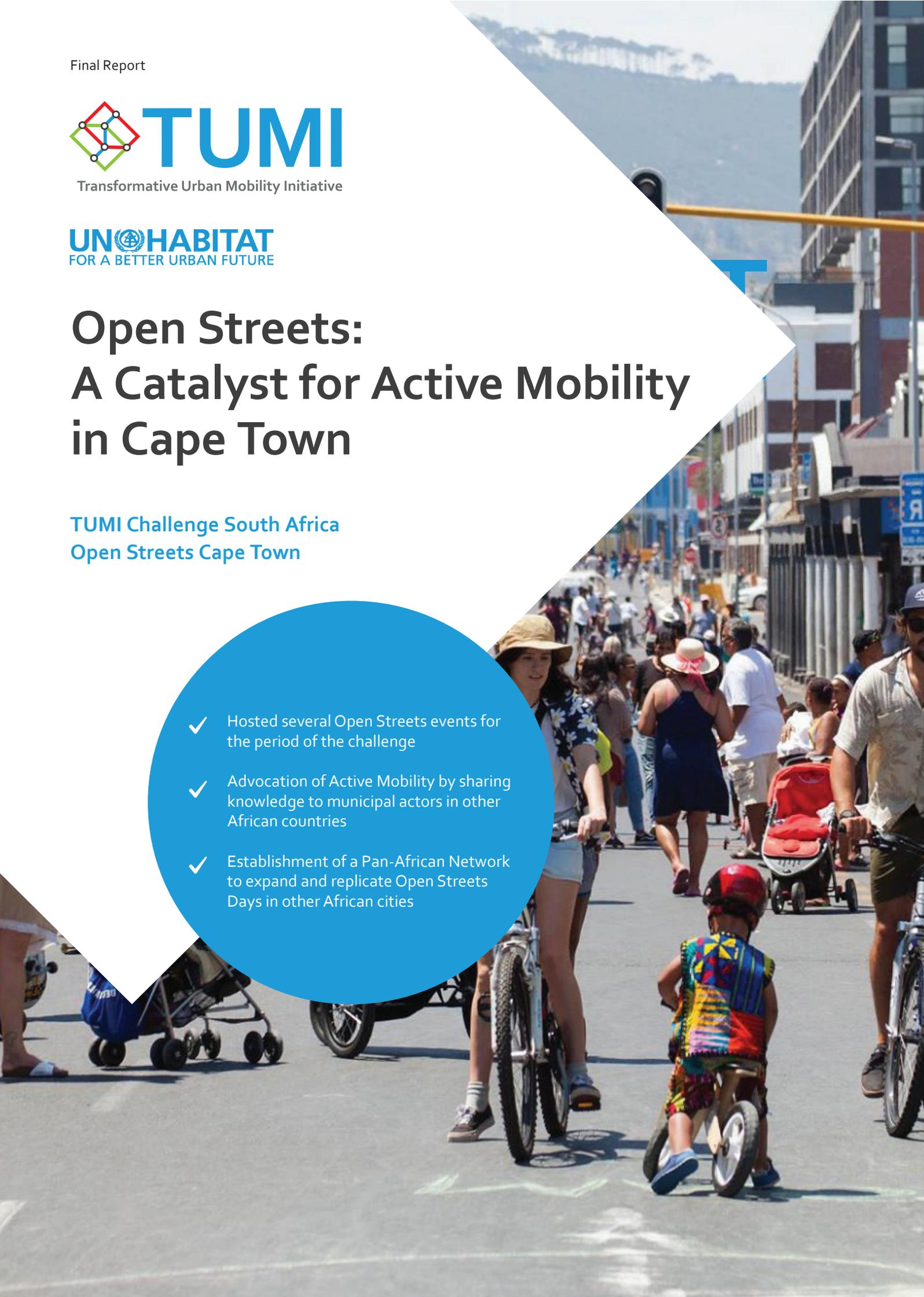




# Open Streets: A Catalyst for Active Mobility in Cape Town

TUMI Challenge South Africa  
Open Streets Cape Town

- ✓ Hosted several Open Streets events for the period of the challenge
- ✓ Advocation of Active Mobility by sharing knowledge to municipal actors in other African countries
- ✓ Establishment of a Pan-African Network to expand and replicate Open Streets Days in other African cities



Cape Town  
Population:  
434,000 Urban +  
3,700,000 Rural

# Executive Summary

Many cities in Africa are known for traffic congestion, road fatalities, air pollution, social disparity, exclusion, and the lack of attractive and safe public spaces. Reimagining streets as places for people to safely move, meet, interact, and play, can make a city more socially integrated. Well-designed streets can be a platform for community building, recreation, active mobility, and improving accessibility of public space will make cities more inclusive and equitable.

