

# SDGs GoGlocal!

## Translocal and transdisciplinary teaching and research to ground the SDGs through integrated urban development

### THE CHALLENGE

#### Africa's dynamic urbanization

Africa's dynamic urbanization processes and the lack of holistic approaches in practice, research and teaching in disciplines related to the built environment lead to unsustainable development of growing regions. There is a lack of integrated, transdisciplinary approaches to localizing the SDGs in urban development, especially when dealing with informal settlements. Singular perspectives, separation of disciplines and hardly any involvement of non-university actors are still common at African universities.



### THE APPROACH AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

#### South-South-North triologue

The project focuses on international dialog between education, research and civil society. It is based on a trilateral partnership with perspectives from Sub-Sahara Africa, Middle East/North Africa and Europe presented by the three partner universities. Experiences from the joint international study program Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design (IUSD) in Stuttgart and in Cairo are reflected against the Namibian context. Transdisciplinary and integrated approaches in urban development herein include the continuous exchange with non-university actors to reflect the practical relevance in the local context. SDGs GoGlocal! is based on the 3-pillars teaching, research and multi-actor learning. With a focus on informal communities this includes reality-based teaching activities, stakeholder workshops and students writing their Master Thesis under the umbrella of the project.



### THE INNOVATION, INTENDED IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

#### Co-production of knowledge

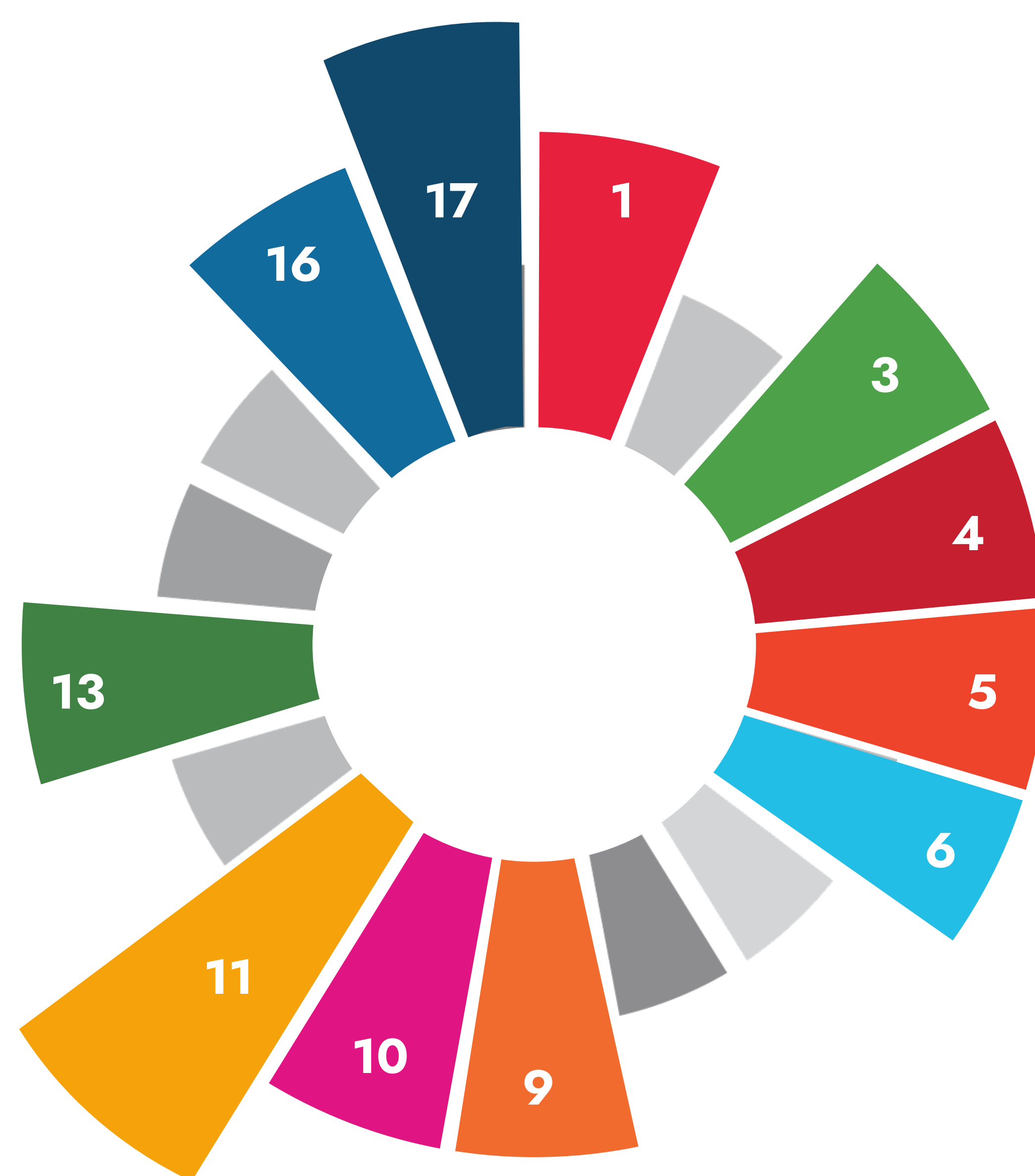
The focus is on localization of the SDGs and the co-production of knowledge between university and non-university stakeholders as well as the trinational partners. The project is based on three pillars: the development of teaching modules, a "learning hub" as an exchange platform for different actors and joint research activities. To address the complex urban realities that prevail in Namibia and other parts of the world, the project focuses on integrative and transdisciplinary learning. Conceptual and practical tools for holistic urban development approaches, as well as co-productive and integrated approaches will contribute to the long-term localization of the SDGs.



### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

#### Partnering SDGs 11 and SDGs 17

To address the dynamic urbanisation process will be one of the strategic leverages for sustainable development. The central SDG addressed is to "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (SDG 11). As urban development is such a crucial field other related goals are SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 13 and SDG 16. As a translocal and transdisciplinary collaboration "Partnership for the goals" (17) is inherent in the project. The emphasize is on the localisation and implementation. To address urbanisation challenges the SDGs need to be incorporated and localised to impact particular contexts. Urban challenges are increasingly understood as complex also in terms of the various actors to be addressed; requiring integrated and more transdisciplinary approaches.



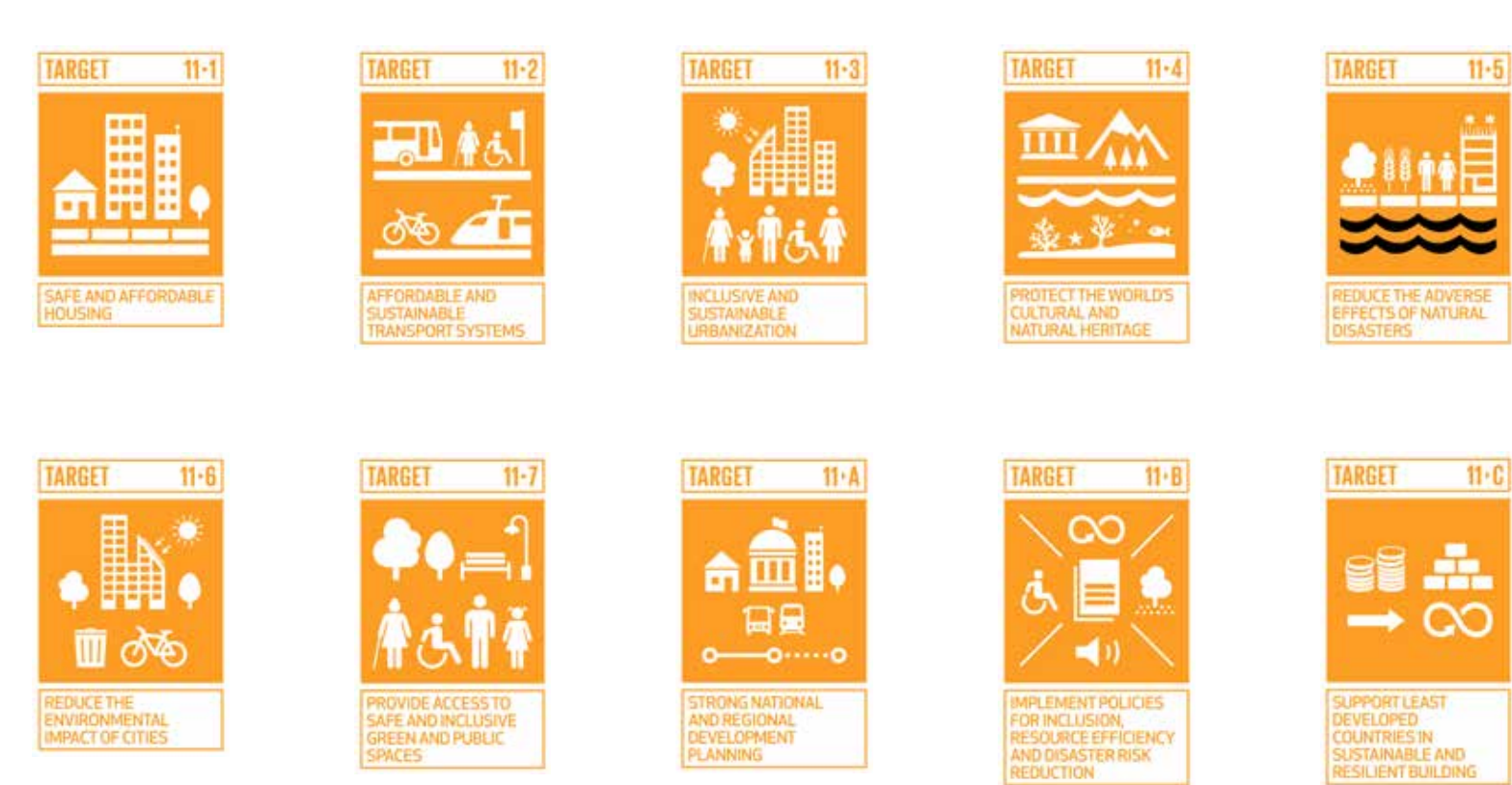
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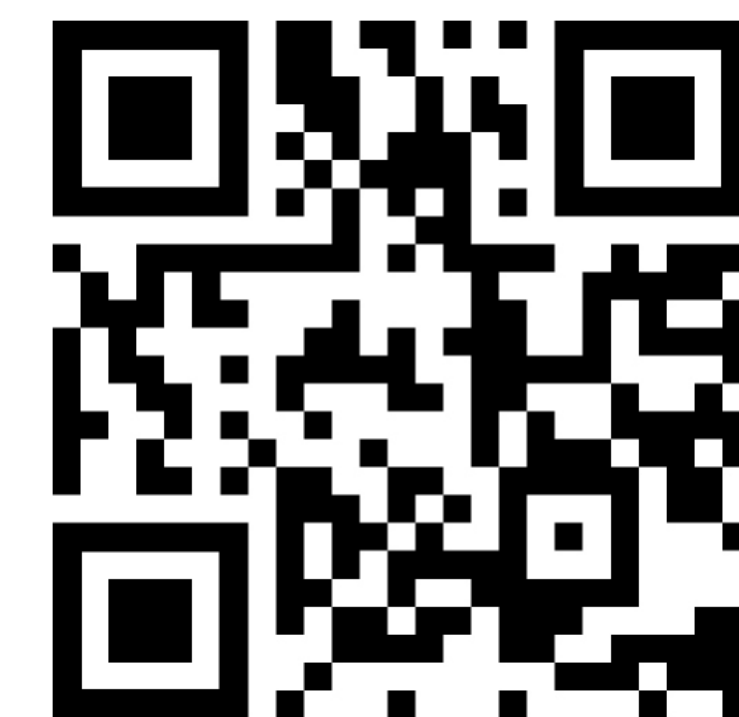
# SDGs GoGlocal!

Urban change needs bold action. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global plan to build better world by 2030. SDGs 11 speaks particularly about 'Sustainable cities and communities', but all other 16 SDGs are also interconnected to cities and urban development.

This banner is part of a series to gain knowledge on the localization of SDGs in the endeavor for making them meaningful drivers for future urban development.



The SDGs GoGlocal! project aims to strengthen translocal and transdisciplinary research and teaching in how to localise and ground the SDGs meaningfully in urban planning and development practice. It is a partnership between the University of Stuttgart in Germany, the Namibia University of Science and Technology in Windhoek and the Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt.



## Stakeholders' negotiations in formal and informal commercial activities

Based on master thesis of **Salma Ashraf Alham**  
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Mohamed Salheen, Prof. Dr. Astrid Ley, and Dr. Merham Keleg.  
Advisor: Ms. Ndeshipanda Iita

### The research

Informal street vending activities increase in the public spaces of Windhoek, Namibia, due to poverty and a shortage of job opportunities relative to the growing population. Street vending poses challenges for formal commercial activities, residents, and the usability and safety of public spaces. Accordingly, informal street vendors use various resistance strategies to maintain their businesses in public spaces.

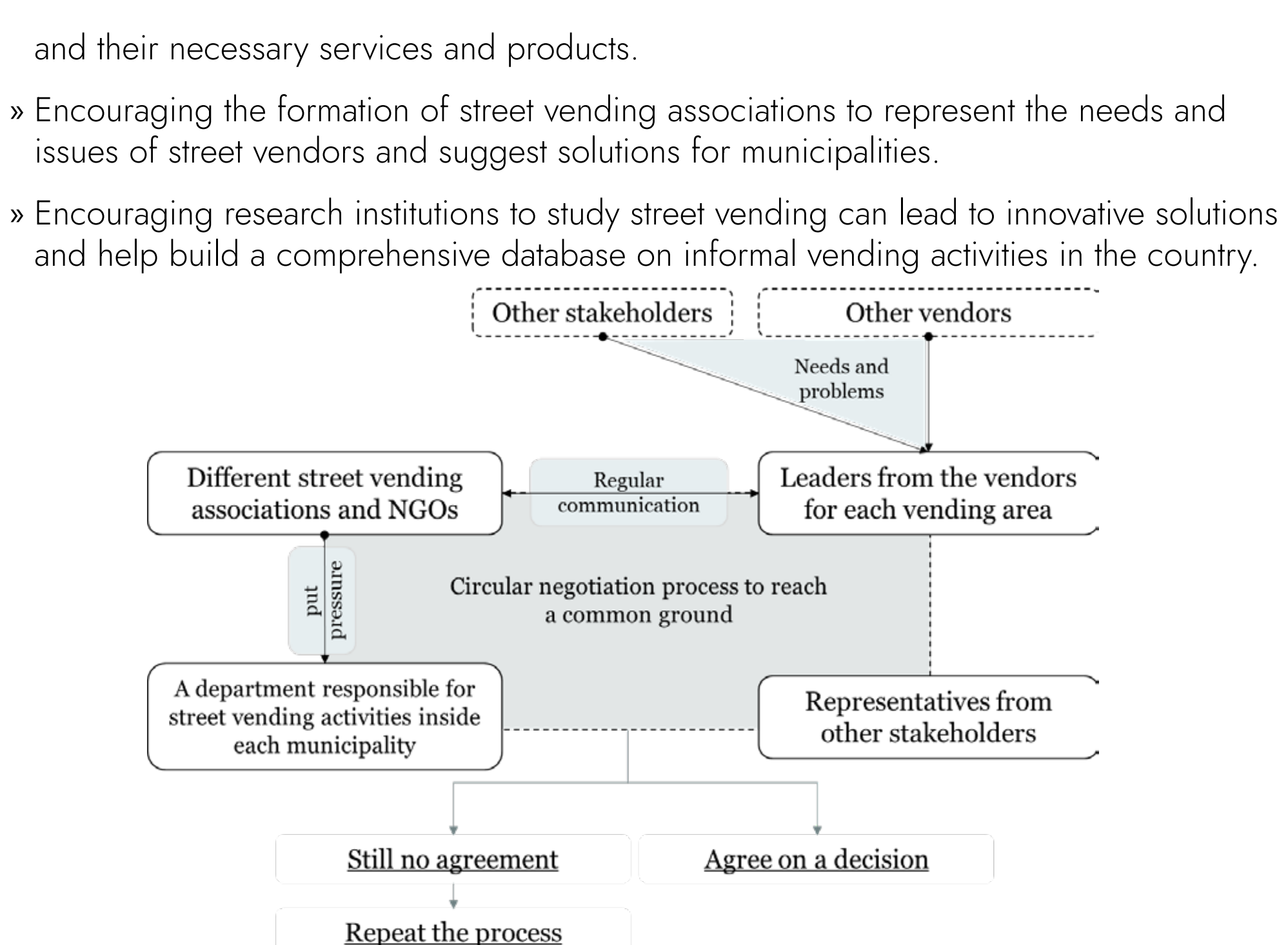
This research focuses on Ondoto Street in Windhoek, Namibia, to explore how negotiations serve as a key resistance strategy for informal street vendors in their interactions with stakeholders involved in formal commercial activities. Additionally, the study examines the socio-economic, spatial, and social impacts of these negotiations. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used, including observations, physical mapping, structured and semi-structured interviews, as well as online and in-person questionnaires. The findings highlight different negotiation forms and their consequences on space production and street vibrancy, with recommendations to positively influence informal street vending activities in public spaces.

