

LEARNING FROM THE CITY

British Red Cross Urban Learning Project Scoping Study



Acknowledgements

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
ACF	Action Contre le Faim
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EMI	Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
HEA	Household economy approach
HERR	Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (UK Government)
HES	Household economic security
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NDMA	National disaster management authority
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PASSA	Participatory approach for safe shelter awareness (IFRC)
RG MHCUA	IASC Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas
UN	United Nations
ULP	Urban Learning Project (British Red Cross)
UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessment (IFRC)

Executive summary

Every day, more than 100,000 people move to slums in the developing world – that's one person every second. Nearly 1.5 billion people currently live in informal settlements and slums without adequate access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation. Many are at risk of hurricanes, cyclones, flooding, earthquakes and epidemics, as well as crime, fires and industrial accidents. Some cities have a growing potential for violence, relating to criminality, elections or political conflict. However, many increasingly offer sanctuary to those fleeing conflict, persecution and insecurity in rural areas.

It is, therefore, clear that urban areas should be a significant and growing centre of humanitarian concern. Humanitarian action, however, has traditionally had a rural focus, helping people in the countryside displaced by conflict or disasters. With over 50 per cent of the world's seven billion people living in urban areas, the face of human vulnerability is changing globally. While much work has been done on urban risk and vulnerability, the humanitarian sector has been slower to understand what this means operationally for agencies.

This scoping study is the first step for the British Red Cross and its partners in better understanding the challenges posed by humanitarian action in

urban areas, and how it might approach them more strategically. It is primarily intended for the British Red Cross' international division and its partners, although some of the general findings are also of relevance to other parts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), as well as to other humanitarian agencies, from those of the United Nations (UN) to international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The study sets out what works in urban areas, what is relevant to British Red Cross ways of working and, importantly, what is practical for staff. While drawing lessons from humanitarian programmes across the globe, the study focuses principally on evidence from five British Red Cross operational contexts: Haiti (Port-au-Prince), Uganda (Kampala and other cities), Djibouti (Djibouti-ville), Mongolia (Ulaanbataar) and Nepal (Kathmandu).

The study looks at the evolving nature of risk and vulnerability in urban areas relating to natural hazards, urban violence and conflict, markets and livelihoods, health and water, sanitation and hygiene, and shelter, land and the built environment.

Not only is the nature and scale of risk changing in urban areas, but exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes, landslides and floods may be compounded

 **Destruction of urban settlements, Port-au-Prince, Haiti** (© British Red Cross Society)



by other, man-made hazards in urban areas, such as fire in overcrowded settlements or technological disasters and chemical spills. In many places where the British Red Cross currently works, and is likely to work in the future, disasters most often occur when other risks and compounding factors are also present, such as violence and inequality. Indeed, urban violence is now a major issue in many contexts, particularly in Latin American countries such as Honduras and El Salvador, which both have higher homicide rates than the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has undertaken groundbreaking work on the issue of urban violence in Latin America, while the British Red Cross has been working on the issue in East Africa through its support to the Uganda Red Cross Society in preparing for election-related violence in urban areas.

The study, however, goes beyond disasters, conflict and violence to look at ‘everyday risks’. For most people ‘everyday risks’ – for example, the risk of not getting enough to eat, not being able to pay to go to the doctor, sewage flowing in the street or an uncontrolled fire ripping through the slums – are far more significant than disasters. Indeed, in the British Red Cross’ work with the Nepal Red Cross Society in preparing for earthquakes, the more frequent emergencies experienced by people – such as fire, flash flooding, epidemics, storm damage, water shortages and landslides – seemed ‘more real’ for communities.

Vulnerability in urban areas is heightened by inadequate and/or unstable income (often with problems of indebtedness), high unemployment, the need for cash to meet basic needs in urban markets, and inadequate, unstable or risky asset bases. Moreover, health risks such as epidemics, including influenza, typhoid, gastro-intestinal diseases and cholera can become concentrated in densely-packed cities where populations expand beyond the capacity of the public health system. In addition, the built environment can be a major source of vulnerability, with poor choice of construction systems and building materials as well as poor design and workmanship leading to significant risk of disaster. Further, people’s land and tenure rights, or lack thereof, can make them even more vulnerable. Cities also have a higher percentage of people renting, squatting or living in slums, and this can make it more complicated to determine the appropriate humanitarian response to an urban disaster. In urban areas, agencies will inevitably find themselves in difficult discussions about land rights, the role of landlords and legal protection for landless people.

The operational implications of these challenges for the British Red Cross, the Movement and the wider humanitarian sector are examined in detail in this study. It highlights **five ways forward for the British Red Cross:**

- 1) sharpening context analysis and assessments
- 2) understanding cash and markets better

3) engaging and communicating with complex communities

4) adapting to the challenges of land and the built environment

5) engaging with urban systems and partnering with local groups and institutions.

Red Cross staff interviewed for the study emphasised the importance of taking time to understand the urban context. They often reiterated that resources deployed up front on **context analysis and high quality assessments** can prove vital in ensuring programmes are effective, particularly given the relative novelty of urban operations to many staff and the dynamic nature of urban areas. On assessments, interviewees noted that the use of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ (the Federation) participatory approach for safe shelter awareness (PASSA) in Haiti was very successful, particularly in ensuring not only a participatory but also an accountable approach.

Many evaluations of urban responses have highlighted the importance of recognising the **role of cash in urban areas**, as people depend more on goods and services than on producing their own food or fetching water, for example. The British Red Cross has built up experience in cash and livelihoods programmes in recent responses in China, Haiti, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The study, however, highlights particular challenges for cash transfer programmes in urban areas, especially in terms of identifying and targeting the most vulnerable,

as seen in the British Red Cross' economic security programme in the peri-urban slums of Djibouti-ville, for example.

In urban areas people often have multiple livelihood strategies. Therefore the use of tools such as the British Red Cross' household economic security (HES) approach, which involves identifying (geographical) livelihoods zones for analysis, assessment and targeting is particularly challenging in urban areas. Even when there are clear groups, such as internally displaced persons or refugees, political and ethnic tensions may prevent these groups from identifying themselves. Gaining the trust of such groups, through a strong understanding of and sensitivity to local and national political and conflict dynamics, is essential to ensure the most vulnerable are not missed. The current situation inside Syria highlights the complexities of urban displacement and targeting, with people living with host families, in schools, public buildings, parks and mosques and often displaced more than once.

Whether the programme is a large earthquake response, a medium-term recovery operation or involves longer-term preparedness or risk reduction activities, **understanding the community**, and engaging with a representative range of stakeholders in a sophisticated and sensitive way, is vital to its success. It is also important that the British Red Cross is accountable to beneficiaries. Urban residents may be difficult to categorise as they may have different, overlapping identities. They may live in one neighbourhood but commute as a

daily labourer into another part of the city. Recognising that people in cities use their time differently is also important. Investment in information management technology and capacity is often critical here. In Haiti, for example, the Haiti Red Cross Society and the Federation, in partnership with telecommunications firm Trilogy International, are creating an interactive communication platform using SMS and interactive voice response technology to enhance accountability to affected communities.

Since the 2004 Asian tsunami, there has been recognition that getting shelter solutions right is a very important element of humanitarian response and recovery, without which successes in other areas such as livelihoods and health will be more limited. Yet after a disaster, in the absence of increased reconstruction and development investment, the typical temporary shelter solutions may be stretched in an effort to make them last for years, with miserable results for the families living with them. Building on its leadership of the global shelter cluster in disaster situations, the Federation has done much to highlight the need for more sustainable approaches to shelter reconstruction in urban areas. Indeed, it is vital that shelter solutions in urban areas build resilience rather than undermining it.

The related issue of **land tenure is often critical in urban areas**, and navigating legal and political systems is important in ensuring the success of an urban shelter programme. Land tenure issues were among the biggest

challenges faced by the British Red Cross team in Haiti. While the Federation, British Red Cross and other National Societies have been developing their work on sustainable reconstruction, they also recognise that there are legal barriers to the provision of equitable emergency and transitional shelter. Under the leadership of the Federation's disaster law programme, Red Cross legal experts have been examining the legal barriers to shelter, the impact on vulnerable people and some potential solutions.

The ways forward sketched out above on situational analysis and needs assessments, better understanding of markets, the complexity of communities and the challenges of the land and built environment lead to the wider conclusion that humanitarian agencies **need to better understand and engage with urban systems**, and in turn partner with local groups and institutions. Recognising the likely scale of future urban disasters, our own limitations as a sector and the range of skills required to engage with issues such as urban violence, it is clear that partnership is essential to ensuring effective response in urban areas. For the Movement, it is vital that engagement with those outside the humanitarian sector does not undermine adherence to the fundamental principles, or perceptions thereof. That said, it cannot be ignored that local governments, not to mention national disaster management authorities (NDMAs), have a particularly important role in urban disaster management and should be a key contact point.

Some authors have called for a new, area-based method of co-ordination in urban settings. Such an approach is appealing given the general absence of many potential partners, such as the private sector, from the cluster system convened by the UN Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This approach, dubbed the integrated neighbourhood approach, was taken by the British Red Cross in Haiti. A geographic approach linked to urban systems is not without problems, such as knowing where a humanitarian mandate ends and that of development and government agencies begins, and what to do if state and development partners fail to meet the basic needs of vulnerable people. However, if well managed, such an approach provides a significant opportunity for a more joined-up response from government agencies (including civil defence, emergency services, line ministries and service providers), the private sector and civil society.

Given the heightened risks and vulnerabilities that accompany urbanisation, improving the appropriateness, quality, reach and impact of humanitarian action in urban areas is essential to saving and protecting countless lives and livelihoods. The study, however, highlights that while agencies need to adapt to meet the challenge of humanitarian action in urban areas, urbanisation does not change everything. The fundamentals of good programmes, such as high-quality contextual analysis and assessments, are common to both rural and urban areas. Yet, given the increasing scale of the humanitarian challenge in urban areas, there is a significant need for

strategic planning and institutional adaptation. British Red Cross staff and other humanitarian workers can draw on the five ways forward identified in the study and the practical tools included in Appendix 2 to help them progress this agenda. The study also highlights the importance of the urban challenge for the future of humanitarian action, and the need for more in-depth learning going forward. To this end, Appendix 3 contains a series of recommendations to improve learning within the British Red Cross, the Movement and the wider humanitarian sector.

1. Introduction

The British Red Cross Urban Learning Project

The purpose of the Urban Learning Project (ULP) is to improve understanding within the British Red Cross and the wider humanitarian sector of humanitarian action in urban areas. The first year of the project (2012) involved the development of the present scoping study. The project focuses on issues that relate directly to the British Red Cross' experience, ways of working and programme approaches. It does not take into account all issues relating to humanitarian action in urban areas. It is intended for the British Red Cross international division and its partners, although many of the general findings are likely to be relevant to other parts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian agencies.

Current and planned outputs of the ULP include:

- > the present scoping study
- > a series of external speakers on urban issues at British Red Cross' UK Office (2011-2013)¹
- > incorporation of project learning into future British Red Cross training of logistics, HES and mass sanitation module (MSM) specialists
- > at least two country case studies in 2013, going into greater analytical depth and providing further evidence on the key issues identified in this study.

The ULP will distil some of the key lessons learned from the British Red Cross, other humanitarian agencies, and policy and research organisations

“Given that urban settings are the future location for many humanitarian interventions, it is important to continue nurturing an attitude of reflection, innovation and flexibility in order to establish the most effective operational response possible.”

Elena Lucchi,
Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)

to continuously improve British Red Cross and Movement programmes in urban areas and better serve vulnerable populations according to the Red Cross mandate and fundamental principles.²

Study purpose and methodology

The scoping study is a first step for the British Red Cross and its partners in the Movement in understanding the challenges posed by urban areas, and how they might be approached more strategically. The methodology for the scoping study involved a review of the academic and not formally published literature on humanitarian action in urban areas as well as programme materials and organisational evaluations. To complement this, a review of tools relevant to urban areas and structured interviews with around 25 staff from the British Red Cross, the Movement and other agencies working on urban issues were also conducted.

While drawing lessons from humanitarian operations across the globe, the study focuses principally on evidence from five operational contexts: Haiti, Uganda, Djibouti, Mongolia and Nepal. The programmes in these countries include preparation for and response to urban disasters, violence, food

¹ Speakers to date include Mark Pelling, King's College London; Ignacio Cano, State University of Rio de Janeiro; and Simon Levine, Humanitarian Policy Group/Overseas Development Institute.

² The fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. For more information, please see <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/fundamental-principles-commentary-010179.htm>

insecurity, and health and social care. They cover large cities, such as Port-au-Prince, Kathmandu and Ulaanbaatar, and medium and smaller urban and peri-urban areas, such as those in Uganda and Djibouti. Further details of successes and challenges in three of these situations: Haiti, Uganda and Djibouti, are included in Appendix 1. It should be noted that a significant proportion of the learning that informs this study, and many of the recent studies within the sector, comes from Haiti, a disaster of such scale that it has distorted many efforts to take stock of the humanitarian sector in the last couple of years (Taylor et al 2012). However, what happened in Haiti provides important lessons about what works and what doesn't in humanitarian action in urban areas that should not be ignored.

British Red Cross ways of working

Our aim is for this project to be relevant across all British Red Cross international programmes. This is challenging given that the organisation operates in a diverse range of countries and contexts, and through a number of approaches. In rapid-onset disasters, British Red Cross disaster response is multilateral, within the context of the Movement. The Movement is made up of three components: the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 188 National Societies, of which the British Red Cross is one. The British Red Cross believes it can be most effective in rapid-onset crises by providing human or financial resources, or supplying goods and services such as non-food items and logistical support, as part of a co-ordinated Movement response. These resources may be co-ordinated by the Federation, the ICRC or directly by the affected host National Society, where it is able. Similar to other National Societies, the British Red Cross also maintains

a number of emergency response units in sectors where it has particular expertise, such as logistics, sanitation and household economic security, with staff and materials on standby in case of an emergency. The British Red Cross can also provide staff to the Federation's field assessment and co-ordination teams (FACT).

For large-scale disasters that require medium-term resources, the British Red Cross has developed a recovery approach, directly implementing programmes and activities. This involves deploying staff and resources over a fixed period of time and working in partnership with the National Society where possible, as well as with Movement partners. This approach has helped build up the British Red Cross' expertise in shelter. British Red Cross recovery programmes are often funded by a large appeal or an institutional donor such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

In around 20 countries, the British Red Cross employs a partnership development approach. This involves strategic and financial support over a number of years to a specific National Society, to help strengthen its preparation for and ability to respond to crises in its own communities. This approach focuses on working with volunteers and staff in the fields of health, water and sanitation, disaster risk reduction and supporting people's livelihoods. The British Red Cross also supports National Societies in their auxiliary role to government in emergency response, while abiding by the fundamental principles of the Movement.



2.The drive for better urban learning

There is serious concern about the scale of future humanitarian crises in urban areas and an understanding that the humanitarian sector needs to change in order to better serve vulnerable urban communities in the 21st century. The increasing awareness of climate change, and the development of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) as fields of expertise, has also contributed to widespread understanding of the need for good humanitarian planning for the future (Pelling 2010 and Pelling and Wisner 2008).

Humanitarian action has traditionally had a rural focus, helping people in the countryside displaced by conflict or disasters. Yet with over half of the world's seven billion people living in urban areas, the face of human vulnerability is changing. Recent humanitarian emergencies in urban areas such as the Bam earthquake in Iran in 2003, Hurricane Katrina in the USA in 2005, Kenya's election-related violence of 2007/8, ongoing armed conflict in Mogadishu, Somalia since 1992, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the conflict that started in Syria in 2012 are causing the humanitarian community to adapt its approaches to urban areas.

The Disasters Emergency Committee evaluation of the response to the Haiti earthquake recommended that humanitarian agencies should prepare now for the next three to five large-scale urban disasters likely to occur in the next ten years (Clermont et al 2011). The authors argued that this preparation should include developing staff understanding of the particularities, vulnerabilities and social systems of urban communities so that they are able to respond appropriately.

Some agencies are taking heed of this challenge. MSF, for example, recently decided that the central question was not 'if' they should respond in urban areas but 'how'. As Lucchi from MSF emphasises, people in urban areas that are affected by violence or marginalisation and neglect "appear to suffer the greatest number of severe threats to their health and well-being". (Lucchi 2012: 87).

But engaging in urban areas presents major challenges. Indeed, cities present new challenges for every phase of response – from vulnerability analysis to implementation through to evaluation. They test the established methods of programme management and decision-making. For example, groups working in urban areas may not be traditional partners for humanitarian agencies, who will increasingly have to deal with a whole range of stakeholders from local governments and city planners to private companies and gang members. As well as presenting challenges, cities also provide opportunities for better co-ordinated and more effective responses.⁴

Humanitarian organisations are now starting to grapple with the changes in approach that urban settings demand. Lessons are being learned and tools are being piloted by think tanks, inter-agency networks and individual organisations. For example, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) has played a leading role in recent years in building evidence of what works and what could be improved in responding to and recovering from crises in urban areas, particularly after the Haiti earthquake in January 2010. The network secretariat recently published an updated lessons paper on responding to urban disasters (Sanderson et al 2012). ALNAP and UN-HABITAT also recently launched a joint urban humanitarian

“ I walked around Kathmandu, seeing the buildings, the density, and imagined just how devastating an earthquake would be. To really prepare for that kind of disaster, at that scale, is a huge project of co-ordination, analysis, engineering and logistics. It took my breath away. ”

British Red Cross staff member, Nepal

⁴ These challenges and ways forward are discussed in detail in Section 4.

response portal,⁵ collecting key resources in a single place. In addition, the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute has carried out a series of case studies in seven urban centres in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, looking at forced displacement in urban areas.⁶ Groupe URD has also done a considerable amount of work on urban crises and responses.⁷

There have been many joint initiatives at the inter-agency level, loosely coordinated by the Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (RG MHCUA) for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Initiatives undertaken to date include the development of guidance on needs assessments, new partnerships in urban water and sanitation, and piloting of a rapid protection assessment toolkit. There has also been a Nairobi-based pilot initiative to develop a joint framework for partnerships and a multi-hazard response plan, supported by OCHA and the government of Kenya.

Many NGOs have pursued internal initiatives or joint humanitarian work in urban areas. They include:

- > MSF, Oxfam International, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children International and World Vision International, who have worked on developing their urban approaches
- > Action Contre le Faim (ACF) developing guidelines on food security in urban areas
- > the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) supporting research and inter-agency learning on cash transfer programming in urban areas.⁸

The British Red Cross has engaged in the majority of the initiatives listed in this section, particularly the CaLP, the work of the Global Shelter Cluster, ALNAP's learning reviews and the IASC RG MHCUA.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian action in urban areas

The Movement includes National Societies in 188 countries. It has been involved in every major humanitarian response in recent times, including many urban emergencies. The Movement has also been involved in global discussions on meeting the challenge of humanitarian action in urban areas in ad hoc ways. The World Disasters Report 2010, produced for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, focussed on urban risk, providing an important and timely contribution to wider debate in the humanitarian sector (McClellan et al 2010). The ICRC has also recently focussed on humanitarian crises in urban centres. This has led to pilot work in cities, particularly in Latin America, where civilians are experiencing high levels of violence, displacement and/or a lack of, or obstructed access to, healthcare.⁹ Reflecting the ICRC's recent work on urban violence, in 2010, the International Review of the Red Cross published an issue on the subject (Harroff-Tavel 2010), with some astute observations about changing patterns of vulnerability and humanitarian access. One of the four themes discussed at the Inter-American Red Cross Conference in March 2012 was urban risk and preventing urban violence.

Movement members have been active in the IASC RG MHCUA. The Federation has co-convened the Global Shelter Cluster, and has recently produced a new handbook on shelter and reconstruction in urban areas (Schneider et al 2011; see also Box 9). There have also been Federation initiatives in food security, and the commissioning of a study by the Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI) on

⁵ See www.urban-response.org

⁶ See <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/search.asp?database=resources&theme=406>

⁷ See http://www.urd.org/spip.php?page=mot&id_mot=40&lang=en

⁸ See also Appendix 2 on 'Tools for humanitarian action in urban areas'.

⁹ See Box 2 on the ICRC's activities in urban areas.

building urban resilience in the Asia Pacific Region, leading to a workshop on 13 April 2012 (EMI 2012). There was also strong representation from the Movement at the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum in Naples in September 2012.¹⁰

The British Red Cross and humanitarian action in urban areas

Internationally, the British Red Cross works in a range of rural, urban and peri-urban environments. It has documented its work in around 15 urban areas in recent years. As demonstrated by this paper, the organisation is trying to collect better evidence on what works, what doesn't and why, as well as what successful innovations might be replicated in other areas.

However, it is commonly felt that the British Red Cross has the same 'rural bias' that the wider humanitarian sector has. In the international division's learning events, the British Red Cross has repeatedly highlighted the need to do more to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies in urban areas. The mid-term review of its operations in Haiti recommended that resources should be allocated to in-depth learning on urban approaches, particularly to the development of tools for more effective recovery programmes. The review suggested that such tools should cover engagement with urban communities as well as programmes supporting livelihoods, and those providing water and sanitation and shelter. They should also be shared widely, inside and outside the Movement.

¹⁰ For more information see <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=672>

 **Urban resident, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**
(© British Red Cross Society)



3. Urbanisation: trends and challenges

Understanding 'urban' and 'urbanisation'

There is no one definition of urbanisation or urban. Different countries and institutions describe these concepts using different quantitative measures such as population density, reliance on a cash economy (as opposed to natural resources and agriculture) or levels of infrastructure and services provided, such as electricity, banking and transport.

Yet it is important to see the links between different types of urban, urbanising, peri-urban and rural areas, in order to better understand people's movements and livelihood options. It is important not to force a strict divide between 'urban' and 'rural', as people's lives do not fall into such neat categories. Research by ACF in Guinea, Zimbabwe and Guatemala, for example, found that the links and interdependencies between rural and urban communities were an important part of people's ability to weather food insecurity in times of shock or stress (Vaitla 2012).

Urbanisation is the process of change that constitutes the movement of people from rural areas to cities, towns or the peripheries of cities. Looking at the scale and speed of urbanisation today (see Box 1), it is clear that it is redefining human civilisation and its relationship with the planet (International Human Dimensions Programme cited in Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke 2012). Urbanisation is driven by many factors relating to migration and patterns of human settlement. Indeed, the presence of the humanitarian sector in cities can be one of those factors, as seen in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example (Büscher and Vlassenroot 2010).

Responding to urban risk and vulnerability

While recent literature focuses on the risk of disasters in urban areas (see, for example, Dodman et al 2012), for most people the 'everyday risks' are far more significant – for example, the risk of not getting enough to eat, not being able to pay to go to the doctor, sewage flowing in the street or an uncontrolled fire ripping through the slums. Unemployment, ill health, drug addiction, violence and risk of disaster may all be present at the same time, with these stresses simultaneously impacting on people's livelihoods and resilience (the Federation 2011a).

Some of the characteristics of urban areas that often give rise to humanitarian needs are:

- > high density, poorly constructed housing, ranging from high rises to shacks, with variance in adherence to building codes
- > secure land tenure or enforced legal rights underpinning forced evictions, in some cases en masse, often carried out with no respect to human rights
- > dependency on food produced outside cities – and on cash for food, rent, water and other services – can trigger crises for the most vulnerable groups when food and fuel prices are volatile, or if a conflict or disaster cuts off physical access between a city and rural areas
- > most of the world's megacities lie on coastlines or on earthquake fault lines, raising concerns about extreme weather events and earthquakes
- > where people live within cities can increase their vulnerability – greater urbanisation is often accompanied by the increasing use of marginal land such as flood plains or unstable hillsides.

“ The labels [of urban and rural] fall far short in capturing the dynamism and diversity of reality... They mask the many ways urban and rural overlap and intertwine, as well as the variety of livelihood strategies within urban or rural areas. ”

International Food Policy Research Institute quoted in Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke (2012)

Box 1: Key facts about urbanisation today

Challenges presented by urbanisation:

> The world's population has been more than 50 per cent urban since 2007/8. By 2030, it is estimated that nine billion people, some 60 per cent of the world's population, will live in cities. Virtually all future population growth will be in towns and cities, mostly in low and middle-income countries.

> Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's fastest urbanising region. It also has the highest proportion of slum dwellers, who make up 72 per cent of its urban population. Asia is the region which will see the most new urban dwellers. For example, 70 per cent of China's population is expected to be living in cities by 2050.

> Every day, more than 100,000 people move to slums in the developing world – one person every second. Currently nearly 1.5 billion people live in informal settlements and slums without adequate access to clean water, sanitation and other basic services. Many are at risk of hurricanes, cyclones, floods, earthquakes and epidemics, as well as crime, fires and industrial accidents.

> While the world's media continues to focus on large-scale disasters in mega-cities, this risk covers only around 10 per cent of urban populations. It is people living in medium and small-sized cities in the developing world who may be even more vulnerable to disasters due to inadequate infrastructure, finance and government responses.¹¹

> Some cities have a growing potential for violence. Factors that may contribute to patterns of violence in urban areas are cultural

acceptance of violence, economic inequalities and marginalisation, the relationship between communities and the police, the population growth rate or youth bulge and the lack of government regulation.

Opportunities presented by urbanisation:

> Urbanisation is linked to a country's economic development. Countries that are more urbanised tend to have higher per-capita incomes, more stable economies and can better weather the shocks and stresses of the global economic system.

> Cities can be concentrations of wealth, services and governance, and hubs for transport, information and business. Cities and towns provide people with more opportunities to work and engage in the cash economy.


> Cities can be used as a setting for health and public health promotion, with municipal government and civil society working together to create healthier neighbourhoods and facilitate better access to healthcare.

> Many people move to cities and towns to access basic services such as healthcare, education and improved water and sanitation that may be more limited in rural areas.

> Many cities offer sanctuary to those fleeing conflict, persecution and insecurity in rural areas. For example, roughly half of the caseload of refugees for the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, was in cities in 2009.

Sources: UNHCR (2009); WHO and UN-HABITAT (2010); Harroff-Tavel (2010); Tibijaika (2010); McClean et al (2010); Zetter and Deikun (2010); Pantuliano et al (2012) World Bank (2011); and Metcalfe et al (2011).

¹¹ It is of note that the evidence on disaster risk is similarly skewed in this way, i.e. towards large-scale disasters in mega-cities (see Dodman et al 2012).

 **Javzmaa (43) lives in this shed with her three children in Bayanzurkh district, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Mongolian Red Cross is helping the family find housing through its social care programme** (© Amanda George/British Red Cross Society)



The risks and vulnerabilities examined in this section have been grouped into thematic areas. However, it is important to note that communities in urban areas often experience overlapping vulnerabilities. Indeed, more than in rural areas, urban communities are complex and variable, with different patterns of vulnerability across cities (Dodman et al 2012).

Cities are made up of many diverse and overlapping communities, and the use of geographic divisions, such as the 'livelihoods zones' of rural areas, does not always help in better understanding communities and their vulnerabilities. This is because, within a city, there can be a good deal of mobility, particularly in times of disaster, violence or food scarcity (Zetter 2012). Migration to different parts of the city, or outside the city, may be seasonal, in response to political stress or based on access to labour or social protection. There can also be complex patterns of displacement in cities experiencing conflict and violence, with certain profiles of people displaced at different times, often on more than one occasion, and with different abilities to network, find work and recover their livelihoods. This has been the case with different waves of Iraqi refugees in Amman and Damascus, for example (Haysom and Pavanello 2011; Pavanello and Haysom 2012). Some forced migrants may also be exposed to greater discrimination and violence at their destination (see Box 4 on election-related violence in Kenya).

The subsections below explore the issues of risk, arising from natural hazards, violence and vulnerability – primarily relating to livelihoods, health, water and sanitation, and shelter – which are of particular importance in urban areas, and how the humanitarian community has begun to respond to them. It should be noted here that the issue

“ Vulnerability in a city can be different... We have beneficiaries who live in tower blocks, others who live in drains under the pavement, some in traditional huts. You need to consider the different ways vulnerability is expressed in an urban setting. ”

British Red Cross staff member working in Mongolia

of urban resilience is not addressed in detail in this study. The debate on urban resilience, and programmes through which it can be built, are insufficiently advanced to allow for detailed discussion. That said, urban programmes at all stages of the disaster management cycle, including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, can help to enhance community resilience. The largest evaluation of the humanitarian contribution to resilience in urban areas conducted to date, in Haiti, found that the international humanitarian response “did not make a detectable contribution” to resilience “and in some instances, may have been associated with undesirable outcomes” (Tulane University 2012). Clearly the international humanitarian system still has some way to go.

