

Walking the Un-Walkable

First Walk Report
May 2023







The Future of Development

Empowering new cities with better governance to lift tens of millions of people out of poverty.

The Charter Cities Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to building the ecosystem for charter cities by:

- Creating legal, regulatory, and planning frameworks;
- Advising and convening key stakeholders including governments, new city developers, and multilateral institutions;
- Influencing the global agenda through research, engagement, and partnerships.



The Lusaka Urban Lab (LUL) is an initiative of the Charter Cities Institute Zambia office to generate new research and facilitate knowledge sharing on urban issues in Lusaka.

The Lusaka Urban Lab is a multidisciplinary research hub that bridges the gaps between urban scholars, communities, and policymakers by engaging these stakeholders in research projects about the many urban issues facing Lusaka and its residents.

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Rationale



In Africa, an estimated 78% of people walk for travel every day¹. On average, people spend up to 56 minutes walking or cycling for travel every day². This number surpasses the global average of 43.9 minutes. Only 59% of Africans are protected by a cycling or walking policy, and most of those policies remain only as “ink on paper” with little to no implementation of walking-friendly projects.

Walking is the most affordable form of transport. In Africa, people who walk often have no choice, making walking the only transport method for the poor and the vulnerable. Women especially take more journeys on foot out of necessity. People walk to collect basic necessities, access services, job opportunities, or public transportation. Walking is an indispensable part of life for most urban Africans and is often one of the most reliable, affordable, and sustainable travel methods when integrated into a more comprehensive transportation network³.

However, urban infrastructure in Africa remains significantly inadequate to support walking. Sidewalks are often inaccessible or non-existent, cities are sprawled, and urban planning and design are often car-centric. 261 pedestrians are killed in accidents daily in Africa, making walking an uncomfortable and life-threatening necessity⁴.

Zambia ranks slightly above the global average of time spent walking or cycling for transport at around 55 minutes per day. In Lusaka alone, 65% of daily personal trips are completed by walking. Zambia, like the rest of urban Africa face the same inadequate pedestrian infrastructure.

“Walking the Un-walkable” explores walking in Lusaka, including challenges and opportunities for improvement. The project aims to develop evidence-based policy briefs and research to guide a shift in urban planning, policies, and infrastructure investment toward a more accessible, walkable built environment. It also helps inform CCI’s research agenda on commuting and labor markets in Lusaka to guide more well-informed, evidence-based commuting strategies and to promote more compact, mixed-used urban environments that facilitate economic vibrancy.

Inspired by the French tradition of the Flâneur⁵, Walking the Un-Walkable centers itself around four walks, which aim to simulate the experience of walking along selected routes and thus identify challenges and shortcomings of pedestrian walkways. The walks have been purposively selected based on the main routes used to access higher learning institutions, job opportunities, and other goods and services in Lusaka.

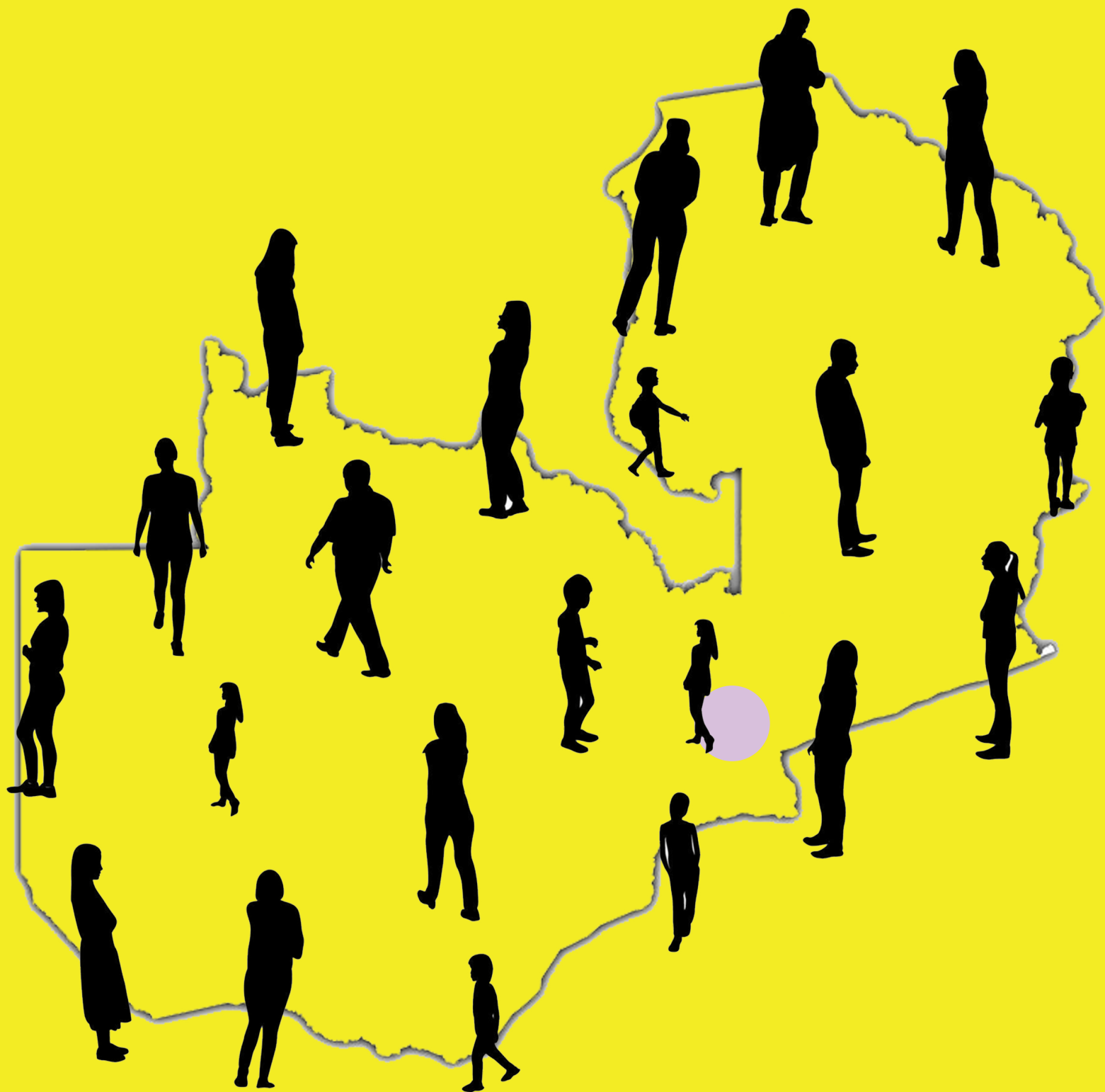
1. UNEP (2022), Walking and Cycling in Africa

2. UNEP (2022), Walking and Cycling in Africa

3. EU (2022), Road Safety Policy

4. Sietchiping et al. (2022) Transport and Mobility in Sub-Saharan African Cities

5. Flâneur a French word that translates to “stroller” refers to the tradition of walking and learning from cities.



Africa is a Walking Continent

78% of people walk for travel every day.⁶

Zambia is a Walking Country

The average Zambian walks 55 minutes per day.⁷

Lusaka is a Walking City

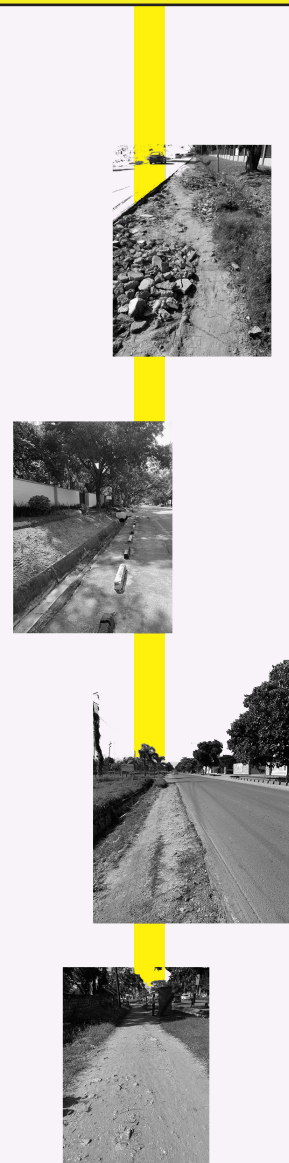
65% of daily personal trips are completed by walking.⁸