### Findings and recommendations

- Informal vendors use two types of negotiations with other stakeholders: negotiations to operate in the area and negotiations to store the products.
- Informal street vendors are not always the stakeholders with the lowest powers if they reach an agreement with other stakeholders.
- The socio-economic implications of these negotiations can be explained through the contested/conflicted, collaborative, and competitive framework.
- The spatial implications are influenced by socio-economic relations, public space management, and stakeholders' power; additionally, stakeholders' space monitoring has equal impacts.
- Based on user's perceptions, street vending activities positively affect the street's vibrancy; however, their negative impacts include increasing congestion and reducing walkability, safety, and security.
- Adopting negotiations as a policy or an approach in dealing with informal street vending activities to improve communication among vendors, municipalities, shop owners, and residents, leading to better solutions for existing issues.
- Implementing a holistic approach to positively impact informal street vending in public spaces should involve changing by laws to be more inclusive.
- Understanding customer perspectives on preferred locations for street vending activities,

### Background and research question

- The informal economy is a significant source of employment in Namibia, representing approximately 38% of the workforce. The majority of informal sector workers are involved in wholesale and retail industries, primarily operating in public areas.
- Informal street vending activities are always seen as a threat by the government and police, as they consider it an unhealthy phenomenon that can't be controlled.
- The case study area Ondoto Street, or Stop and Shop, is located in Okuryangava, Katutura, Windhoek. The landuses surrounding the street are mainly commercial, which attracted more people and encourage additional activities
- The main research question guiding the research was: **(1) What are the different negotiations among stakeholders who are engaged in formal and informal commercial activities in public spaces? (2) What are the implications of the investigated negotiations in public spaces?**



and their necessary services and products.

- Encouraging the formation of street vending associations to represent the needs and issues of street vendors and suggest solutions for municipalities.
- Encouraging research institutions to study street vending can lead to innovative solutions and help build a comprehensive database on informal vending activities in the country.

## Woman-led upgrading process in informal settlements

A case study of Freedom Square, Gobabis

Based on Master thesis of **Tanzila Ahmed**  
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Astrid Ley and Prof. Dr. Mohamed Salheen  
Advisor: Jennilee Kohima

### The research

This research emerges from the importance of conducting planning and projects in an inclusive manner. It aims to analyse the gender sensitivity of the upgrading of the recently formalised settlement of Freedom Square, Gobabis, Namibia, by exploring local women's engagement in the process. The data was gathered in Gobabis and Windhoek through interviews with experts and women inhabitants of Freedom Square followed by a participatory workshop and through documentations of the upgrading process. These data provide information on women participants' motivations and socio-economic challenges, influence of the stakeholders and impact of the process on the participating women. Analysing the data leads to evaluating the gender sensitivity of the process from the perspective of women inhabitants. Such research is significant in localising Sustainable Development Goal 11, as this process implements SDG targets 11.1 and 11.3 within the Namibian and African context.