Natural hazards

There is increasing attention to humanitarian crises in urban areas arising from natural hazards and the need to prepare for them and reduce the risk of their occurrence (Pantuliano et al 2012). Reducing the risk of disasters in urban areas has been extensively studied, and the evidence base is richer than for urban response and recovery (see, for example, Pelling and Wisner 2008 and Pelling 2011). The recent focus of many humanitarian agencies on urban areas has resulted in large part from the attention generated by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti but also from discussions in the wake of other

large-scale disasters, such as the Asian tsunami of 2004.

Publications from the World Bank, the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change and a range of other sources, identify risk factors specific to certain countries, regions and cities. There is also growing recognition of the challenges caused by climate change and the risks to cities, particularly in Asia (Balk et al 2009). This has led agencies, politicians and academics to invest in research on urban disaster risk, including its links with climate change.

Exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes, landslides and floods may be compounded by other, man-made hazards in urban areas, such as fire in overcrowded settlements or technological disasters and chemical spills. Hence, in-depth analysis of the context (including hazard mapping) and a thorough vulnerability and capacity assessment are essential in urban areas. In many places where the British Red Cross currently works, and is likely to work in the future, the organisation will have to be dynamic enough to recognise that disasters occur most often when other risks and compounding factors are present, such as violence and inequality (Mitchell and Harris 2012; Toscano et al 2011). Indeed, communities are often faced with multiple, overlapping risks which cannot be put into neat boxes under disasters or conflict (see Box 3, for example).

Urban violence and conflict

Levels of violence in some cities can approach those associated with conflict. While most of the world's armed conflicts occur in mountainous or rural areas to avoid detection by

authorities (Harroff-Tavel 2012), in urban areas, events such as food price riots, turf wars between gangs, targeting of particular communities and terrorist acts are increasingly posing significant challenges to the humanitarian community.

¹² For a case study which analyses the Safer Access Framework in Lebanon see O'Callaghan and Leach (2012).

Box 2: International Committee of the Red Cross activities in urban areas

The ICRC undertakes activities in urban areas where armed violence causes serious humanitarian consequences, for example in a number of countries in Latin America. These activities help residents deal with the direct and indirect effects of the violence. The ICRC, often in partnership with National Societies, facilitates access to, rather than provides, basic services, using its experience in conflict situations. ICRC tools have been adapted to situations of violence, for example the Safer Access Framework.¹² This framework helps raise awareness of the importance of access to medical services and of state authorities respecting Red Cross fundamental principles.

ICRC activities in urban areas may also involve the deployment of health workers to provide medical and psychological support to victims of violence, attempts to reduce violence in schools and the facilitation of dialogue on security and international humanitarian law with armed actors operating in violence-prone environments. Another important element of the ICRC's work in urban areas involves gaining access to detainees in prison and working to improve their treatment and living conditions.

Interviews with staff involved in such activities highlighted that

success is partly dependent on hiring staff with the right skills sets to deal with the complex challenges of urban violence. As well as being extensively trained in the ICRC's planning framework, staff must have strong analytical skills acquired in conflict situations, which they can then adapt and apply to situations of urban violence. They must be able to think quickly, be creative with programme approaches and make difficult choices in rapidly changing environments. ICRC activities in some contexts also involve new partnerships with teachers and health authorities. Overall, the approach seeks to determine what is working in a community, as well as what is not working.

The ICRC is clear that the long-term prospects for communities dealing with the consequences of violence will not be dependent on its work alone. However, the ICRC can add considerable value in facilitating access to services on the basis of need and in supporting dialogue. Although such work can be sensitive, and must be undertaken in accordance with the fundamental principles, it is likely that there will be a need for similar programmes in different contexts in the future.

Source: Interviews with ICRC staff; Harroff-Tavel (2010); and Apraxine et al (2012).

Some of the immediate effects of violence in urban areas include a high number of fatalities and high levels of displacement – both outside and within the city. For example, cities in some Latin American countries – such as Honduras or El Salvador – have higher homicide rates than the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Koonings cited in Apraxine et al 2012). Over 80,000 people were killed over the last decade and over 40,000 disappeared in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (ICRC 2011). That is more than in many official armed conflicts of recent years. Violence in urban areas can take many forms. World Bank research from Nairobi, Johannesburg, Port-au-Prince, Fortaleza and Dili in 2008 and 2009 found that different forms of violence – from domestic and gender-based violence to gang violence and political opportunism – reinforced each other (World Bank 2011b).

Beyond the devastating toll of deaths, trauma and displacement that urban violence can wreak on communities, there are many more long-term effects linked to the stresses of violence on livelihoods and access to basic services. Violence can compound marginalisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, either through decay of basic infrastructure or through the inability of humanitarian agencies to ensure safe access to affected communities.

With the exception of Médecins Sans Frontières and the ICRC, most humanitarian agencies seem more comfortable focussing on the risk of disaster in urban areas, with violence being an unfortunate by-product of disasters or badly planned programmes (Muggah and Savage 2012). The issue of urban violence may at times present a challenge for Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, which serve as independent auxiliaries

to national governments on humanitarian assistance. National Societies also work in response to international and non-international armed conflict, increasingly in partnership with the ICRC. Supporting the most vulnerable may at times mean supporting those made vulnerable as a result of government policies of exclusion, marginalisation and/or oppression of those who are victims of violence. Applying the fundamental principles is central to ensuring an effective and appropriate response at such times.