6. UNEP (2022), Walking and Cycling in Africa

7. UNEP (2022), Walking and Cycling in Africa

8. Ministry of Transport & Communications et al. (2019) Zambia Non-Motorised Transport Strategy

However, Lusaka is not a “Walkable” city



Pedestrians accounted for 60% of road traffic accidents in Zambia.⁹

9. Ministry of Transport & Communications et al. (2019) Zambia Non-Motorised Transport Strategy
10. Ministry of Transport & Communications et al. (2019) Zambia Non-Motorised Transport Strategy



Sidewalks are missing from about 75% of the road network in Lusaka¹⁰

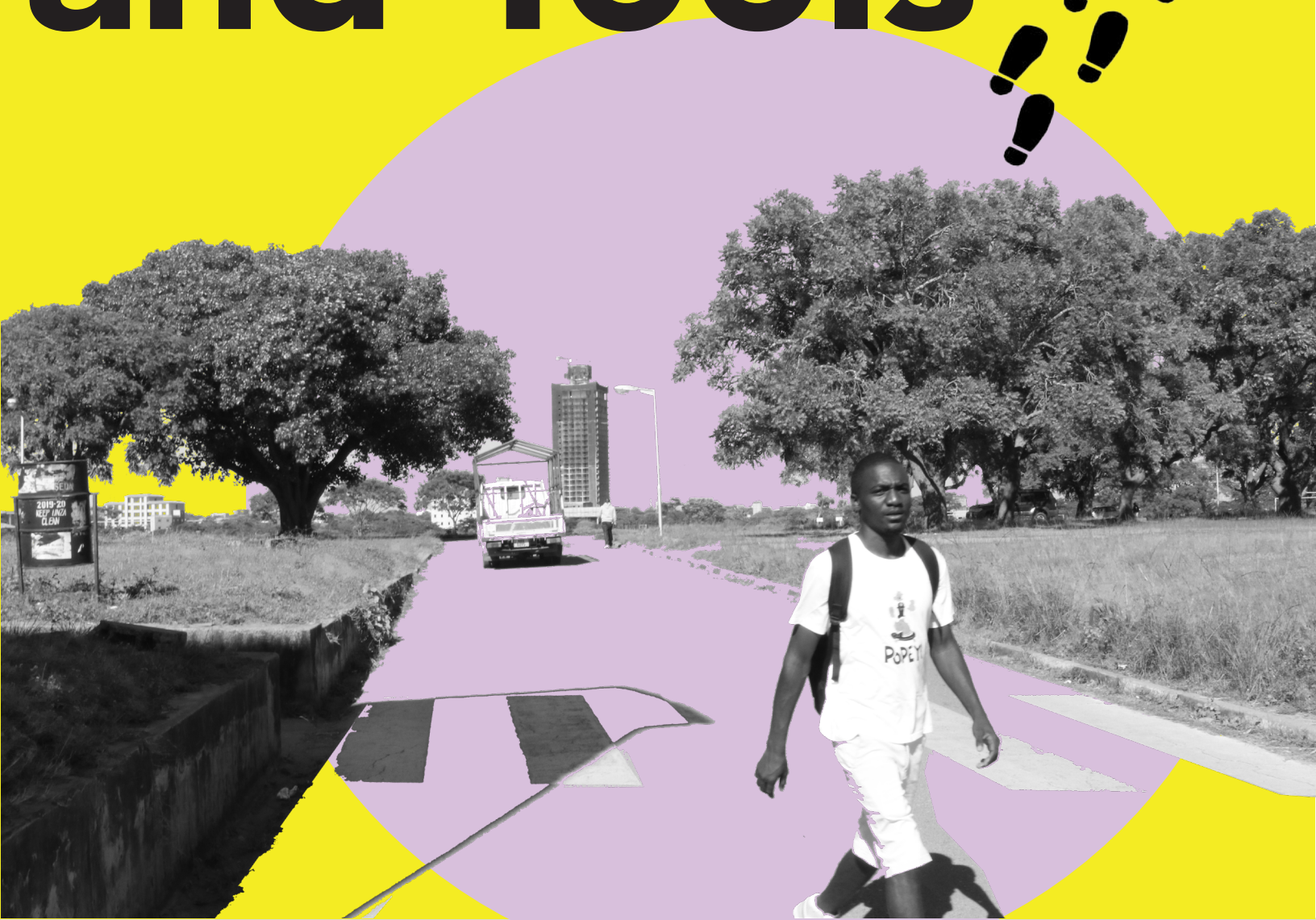


Street lights are missing in most of Lusaka streets



Traffic lights or physical measures are inadequate to reduce cars' speed

Approaches and Tools



Participatory Development

Participatory policymaking is an approach to development that aims at engaging local populations in development projects. The approach facilitates the inclusion of individuals or groups in the design of policies via consultative or participatory means to achieve accountability and engagement in generating local policies.



Transect Walking/ Mapping

Transect mapping is a tool used to collect and document spatial information about a specific urban issue in a community. Transect mapping is often done through doing a “transect walk” with informed community members and professionals. The walk, followed by the mapping activity, will record built environment conditions and experiences.

Sketch Mapping

Following the transect walks, the group utilizes sketch mapping to document the collective experience on one map. The collective sketch map includes three main parts: (1) infrastructure conditions (presence and condition of sidewalks and crosswalks), (2) walking experiences (pleasant, interesting, inviting, safe), and (3) urbanity (land use mix, commercial floor space ratio, intersection density).



Co-Design Workshop

A cornerstone of participatory research/policymaking is the co-design process of the research. This method consists of people with relevant skills and experience coming together to create a tangible road map for the research. Participation techniques were used in the co-design workshop with the main stakeholders, who were invited to co-design the walking routes and identify the focus points of transect mapping.

The Co-Design Workshop

April 14, 2023

The co-design workshop was conducted on the 14th of April, 2023, at CCI Zambia headquarters in Woodlands, Lusaka. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGARD), the United Nations Development Program Acceleration Lab, the Zambia Institute of Planners (ZIP), and the University of Zambia (UNZA).

The workshop focused on introducing the project to the partners and soliciting feedback on the project tools and strategy. It also focused on co-designing the routes studied throughout the project. Our partners welcomed the project and suggested involving other key stakeholders like the Ministry of Transportation and Logistics, the Road Development Agency, and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing, and Urban Development. They also suggested focusing on specific communities in the studied routes, like walking routes for school children and worker groups, and further engaging them in the walks.

At the end of the workshop, it was agreed to start with an UNZA-Kalingalinga route for the first walk to focus on students' mobility. Since UNZA is a main partner in the project, engaging students in the walk and mapping is easier. The workshop also identified the importance of producing a toolkit of standards and measures that can be implemented by local authorities to improve walkability, highlighting interventions and pilot projects at the end of the mapping phase. The co-design workshop is an important pre-mapping exercise to build on the collective intelligence of the various stakeholders to conduct truly inclusive and well-informed research.





First Walk

April 21, 2023

The first walk was designed to go from UNZA to Kalingalinga and Mass Media to simulate students' walk from campus to the boarding rooms in Kalingalinga. The walk started with a speech from CCI's Africa's Lead Mwanda Phiri who highlighted the importance of walking as a primary mode of mobility for Zambians and the importance of improving it. This was followed by a few remarks from Mr. Maambo B. Haamaundu, the Permanent Secretary of Administration of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, on his excitement to join the kick-off walk and see the final outcomes of the projects.

The participants consisted of representatives from the United Nations Development Program, Zambia Institute of Planners, Zambia Institute for Public Policy Analysis and Research, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, University of Zambia (both students and staff), Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, Market Urbanism Report, and various media houses.

The participants were given maps and pads to document their experience and the mapping exercise was split into three main areas: infrastructure conditions, walking experiences and urbanity. This part will go over the findings of the walk, the common observations, and the outcomes of the co-mapping activities. Below are some of the pictures from the walk





UNZA Fields



Kalingalinga



Kalingalinga intersection with Mass Media



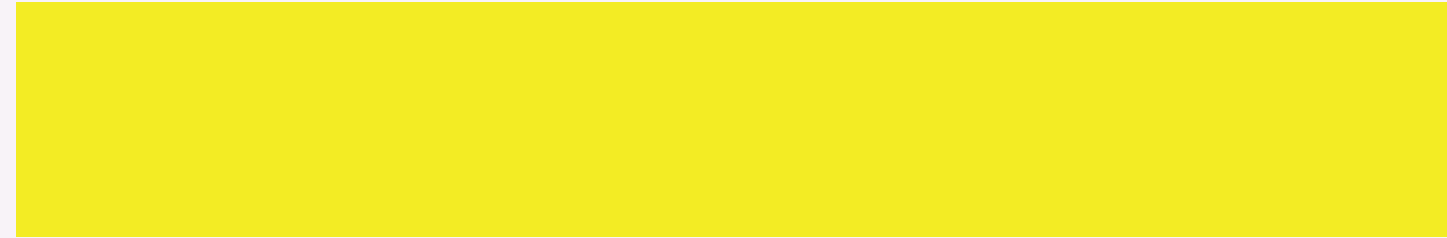
Kalingalinga



UNZA Pathways



Kalingalinga



The walking and mapping exercise was followed by a group mapping workshop. The workshop started with the participants reflecting on their walk. The students noted that it was interesting to map a walk some of them take almost daily and put into writing their experience. Some students also pointed out that the walk highlighted things they walk by every day but never noticed. They also spoke intensively about the blockage of the drainage system in the rainy season. The normal 20-minute walk to UNZA changes to over a 90-minute walk around Kalingalinga and UNZA because of seasonal flooding.

Other partners highlighted the lack of any pedestrian infrastructure, from sidewalks to street lights to shade or litter bins. They expressed how small interventions can improve the walking experience significantly. The discussions also touched on how the Kalingalinga area was the only lively area with mixed-use development, yet it remained the poorest area with regard to infrastructure. All this information is mapped, and the collective notes are documented.



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The Collective Map

Common Observations

UNZA (inside UNZA and fields)

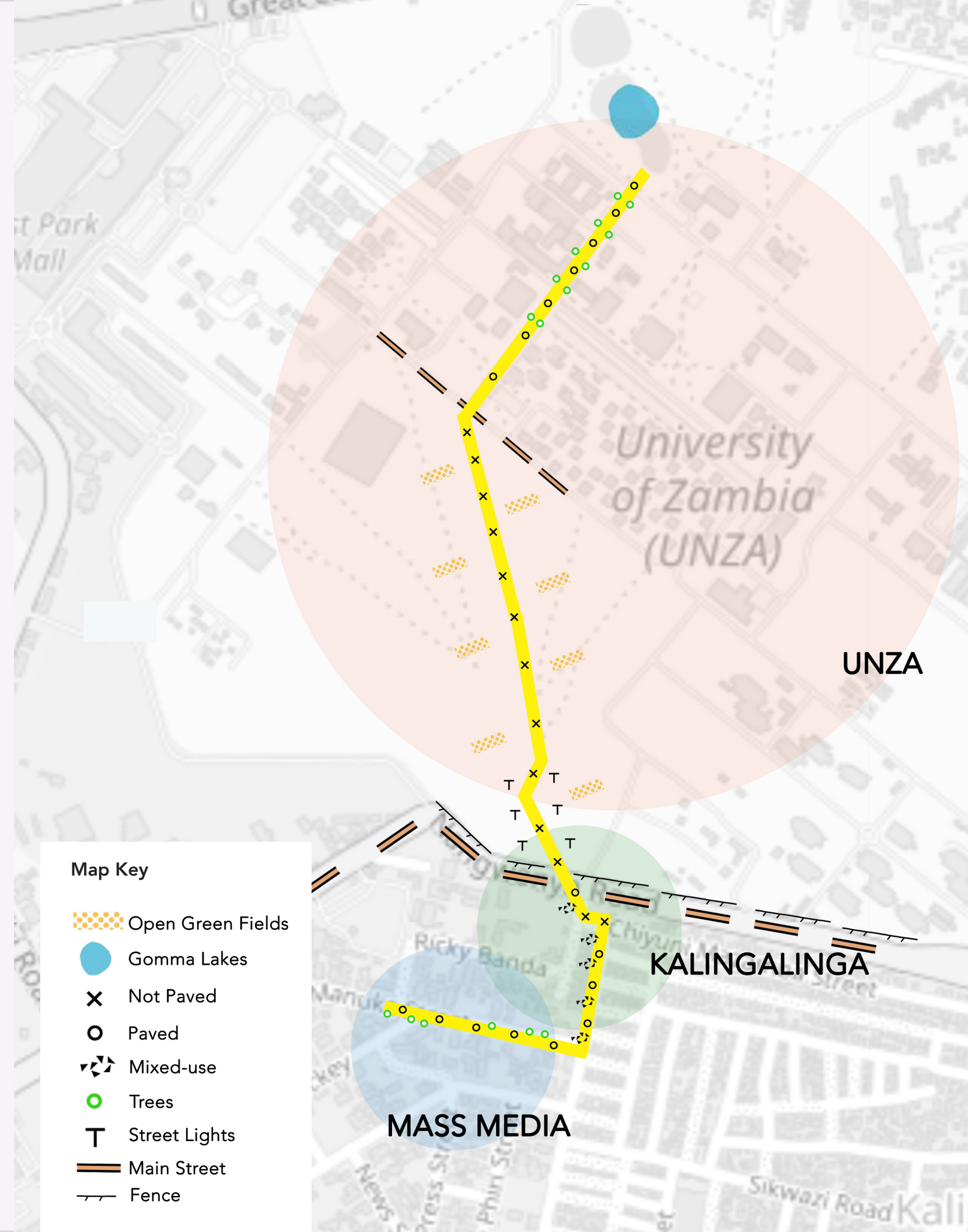
- Inside UNZA, there were no appropriately paved walkways
- Paths in the UNZA fields are mostly pedestrian-created
- Most of the UNZA fields paths don't have streetlights
- Most routes are shared by pedestrians and cars
- The back entrance to UNZA is poorly managed