### Findings and recommendations

- The changing roles of non gov. and gov. stakeholders impacted women's engagement.
- Due to lack of gender mainstreaming agenda and a lack of post-process monitoring, most economic and social challenges of the participating women went unnoticed.
- Primary motivation of land occupation has been accomplished. However, until the land instalments are paid, it is questionable. Their basic services needs have been partially fulfilled.
- Women are committee leaders, but lack of women in decision making, authority and governance remains. Inhabitants are focused on avoiding land instalments but on building permanent structure and availing basic services.
- The process has been able to accommodate certain gender specific needs, but it has room for reform by evaluation, monitoring and further planning.
- The policy recommendations include existing laws to explicitly acknowledge genders using clear terminologies and definitions. The urban development policies shall set requirements of inclusive participation, to avoid the risk of overlooking gender specific needs.
- Additionally, local authorities need to be equipped to handle the rapidly formalised communities and certain responsibilities shall be delegated to the committee leaders for better management.
- Regular assessment and post process monitoring are equally recommended. The stakeholders engaged in the development shall have a continued engagement to ensure sustainable result of the process.

### Background and research question

- The inhabitants of these informal settlements in Namibia do not have tenure of the land they occupy. This makes the women inhabitants more vulnerable, as they live in constant fear of eviction. Due to a lack of tenure security, they do not receive access to basic services.
- The Flexible Land Tenure Act of Namibia can be utilized to mitigate this situation. It focuses on faster and cost effective land delivery to formalise informal settlements thus making them eligible for access to basic services. This law also allows women to own land.
- This research looks into one of the women led informal settlement upgrading processes implementing the FLTA and how this process contributes to a sustainable development.
- The main research question guiding the research was: **How gender sensitive was the settlement upgrading process in Freedom Square, Gobabis?**



### SDGs relevance

- Localisation of goal 5 (Gender Equality) requires a gender mainstreamed approach where processes and policies are aware of differences between genders and addresses them accordingly- thus being gender sensitive. The localisation of goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) requires taking an inclusive approach in informal settlement developments therefore ensuring participation of all groups with a comprehensive plan in mind.
- Both these goals are possible to localise by being inclusive of all genders and all stakeholders in policy making, planning, process implementation and monitoring of urban planning projects.
- An upgrading process with women's active engagement among other stakeholders and producing outcomes considering women's needs (land tenure leading to housing, access to basic services) therefore, impacting their lives with economic and social benefits can be translated as an integrated approach to localise SDG 5 and 11 in Namibia.
- This research concludes that to localise SDG 5 & 11 through these upgrading processes in Africa, multi stakeholder engagement is necessary and alignment of stakeholder goals is of importance. As the goals aim to be sustainable, any process or policies needs to have a long term impact on its users.

## Shared is more

The role of public space for community resilience

Based on Master thesis of **Alan Tonatiuh Cayetano Borja**  
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Astrid Ley and Prof. Dr. Mohamed Salheen  
Advisor: Ms. Sophia van Greunen

