

In France, in 1960, children spent on average 3 to 4 hours outside their home, compared to 47 minutes in 2021 (29 minutes on their own).

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This note will shed light on the reasons that lead to the exclusion of children from public space.

It will then present some insights for city stakeholders to make public spaces safer, more accessible, and more attractive for children.

Nb : this note will provide an overview of common trends and structural variables but will not delve into the specific details of each country.

Children in keys statistics

Among the **4 billion people** living nowadays **in urban areas**, nearly **one-third are children**.

Source – UNICEF

In 2030,
60% of the urban population
will be **under 18**.

Source – World Economic Forum, 2021

In the UK, **75% of children**
spent less than 1 hour
playing outside,
per day.

Source – The Guardian, 2016

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