Violence in the city may not follow patterns familiar to humanitarian workers. Assumptions about who is most vulnerable, for example,

“With today’s urban violence – there’s no beginning and no end.”

ICRC staff member

may miss the real story. Research from the World Health Organisation (WHO) found that in some cities in Latin America, men are 10-12 times more likely to be killed than women (cited in World Bank 2011a).¹³ We cannot assume that women and children are always the most vulnerable, as many humanitarian assessments are often quick to assert.

Box 3: Riots and fires in Mathare, Nairobi

Are fires related to urban riots a disaster or an act of urban violence or conflict? In today’s urban areas, it doesn’t make sense to draw a strong distinction. Whatever they are, vulnerable communities need to make sense of the risks they pose and rebuild their lives. In 2007, riots, looting and fires linked to political unrest and opportunistic violence deprived tens of thousands of people of their homes and safety in Mathare, one of Kenya’s largest and most densely populated slums, and home to around half a million people.

Events like these can significantly alter dynamics within communities, undermining trust, which often takes years to heal. However, for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the work of its volunteers can inspire others to get involved in alleviating suffering. For example in Mathare, Sarah Kanyingen, a 28-year-old mother of three, who lost

everything in the 2007 riots, sought refuge in a shelter run by the Kenya Red Cross Society. Afterwards, she decided to volunteer and help others. She now serves on a Kenya Red Cross Society action team, which organises neighbourhood volunteers to visit homes and share information about fire hazards, health and hygiene. The teams also mobilise the community to work to improve the state of open sewers to prevent disease outbreaks and they have contributed to a reduction in slum fires. They have also helped respond to other rapid-onset disasters, such as the landslide in 2012 that killed six people. It is thought that many more would have died without these action teams. The work of National Societies such as the Kenya Red Cross Society shows that there are both new challenges and new opportunities in preparing for and responding to urban crises.

Source: Lassy-Mäntyvaara (2012)

Another significant challenge of working in urban areas that requires a shift in mindset for humanitarian agencies is staff safety and security. This point is highlighted by examples from Uganda and Djibouti in Appendix 1. While humanitarian action often involves living in insecure environments, urban violence raises additional challenges. Because of the dense populations in urban areas, rumours can spread quickly and the security situation can deteriorate rapidly. Risk assessments, therefore, need to be updated regularly. There is also work needed on how to deal with armed groups and influential individuals in a community. This requires local and international staff members experienced in humanitarian negotiation. Engaging in a dialogue with the variety of armed groups found in an urban setting may be daunting. As Lucchi notes, armed groups in urban areas may be loosely organised, operating on a relatively small scale, perhaps with criminal objectives, but often engaging in violent and unpredictable incidents (Lucchi 2012).

However, it should be noted that the media may over-dramatise and even contribute to misperceptions of the relationship between urban humanitarian response and violent crime. For example, it is now acknowledged that the TV coverage of a badly planned airdrop of food into Port-au-Prince, which led to a violent riot, changed agency perceptions of safety, despite the fact that it was a fairly localised and predictable event (Kyazze and Virk 2011). Better context analysis – understanding urban risks and the appropriateness of different humanitarian approaches – possibly would have prevented the ill-judged action that led to violence.

In recent years, members of the Movement, particularly the ICRC, have been taking a new approach to situations of armed violence in urban

areas (see Box 2; the Federation 2011b; Serafin 2010). While staying within the framework agreed by the international community, the ICRC considers that it would be failing to live up to its responsibilities if it did not try to better understand and have a more effective approach to the changing dynamics of conflict (Harroff-Tavel 2010: 345).

One of the important characteristics of urban areas is that vulnerable people are difficult to identify, or may not want to be identified. They may want to preserve their anonymity because they may face discrimination or violence if their identity or circumstances become known. There has often been a tendency for local and national officials to restrict access to displaced people in urban areas, play down their numbers or even deny their existence (Pantuliano et al 2012: 9). There can also be acute health needs due to urban violence or long-standing urban marginalisation. Levels of violence, for example, can have direct or indirect medical consequences,

¹³ However, women and girls often bear a greater burden of certain types of violence, such as sexual violence and exploitation in the workplace.

📍 **Three survivors of a grenade explosion in Moyo during a follow-up visit by Uganda Red Cross Society volunteers**
(© Drati/Ugandan Red Cross Society)



such as preventing people from seeking medical advice until the problem becomes an acute emergency. The lack of basic infrastructure, such as water and sanitation, in slums and areas where people congregate is also a major health risk.

The ICRC's role in protection – particularly in relation to detention and to violations of international humanitarian law – may not be so different in a rural or urban setting. However, other protection activities are considerably different because of the range of groups involved. The ICRC has developed pilot projects in cities across Latin America, and the first lessons learned are emerging (Harroff-Tavel 2010):

> Protection activities need to be introduced slowly and cautiously. Acceptance by groups should be gained gradually and by first meeting their basic needs, such as healthcare, water supply and waste treatment. Trust needs to be built slowly.

> The dialogue the ICRC pursues with armed groups will change dramatically depending on the nature of the groups, whether they are political, criminal or a combination of the two, and what their aims are. Finding a basis for discussion that can be agreed on – such as the protection of health facilities – can be an important start.

> Making the link between discussions with armed groups inside and outside places of detention can be very important. This builds relationships, and also reinforces the ICRC's neutral humanitarian role. Such contacts can also improve safety and security for ICRC staff.

Since the Kenyan election violence in 2007-2008, and the events of the 'Arab Spring' in 2011-2012, many National Societies are preparing for potential election violence, as seen in the case of the Uganda Red Cross Society in Appendix 1.

An in-depth examination of the humanitarian implications of conflict in urban areas is beyond the scope of this study.¹⁴ It is, however, important not to forget the trauma and longer-term impact on vulnerability arising from conflict in urban areas. From Mogadishu in Somalia to Homs in Syria, ongoing conflicts create humanitarian need and vulnerabilities which agencies must address in a manner that is sensitive to the urban context. A more strategic approach needs to be taken to address the complex systems of urban areas including markets, communities, the built environment, the law and urban institutions.