Kalingalinga:

- Makeshift seller stands have led to drainage problems
- Blocked drains led to water damage on roads
- No cyclist paths
- No clear road markings
- No roads maintenance
- No street signs
- Stagnant water
- Poor waste management
- Mixed-use development

Mass Media:

- Better drainage systems than Kalingalinga (no stagnant water)
- No street signs, light traffics
- No trash bins, shade, or places to sit
- No sidewalks or pathways
- No mixed-use or any street vendors





UNZA Students Walk & Write

UNZA students who were part of the walk were invited to give feedback and contribute to the publication with their opinions and writings.





Chilufya Issac Kumwenda

Second Year - School of Natural Sciences

In the University, the road conditions were not fully maintained, though conducive for vehicles to use. These roads, however, had very few traffic signs, sidewalks, and streetlights that were not fully implemented in all roads used by the students.

In Kalingalinga, the roads used did not have well-maintained drainage systems, no traffic signs, and no sidewalks. As the area is densely settled with poor infrastructure planning, inadequate road maintenance and drainage systems, as well as dumping of waste materials, have created an environment where disease can spread easily.

In Mass Media, the roads were well maintained, and pedestrian sidewalks were well separated from the road, unlike the narrow roads of Kalingalinga. The drainage systems and infrastructure conditions were good compared to Kalingalinga, reducing the chances of road accident occurrences in the area.

As the walk was conducted, the infrastructure conditions of UNZA, Kalingalinga, and Mass Media areas varied, with Kalingalinga having the poorest road conditions for pedestrians and most drainage problems. UNZA and Mass Media had the most conducive road conditions to safeguard pedestrians and better drainage systems.

Proper sensitization of the local people to improve road safety and how to manage well waste materials could be conducted. This would give the people a chance to understand the importance of having favorable infrastructure conditions, which in turn safeguard their livelihoods and health in a densely populated area.

The walk was a real eye-opener in highlighting the environmental flaws and all that is needed to create sustainable pedestrian walking environments.



Isaac Lukwesa

Second year - School of Natural Sciences

The walk with CCI was really enlightening. Many things were observed and in my article I will try to go over the most notable points

1. No sidewalks

Most roads in school premises and the Kalingalinga area don't have sidewalks. The absence of sidewalks is dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers. This manifests in many negative effects on mobility. Most students know there is an increased risk of being hit by passing vehicles. Drivers driving too close to the edge of the road increase the risk of collisions with other vehicles, pedestrians, or cyclists. The walking experience, in general, is not pleasant, always choosing whether to look over one's shoulder for cars or to look downwards to avoid potholes and other hazards. People with disabilities or mobility issues find it difficult to move around safely. Almost all the roads in Kalingalinga and around UNZA lack road signs or traffic lights.

2. Poor drainage systems

As students, we know how the roads become in the rainy season. Floods fill up Kalingalinga, preventing many students from getting to UNZA and residents from getting to their jobs. During the walk (done in the dry season) we could observe one of the reasons the flooding happens, the poor maintenance of drainage systems. The clogged drainage systems create still water which can cause outbreaks of diseases like malaria.

Foreign objects, grease and fat buildup, and debris like leaves and twigs can accumulate in outdoor drainage systems, causing blockages. Structural damage and a lack of regular maintenance, such as cleaning and inspection of drainage systems, also contribute to blockages. Including human behavior, natural causes, and environmental factors.