Open Streets Days, a temporary network of car-free streets, are proven people-centered tools that do just that.

The concept of "Ciclovias" from Latin America has been successfully tested and further developed in Cape Town by Open Streets Cape Town (OSCT). Based on OSCT's track record and close relationship with local government, TUMI selected OSCT to showcase practical examples of tactical urbanism, share knowledge with and inspire other African city officials to initiate similar efforts in their home cities.



ACTIVE  
MOBILITY



OCTOBER 2018 -  
MAY 2019

## The Process

The project was structured in several activities:

- Open Streets Days takes place the last Sunday of every month during the period of the Challenge.
- Street Indaba hosted a large gathering themed Placing Children at the Centre, focusing on how children experience the streets in our cities, and what responses were required to improve that. The event took place in Langa, the oldest township in the Western Cape. The Street Indaba aimed to bring together those working to make streets child-friendly in Cape Town.
- Input from this event helped inform the design and communications around the rest of the Open Streets Days series, placing a more deliberate focus on giving children a bigger stage. It also helped strengthen relationships with local organizations.
- Open Streets Exchange for African Cities took place in October 2018, with 19 participants from 11 countries across Africa and representatives from the Exchange's co-hosts UN-Habitat and GIZ. The Exchange proved to be a deeply profound learning experience for all participants.
- This gathering aimed to facilitate a practical knowledge exchange amongst individuals working in mobility and transport and create a platform to explore the potential of Open Streets and similar initiatives in other African cities.

## Outcomes/Impacts

- The Challenge contributed to creating more vibrant streets and public spaces, particularly in marginalized areas of Cape Town, to improve accessibility, air quality, road safety, and overall quality of life for all urban residents. It helped create a new mindset about movement on city streets and streets as public spaces. The Challenge facilitated creating a network with other African cities to share experiences and generate new knowledge. This happened at different levels:
  - Internationally: The most important legacy of the Challenge is the launch of an Open Streets network for African cities, which continues to work and support each other to facilitate Open Streets activities. Furthermore, the Challenge has planted the seed to create new bridges with Latin America initiatives to expand the knowledge and develop avenues for exchange across the Global South. OSCT was invited to present at the annual congress of the Latin American Open Streets in Cali, Colombia, where the experience was lauded and widely shared on social media.
  - Locally: Open Streets days took place the last Sunday of every month in different locations: Woodstock, Bellville, the City Centre, Langa, and Mitchells Plain. Moreover, a resident's association in Cape Town initiated their own Open Streets program in a marginalized area called Grassy Park. The local impacts highlighted in
    - media coverage generated to a value of more than R 1 000 000
    - widespread participation by residents and collaborators
    - participation by and promotion through government officials
    - the organization of group bicycle rides or "bike buses" from different parts of the city
  - Regionally: OSCT has been consulted by other African cities, who started their own program, namely Addis Ababa/Ethiopia, Kampala/Uganda, and Nairobi/Kenya.
  - Nationally: The Transport Department in Johannesburg sent two representatives to the Open Streets Exchange who participated actively in the roll-out of an Open Streets Day in Johannesburg with a local school and are currently planning on its growth.



#### Contact

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#### On behalf and funded by



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#### Status

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## Major Challenges & Key Lessons Learned

The Open Streets TUMI Challenge has highlighted the importance of having a long-term view of this type of initiative. In Cape Town, specifically, politics at the city level have had a direct bearing on the development of the program. The various and unexpected changes inside the government (e.g., the transport department was completely transformed) in the last two years have made it extra challenging to land the program and develop the required relationships.

Organizational development: internal changes in leadership proved to be a significant challenge, and the resulting reduction in capacity reduced the organization's ability to deliver on all the activities proposed.

Sustained funding: considering the long-term nature of the work, an increase in funding of this level for a small organization is a crucial injection to help accelerate programs. However, the short term nature of the engagement makes it difficult to maintain the level of engagement and activity once the funding comes to an end.

## Potential for Scaling & Replicability

The network of African cities and decision-makers, which was established during the pilot project in Cape Town, entails great potential, enabling successful replication in other cities. Through the network, knowledge and best practices can be developed and shared. The concept of Open Streets and Car-free days has caught on throughout Africa and is catching up to the rest of the world. These sorts of actions are increasing evermore as the citizens of cities fight to regain space taken from cars.

With a mechanism to allow vendors and others to earn a living and the people of the cities to get out, there is a tremendous potential in the future. The Corona lockdowns have changed people's attitudes and behavior towards non-motorized means of transport (NMT). With the right guidelines/distancing, Open Streets across Africa can give citizens space and opportunity to gather in a safe place and retake the streets from cars.

TUMI is the leading global implementation initiative on sustainable urban mobility formed through the union of 11 prestigious partners.

More here: [transformative-mobility.org](https://transformative-mobility.org)