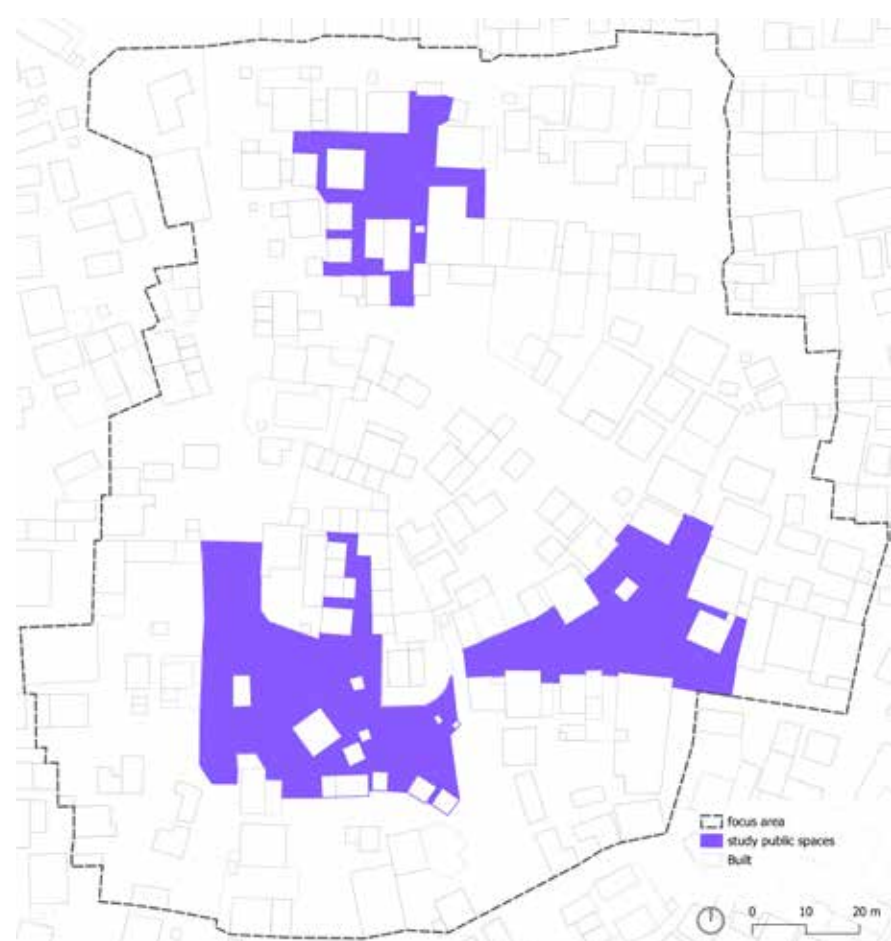
### The research

This research assesses the multi-dimensional role of public spaces in fostering resilient communities within the context of Windhoek's informal settlements taking Peter Nanyemba informal settlement as case study. By investigating public spaces' production, use, and impact, the study aims to provide comprehensive insights into how these shared spaces develop the adaptive capacities of people living in informal communities.

The study delves into the processes that shape public spaces within and it focuses on understanding how these spaces are designed, constructed, and modified over time. It seeks to know the factors driving these transformations, offering insights into how public spaces evolve to meet the community's needs and explores the relationships between people in the shared spaces. Therefore, it seeks to understand the range of activities in these areas by studying how people appropriate these spaces, informal rules, behaviors, social networks and a sense of belonging among community members govern public space use.

### Background and research question

- Peter Nanyemba is an informal settlement located in the northwest of Windhoek with an ongoing upgrading process with focus on households formalization and access to land tenure within blocks E, F, G and H.
- 3 public spaces were selected based on their functions to be studied: (1) a "provider" public space for shared essential services such as water and showers- the "community water point"; (2) a "productive" public space for food and trading activities. The space is known as the "big boys area"; (3) a governance public space for the management and organization of the community. The space is known as the "community meeting point".
- The main research question guiding the research was: **What is the role of public space in fostering more resilient communities in the context of Windhoek's informal settlements?**



### Findings and recommendations

- Public space is not only a physical infrastructure but a social infrastructure for community networks. Public space reflects the community's ability to self-organize and adapt with transformations that affect both the physical space and the nature of social interactions.
- Public space is a platform for community resilience where flexibility and multi uses of space makes informal settlements more resilient. Public spaces compensate the deficiencies from resident's private spaces and allows vulnerable community members to find support among the community.
- Public spaces should be prioritized alongside housing from the very beginning the upgrading processes and not merely be viewed as a final product of urban formalization. This would contribute to the general well-being of the community and their capacity to face stresses by the support among the community.
- Early investment in public spaces are key to foster social cohesion and strengthen collective organization. By promoting social ties and providing tools for community interaction, the long term success of the neighborhood formalization is greatly increased.
- Public policies should include strategies that enable residents to shape their neighborhood with support from local authorities. It is essential to adopt bottom-up policies, where authorities provide facilitation and guidance rather than impose limitations. Include residents in planning processes allowing for local knowledge and practices to shape the formalization and improvement of these areas.
- Promote community-based training programs over public spaces (accessible for everyone) to build local knowledge and skills as well as create opportunities for small business in the informal settlements to ensure a local income.

### Background and research question

Function	Provider	Community resilience
The space	Community water point	
Categorization	Shared available space	
Activities	Collecting water, showering, washing, playing and leisure	Gathering, socializing, washing and hanging clothes
Values for resilience	Access to water, Access to electricity, Access to social cohesion, Access to social cohesion	Access to social cohesion, Access to services
Function	Productive	Community resilience
The space	Big boys area	
Categorization	Shared available but socially defined space	
Activities	Trading, Food growing, Gathering, socializing	Washing and hanging clothes
Values for resilience	Access to electricity, Access to social cohesion, Access to social cohesion, Access to social cohesion	Access to social cohesion, Access to services
Function	Governance	Community resilience
The space	Community meeting point	
Categorization	Shared available space	
Activities	Holding community meetings, Holding elections, Playing and leisure, Gathering, socializing	Washing and hanging clothes
Values for resilience	Access to electricity, Access to social cohesion, Access to social cohesion, Access to social cohesion	Access to social cohesion, Access to services