3. Litter and garbage

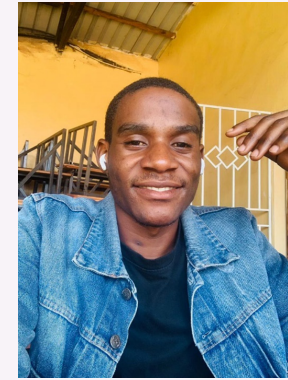
The most significant observation was that the area was littered with garbage, plastic bottles, cigarette butts, food wrappers, and other trash. Poor garbage dumping and littering also harm the environment by releasing toxins and chemicals into the soil and water, leading to long-term environmental damage.



4. Safety is an Issue

UNZA has poor security that allows almost anyone to access UNZA premises. Students experience an increased risk of violence, theft, and property damage from outsiders coming illegally into UNZA. This poses significant financial and emotional consequences for the school and its community. Incidents of harassment, assault, or abduction are common, especially to students who stay outside school. This can negatively impact students' academic performance, as they feel unsafe or distracted by security concerns.

It is essential for schools to prioritize the safety and security of their community by implementing appropriate security measures, such as surveillance cameras, security personnel, secure entrances, and emergency response plans, and by installing street lights around the school area. Schools should also educate the community on the importance of safety and security and encourage them to report security concerns or incidents.



The walk with the Charter Cities Institute was an eye-opener. There are many things that have to be improved for the safety of pedestrians. Among those things are street lights, litter, and other wastes which are dumped in the drainage system, especially in Kalingalinga. The roads in Kalingalinga are too narrow to be used by motorists and pedestrians together. Drainages are blocked by wastes which makes water stagnant, and blocked water in the rainy season causes flooding. I look forward to seeing the best we can do to solve the problems that we local pedestrians face.

Emmanuel Mwape — Fourth Year — School of Natural Sciences

Taking a walk with Charter Cities Institute exposed me to the stark reality of pedestrians' infrastructure challenges. From plastic pollution in drainage systems to the absence of street lights and the high density of vendors along the roads, it was an eye-opening experience. Despite the identified hurdles, the walk was still interesting, albeit the need to ensure safe crossroads for pedestrians cannot be overemphasized.



Njavwa Sifuniso — Second Year — School of Natural Sciences

The walk was successful, and the road that was observed was from UNZA to Mass Media. Kalingalinga was rated as the poorest in terms of road infrastructure. In conclusion, it was observed that the road does not accommodate pedestrians in general. A lot can be done at the national level to factor in pedestrians, as they represent the majority of road users.



Abel Chikasa — Second Year — School of Natural Sciences

Partners Walk & Write

Partners were invited to give feedback and opinions on the walk.

Our roads are predominantly designed for vehicles, with pedestrians and cyclists competing to use the same space. Pedestrian walkways appear to be an afterthought which is unfortunate as planning for the mobility of road users must be resilient, inclusive, and safe.

Busiku Sulwe — President — Zambia Institute of Planners



Lusaka's compounds would certainly be viewed as slums by Americans, and I was told that many Zambians view them this way. But to me, they're not that bad.

The downside is that a lack of collective action from private and public sector alike has led to service failure: crime, dangerous electrical setups, dumping, clogged storm drains, etc.

Their upside is the extreme mixing of uses, driven by market forces, meaning the neighborhood is walkable, convenient, and desirable. On that last point - desirability - note the gentrification and escalation of rents in the compound we walked through.

I find similar upward trends in other informal settlements throughout Africa and Latin America.

Scott Beyer — Market Urbanism Report



So Where Are the Sidewalks? Road Safety in Lusaka

Vanessa Wematu Akibate
AfYWL Fellow: Communications Unit
United Nations Development Programme

CCI invited UNDP Zambia to collaborate on a research and policy project to improve walkability in Lusaka. On Friday, the 14th, we attended a routes co-design workshop where we discussed various aspects of the project and its outcomes. The next week, we were ready to do the first walk together and kick-start this project.

Armed with clipboards, pencils, and maps, UNDP Zambia's 10km Project and its Accelerator Labs joined the Charter Cities Institute's Lusaka Urban Lab for a co-mapping walk and workshop. We joined the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, Zambia Institute of Planners, and students and staff of the University of Zambia, among others. We walked from the University of Zambia, down through a man-made pathway out of the school, into Kalingalinga, and then into Mass Media, ending at a quaint little coffee shop run by a chicken – more on that later.

