

# Urban Informality: Informality and equitable urban resilience



#### Working Group Focus:

- Examining the pervasive role of informality in shaping urban life in the Global South, particularly in Southern Africa.
- Bridging the gap between research and practice to enhance urban resilience and equity through better understanding of informality.

The Urban Informality working group focused on the critical role of informality in urban resilience, synthesizing research and practical insights from the Global South. They engaged with key stakeholders and disseminated their findings through various outputs, including briefs, infographics, and global platforms like COP28, to promote more equitable and resilient urban planning and governance.



#### **Engagement Process:**

- Interdisciplinary Approach: Synthesized research and practices from Southern Africa and other Global South contexts, drawing on expertise in climate change adaptation, social-ecological resilience, urban governance, social movements, and environmental justice.
- **Key Collaborations:** Worked with organizations like ICLEI Africa and Slum Dwellers International to integrate insights from urban communities and decision-makers, ensuring practical relevance.
- **Global Platforms:** Disseminated key messages on informality and urban resilience at high-profile events like COP28 in Dubai, integrating insights into the opening remarks of sessions by prominent figures.
- **Community-Centred Dialogue:** Engaged with local communities to ensure their perspectives were central to the research, creating feedback loops to refine strategies.
- Innovative Storytelling: Used narratives like the story of Mutinta to illustrate complex urban food systems, making policy engagement more relatable and impactful.

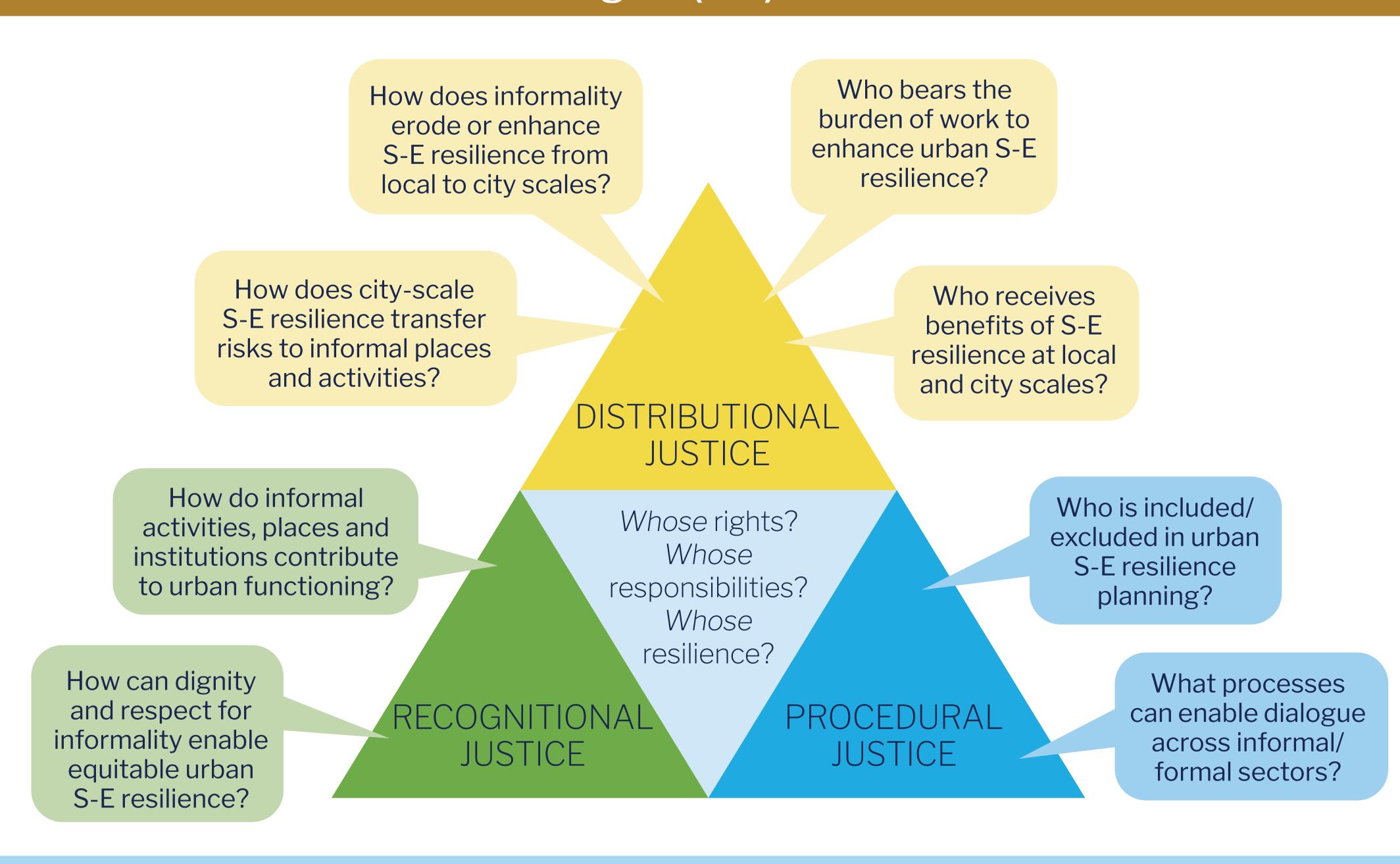


#### Key messages conveyed:

- 1. Informality is a pervasive and dominant feature of our cities: it is part and parcel of the overall social, economic, institutional and spatial fabric of urban systems. Informality is here to stay.
- 2. Recognizing and proactively engaging with informality leverages opportunities for enhancing community and city-wide resilience, because informality is a source of solutions as well as challenges to urban resilience.
- 3. Investment in partnerships is essential to unlocking informality's contributions to urban resilience and equity.



## Essential questions for more just and equitable urban social-ecological (S-E) resilience





#### Outputs:

**Insights Brief:** Informality and equitable urban resilience **Infographic:** Formality and informality

Cartoon: Informality and collaboration: a story of sand, land and flooding

Poster: Addressing informality for equitable urban resilience

**Blog:** Embracing informality: a crucial element in creating equitable urban resilience



### Key Insights:

Effective and Equitable Ways to Work with Informality in Urban Resilience:

- Work with BridgingOrganizations and Individuals:
  - Collaborate with entities that can connect formal and informal sectors, facilitating communication and cooperation.
  - These organizations often have established trust and can mediate between various stakeholders.
- Create Spaces for Innovative Governance:
  - Establish inclusive forums where informal sector representatives can participate in urban planning and policymaking.
  - Encourage creative solutions and flexible governance structures that adapt to the realities of informality.
- Recognize and Address the Inequities of Informality:
  - Identify the specific challenges faced by informal workers, such as lack of legal protection and access to resources.
  - Develop targeted interventions to mitigate these inequities and support informal sector resilience.
- Accept the Limits of Formality and Build on What Works:
  - Acknowledge that formal systems alone cannot address all urban challenges.
  - Enhance existing informal practices that contribute to resilience, integrating them with formal strategies for a more comprehensive approach.

More on the urban informality working group here:



