

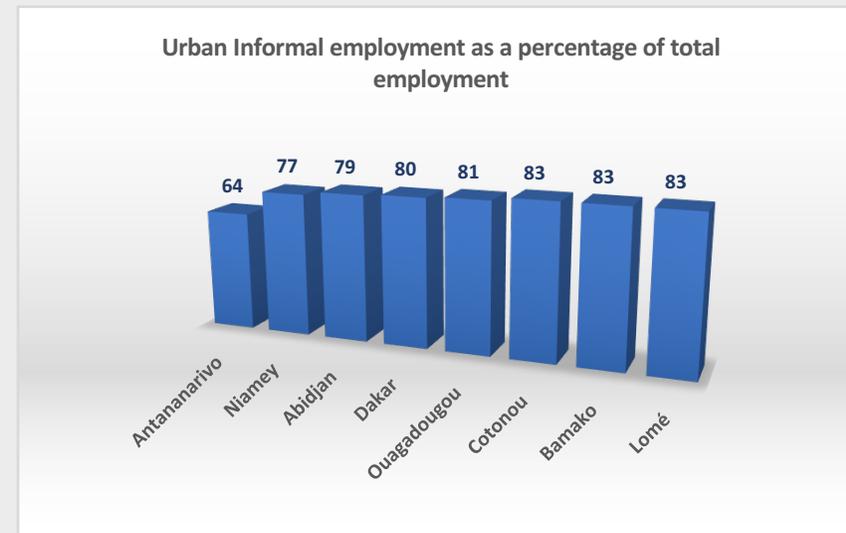
# Informality and Urban Planning in Africa

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## Extent of informality

- **Informal work:** Most people who work outside of agriculture in the Global South, work in the informal economy. In Africa, 86% of employment is informal (Bonnett, 2017).



- **Informal settlements:** Globally, 1 in every 8 people live in a slum. In urban SSA, 1 in every 2 people live informally.

# Governance and planning limit livelihoods

- Planning systems – detailed planning laws inherited from the colonial era embody European visions of a ‘modern’ city: order, cleanliness, mono-functional neighbourhoods.
- On the ground realities – informality everywhere. Planning rationales used to remove informal settlements and traders, to ‘modernise’, ‘restore order’ and ‘clean-up’.
- Across the continent, masterplans aspiring to ‘world class cities’ driven by property developers & urban land grabs.

# Kigali: Rwanda

80% Informal

Eviction to make way  
for new master plan

New vision



# Kigali: Master plan adopted in 2008



# 'Hope City' Accra



# Future Lagos



‘Conventional  
wisdoms’ of  
planning need  
to change

- Informal workers must have the right to work in public space.
- Regard homes as workspaces.
- Informal food trade contribution to urban food security.
- Informal operators improve urban sustainability through waste collection and recycling.
- Planning curricula needs a radical overhaul.
- Planning processes can learn from co-production.

# Implications for planning practice

- Gap between the needs of those working informally and the expertise of those charged with planning and management of informal work places and spaces.
- Informal workers have specific and differentiated locational and service requirements.
- Critically, their activities fit in different ways into value chains.
- Any intervention must involve, careful consideration of what is currently there and why.
- Planning needs to be participatory.

We are suggesting a fundamentally different approach to planning practice – bottom up, incremental, flexible, economically conversant and acutely aware of, and informed by, the specific context and power dynamics.

This suggests a new cohort of planning practitioners who are willing (and brave enough) to try out new approaches.



## Implications for future research

Detailed case study work filtering  
into four processes:

1. Urban theory building from the 'South'
2. Changing planning laws
3. Training a new cohort of urban planners / practitioners
4. Cross disciplinary work between planning and development studies / economics.