



# Social and health benefits of parks

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# Globalisation

- ◉ World population **expected to double** by 2050.
- ◉ Half of the population will be **living in cities**.
- ◉ Urbanisation is **increasing globally**, and the natural environment becomes **increasingly fragmented**.
- ◉ Urbanisation will cause an **increase on residential dwellings**.
- ◉ International average standards says **600 people per hectare** (Adejumo, 2014).
- ◉ This average open space ration **seems to be a challenge** in over-populated cities around the world, particularly African Cities.

# Evidence of urbanisation



# Introduction

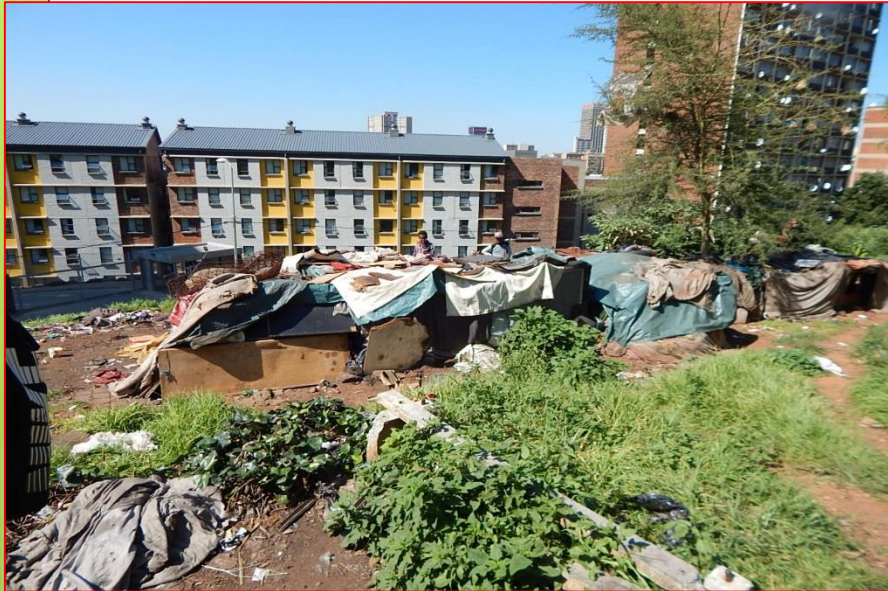
- Many governments around the world are **revitalising run-down city parks**, building **greenways along rivers** and planting **community gardens** in vacant lands.
- This action is **realising the value of open spaces** to the environment.
- There are new issues surrounding the **value and meaning of urban spaces**, which are being explored.
- Example is **equitable accessibility of green spaces** and **proximity to parks** is increasingly addressed as an **environmental justice concern**, rather than just a recreational one.



# Johannesburg....

- COJ was set out on **racial and class grounds** with the **poor and non-whites** populations housed in **unattractive and unhealthy areas**.
- Post-apartheid COJ is beginning a process of **providing better parks for urban residents**.
- Since 1994 an **enormous increase on inward migration** of South Africans into the City.
- This causes **pressure on land for urban development**, along with formation of a more mobile black urban middle class with **needs for recreation**.
- Parallel to this, a greater number **immigrants has meant the partitioning of the inner city** into ethnic enclaves, with competing needs for living, business, trading and transport hubs.
- More concern is about **livelihoods and survival than leisure** opportunities.