### SDGs relevance

- SDG 6, clean water and sanitation. Public space in Peter Nanyemba is used as a shared infrastructure that provides access to drinking water reducing the number of people suffering from water scarcity. Moreover, residents in Peter Nanyemba built structures over the public spaces to have access to sanitation (showers).
- SDG 10, reduced inequalities. Public space provides a platform to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all within a community, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities. Public space in Peter Nanyemba is used to access basic services and a tool for people to organize and upgrade their settlement. Furthermore, it enhances inclusive capacity for participatory and neighborhood management.

## Community resilience to flash floods

Structural and non-structural responses in Peter Nanyemba informal settlement

Based on Master thesis of **Elsa Yopez Westreicher**  
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Astrid Ley and Prof. Dr. Mohamed Salheen  
Advisor: Ms. Gaby Hansen

### The research

The rapid growth of informal settlements combined with climate change heightens vulnerability to natural disasters, worsened by limited understanding of local responses leading to interventions unsuited to specificities. This study investigates community responses to flash floods, using qualitative methods like observation, mapping, and interviews with 21 residents and 8 experts. Conducted over two months it highlights two resilience components—resistance, recovery, adaptation and transformation—across three scales: individual/household, neighborhood groups, and administrative blocks. Findings document current measures, highlighting interactions between structural and non-structural responses, and offering policy recommendations alongside a framework for assessing local disaster resilience.

### Findings and recommendations

- Residents' risk perception plays a key role in shaping their response to flash floods, directly impacting community resilience across different levels. Structural responses are more prevalent at the individual and household level, while non-structural responses are distributed more evenly across scales but occur less frequently.
- | Structural responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Non-structural responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures implemented from reacting to transforming</li> <li>Resilience' replication through observational learning</li> <li>Low budgets limit improvement in resilience for most floods.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undergoing learning process that will enable handling future floods.</li> <li>Lack of knowledge's dissemination hampers widespread measures' adoption.</li> <li>Adoption of quick solutions that may impact others.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chain effect of individual measures benefits wider scales.</li> <li>Copy of harmful behaviours affecting nearby</li> <li>Structural responses limited to emergencies.</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSR continuously present in the resilience phases.</li> <li>Transmission of information occurs as needed.</li> <li>Agreements on day-to-day organizational decisions.</li> <li>Some NSR do not specifically address flash floods' issues.</li> <li>Knowledge and awareness is not widely disseminated.</li> <li>Occasionally neighborhood decisions results in maladaptive practices.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency actions fail to evolve into mitigation and adaptation strategies.</li> </ul>                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community participation in NGO's donations implementation.</li> <li>NSR continuously present in the resilience phases.</li> <li>Residents' involvement in planning and implementation is minimal.</li> <li>Some NSR do not specifically address flash floods' issue.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  |

### Background and research question

- The combination of rapid informal growth and climate change heightens vulnerability to natural disasters, worsened by limited understanding of local responses and poorly adapted external interventions, resulting in ineffective solutions.
- Flooding poses serious consequences, including immediate physical harm, infrastructure damage, water contamination, and long-term health issues like chronic conditions and malnutrition.
- Peter Nanyemba, located in Samora Machel Constituency, has a steep terrain and limited access to basic services, with approximately 15,000 residents and has an ongoing upgrading process.
- The main research question guiding the research was: **How and to what extent does the community respond to flash floods in the Peter Nanyemba informal**



### SDGs relevance

- SDG 13 (target 1) "Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries" and SDG 11 (target 5) "Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters" was instrumental in initially examining the challenges related to these goals from the national down to the city level. Localizing these SDGs and targets to the specific context of informal settlements in Namibia requires to take an overlooked topic into account: flash floods.
- The assessment of flash floods enhances resilience in the SDG process by analyzing the interaction between structural and non-structural responses across various phases and scales. This analysis highlights how adaptation and transformation measures' can address issues related to flash floods like water scarcity, soil degradation, erosion, and food security.