The walk was pleasant and refreshing. Living in the heart of Lusaka, I depend on using cars and Ride-share applications to move through the city. When I first arrived in the city, I was itching to get a scooter and a cycle. Still, I was swiftly convinced otherwise by several warners, touting, "Lusaka is not really pedestrian-friendly". While there are not many sidewalks and lights in the evening, I wish I had taken this advice with a grain of salt because while there may be work to be done to improve the usability of the roads for non-motorized transport, the walk was quite pleasant. The air was clear, I learned a lot about the city and its citizens, and feeling the sun on my skin was great.

Regarding the infrastructural conditions, a few key hazards and interruptions were spotted throughout the walking tour that regular walkers likely encounter daily. One is the lack of street lights. A few solar-powered street lights within the University's premises disappeared on the man-made path out of the school, making a brief appearance along the side of the busy Nangwenya road, then disappearing again as soon as we entered the densest part of the walking tour – Kalingalinga market.

There were also shallow, open gutters that, according to the students who use the path daily, are prone to flooding. It leaves this walking route nearly unusable during the rainy season. One student shared that her typical 20–30-minute walk down this path into and out of campus turns into an hour/hour and a half long walk around the path during the rainy season.

In the height of summer, the students, workers, and other road users brave the scorching sun to make it to their classes, places of work, and errands. Outside of Mass Media, the suburb that sandwiches the Kalingalinga market, the rest of the path featured no forms of shade. Shelter covers and trees were only found in Mass Media, even the guard outside the gate of UNZA carried his own umbrella.

Considering that the selected path is patronized by students of the University of Zambia as one of the most popular routes in and out of campus, this route is one of the key walking routes in the city. The daily users of that path must be protected from the weather, crime and road accidents.

Also, where are the sidewalks?

Moving laterally through into the school towards lecture halls, other college facilities, and nowhere else. Pedestrians walked on the shoulders of roads that had them and on plain old car-thudded tarmacs in most other instances. There was also a prominence of pedestrian-made footpaths, which had been there since before –, when a colleague of mine attended the University herself. Although popular amongst road users for years and used frequently by non-motorists moving through the city, these pathways feature no infrastructural modifications.

Altogether, the walk was enlightening. It is generally easy to move through the city, and much of the Zambian population does. But since walking is healthy for individuals, sustainable for the planet, and clearly the popular and sometimes necessary choice for Zambians, what can be done to make it safer and more dependable for all involved?

At the last stop of the walk – a café run by hens– the group gathered over a large map of the walking path, pointing out opportunities for further infrastructural improvements. The group pointed out that more solar-powered lights would be helpful for road users at night, and more lanes specifically dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists would make the movements of pedestrians more comfortable and safer to use. Further, sensitization efforts are also needed to ensure that motorists are alert to the fact that the road is shared with walkers and riders and to encourage mutual respect for all road users.

In tight areas like the narrow streets of the Kalingalinga markets, I would even go as far as to say these areas could be sealed off for only walking and riding entries to prevent accidents and blockages and create more spaces that encourage non-motorized transport use.

In light of the upcoming Road Safety Week, the 10km Project and the Accelerator Labs are working on ways in which the partnerships they have and can have with think tanks, Civil Society Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisation, and the Government of Zambia can be extended to advocate for the safe use of roads for both walkers, riders, and drivers. This walk is a step in the grander scale of efforts the Country Office is executing to make to ensure that the 88% of pedestrians in Zambia can have access to cities, towns, and communities with roads that reflect their needs and respond to the current livelihoods.

As the week draws nearer, the UNDP Zambia Country Office is preparing to roll out a series of advocacy and awareness-raising activities to demonstrate the importance of balanced urban planning that reflects Zambian's movements through dense areas with mixed land use and its quatter sub-urban sections and to communicate the need to scale interventions that can improve road-safety for non-motorized road users.

Now to the part of this story, I am sure you are most interested in learning about how a chicken runs a café? Well, that may have been a slight over-exaggeration. Henrietta the Chicken is a pretty vivacious hen owned by the managers of the Mocha Puddle – the last stop on the walking tour. On an average day, you can find her confidently strutting up and down the café, engaging guests and making her presence known. Henrietta, and her cat brothers – Nutmeg and Muskat –keep the café's guests entertained and smiling to allow their owners to focus on baking delicious brownies and cookies for the people of Lusaka.

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