# Examples...





# Solutions...



## Way forward...

- When **planning or upgrading parks**, planners need to understand:
  - (i) **who** will access the park and **why**?
  - (ii) **How** far people are willing to travel?
  - (iii) **What** type of recreation people want?
- Important things when planning:
  - a. **Public participation**
  - b. **Budget**
  - c. **Monitoring and evaluation**
  - d. **Relevant legislations**



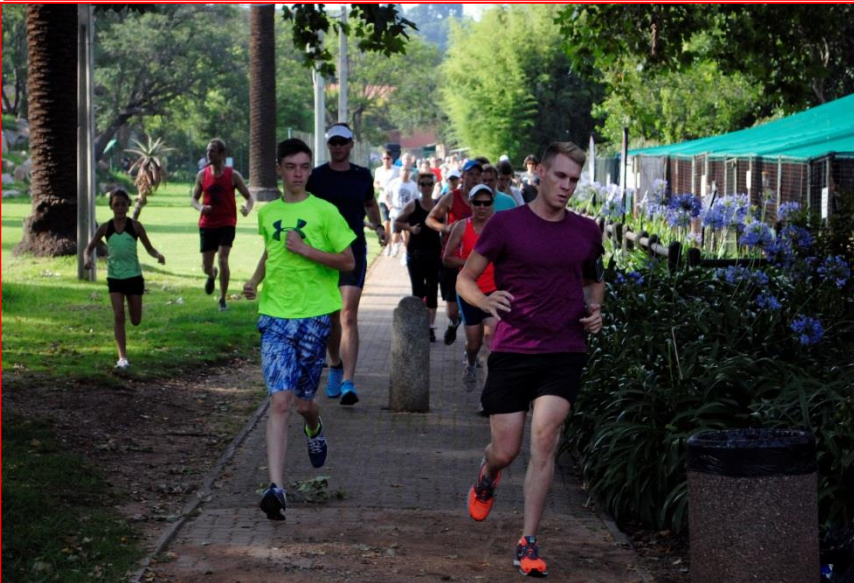
# Social and health benefits of parks...

- They promote **active outdoor living** for resident, such as exercising which can fight unhealthy lifestyle.
- Promote **mental wellbeing** (Jackson, 2003).
- For small children, playing entails learning and it has been proven to be a critical element in a child`s future success by: (Sherer, 2006)
  - (i) **developing muscle strength and co-ordination**
  - (ii) **Language**
  - (iii) **Cognitive thinking**
  - (iv) **Reasoning abilities**
- **Socialising** by **active groups** in cities where many people live in apartments.
- Provides a **way to relax** and enjoy the outdoor.

## Benefits of parks continued

- Urban green spaces **contributes to the reduction of 'heat island' effect** because: (Goddard et al, 2009).
- Urban areas have more hard structures than rural areas, which **increases the air temperature** (Kim, 2001).
- Parks break up reflected heat** from these hard surfaces on clear summer days to bring a cooling effect though the shade they provide, (Kusaka, 2004).
- The heat reflected by hard surfaces **increases the air temperature** during the day.
- Parks contributes by **reducing air temperature**.

# Summary...





# Outdoor gym

12

2016/10/07





# Outdoor living...





# Playing facilities





# Acrobranch



## Case studies

- Fort Meyers, Florida USA; In 1990 Police documented a **28% drop in juvenile arrests after building a new recreation centre and a park** in a low income community (Sherer, 2006).
- Chicago, USA; A study to **determine the impact of the community in social control of public spaces** like parks, found that **parks promoted unity** in the parks, **deterred disorder** and **reduced the level of physical and social disorder** (Sherer, 2006).
- Caracas, Venezuela; Hugo Chavez Park was established in what is generally regarded as a **severely crime-ridden and degraded part of the city** where people abandoned public spaces out of fear. It was hoped that **the park would help to bring new beneficial social activity to the run-down areas** and reduce crime in Caracas. (Lopez, 2014).



## Conclusion...

- Regular physical exercising **improves health and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases** such as diabetes hypertension and heart diseases.
- Often people use parks for exercising, **to improve their physical and mental well-being**, as their lives are **more vulnerable to stress, mental health issues and obesity** than ever before.
- Parks add value to the cities because **they promote active living by socialising**.
- Parks also function as **flood mitigating and carbon sequestration features** in polluted cities.
- In an African context, parks are used as a **gathering place to discuss matters** affecting relevant communities.



# References...

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# Acknowledgements



# THE END.....