¹⁴ Groupe URD has conducted significant research on the themes of 'Wars in cities and cities in wars', available at <http://www.urd.org/Wars-in-cities-and-cities-in-wars>

Box 4: Responding to election-related violence in Nairobi

The violence and aftermath of the 2007 presidential elections in Kenya took the international humanitarian community, as well as many others, by surprise. Up until then, most international aid efforts were directed at rural areas and were largely focussed on refugee camps in the northern areas of the country and pastoralist communities. There is a history of election-related violence and internal displacement in the country but much of this has been outside Nairobi and not well recognised by the media or the authorities.

In December 2007 and January 2008, election-related violence led to the displacement of some 660,000 people, according to official figures. A major humanitarian response was launched by the government of Kenya and the international humanitarian system.

An in-depth study based on 140 focus group discussions with people who were internally displaced and other Nairobi slum residents revealed that, in many ways, the problems both groups faced were very similar: criminal

violence, the threat of forced eviction, insecurity, corruption of public officials, sexual abuse, lack of basic services, extortionate rent, water and electricity costs, and the challenge of finding work. People displaced during the 2007-8 election violence were faced with additional risks, including resurgence of violence based on ethnicity and loss of assets when fleeing their previous residence. On the other hand, those who had been displaced from rural areas to Nairobi emphasised the improved access to services and opportunities for livelihoods in the city. The experiences of displaced people are not uniform.

Since that time, UN agencies and NGOs have been actively assessing and responding to the humanitarian challenges in Nairobi, as well as in Eldoret. In 2010, in anticipation of the next Kenyan elections scheduled for March 2013, UN-HABITAT and OCHA co-led efforts to assess the risks and prepare for them.

Sources: Harroff-Tavel 2010 and Metcalfe et al (2011)

Markets and livelihoods

In 2008, it was estimated that a third of all urban residents were poor, representing a quarter of all the world's poor (750 million based on the benchmark of US\$2 a day) (Ravallion et al cited in Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke 2012). The vulnerabilities of people living in urban areas differ from those in rural areas. People in urban areas are more likely to be dependent on local markets, while in rural areas they are likely to be dependent on natural resources and agriculture. Vulnerabilities of people in urban areas relating to markets and livelihoods have been covered in detail in other publications, and thus are only outlined in brief here.¹⁵ At a general level, aspects of urban poverty with significant vulnerability implications include:

- > inadequate and/or unstable income, often with problems of indebtedness
- > high unemployment
- > the need for cash to meet basic needs in urban markets
- > inadequate, unstable or risky asset bases (Cross and Johnston 2011).

Particularly vulnerable groups include migrants, refugees and displaced people who may lack the relationships and economic means to survive in a market economy, as well as the skills necessary to get paid work (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke 2012). Economic security and livelihoods programmes are often not sufficiently adapted for migrant groups.

Gender discrimination is another important factor increasing vulnerability in urban environments. While cities can offer opportunities for women in formal and informal work and social support networks, there can also be significant barriers to paid employment. For example, there may be challenges in accessing microfinance schemes (Martin and

Mosel 2011). Moreover, women who have recently migrated as refugees or been displaced internally may face challenges such as sexual harassment when taking goods to market and may have even less protection from local authorities than others, as seen in Kampala, Johannesburg and New Delhi (Krause-Vilmar 2011). At the same time, there are documented cases where female refugees have coped better than men with relocation to cities and achieved economic self-sufficiency, such as Angolan refugee women living in Lusaka, Zambia (Spring cited in Pantuliano et al 2012).

While it is clear that cash and markets are essential to urban livelihoods, the real challenge is in ensuring that assessment measures identify areas of critical need and do not miss vulnerable groups who may be less visible. This challenge is addressed in more detail in Section 4.

Health and water, sanitation and hygiene

It has been estimated that there are more than 200,000 slums in the world (Davis 2006). The UN defines slum dwellers as:

“individuals residing in housing with one or more of the following conditions: inadequate drinking water, inadequate sanitation, poor structural quality/durability of housing, overcrowding and insecurity of tenure”. (UN-HABITAT quoted in Cross and Johnston, 2011: x)

A humanitarian crisis could be triggered or exacerbated by any one of these factors.

The influence of the built environment and population density on health has been well documented. Cities concentrate certain risks such as water, air and noise pollution, as well as heat waves from the ‘heat island’ effect (where an urban area is significantly warmer than its

“What difference does an urban setting make? There are physical differences and social differences. There’s the density of the slum population, the reliance on services and service providers for everything – food, electricity, gas, sewage disposal. In rural areas, some of this is there, but it’s not as critical; people cope. In Haiti, the earthquake caused a collapse of services, and they were in such a poor state anyway. A lot of service delivery and repair fell on our plate as well.”

**British Red Cross
colleague working in Haiti**

¹⁵ See, for example, the Humanitarian Policy Group’s series on urban displacement and vulnerability, available at <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/search.asp?database=resources&theme=406>

surrounding rural areas) (WHO and UN-HABITAT 2010: x). The risks of epidemics, including influenza, typhoid, gastro-intestinal diseases and cholera, are higher in densely packed urban areas. However, public health experts are quick to point out that urbanisation in itself does not necessarily cause a crisis. It is only when populations expand beyond the capacity of their public health infrastructure that problems come to a head (Patel and Burkle 2011). Lack of access to basic primary and preventative healthcare coupled with dwindling access to sanitation facilities in vulnerable areas such as slums often lead to a decline in women's and children's health, manifested through higher infant and maternal mortality, malnutrition and stunting (Patel and Burkle 2011).

The WHO defines a 'triple-threat' to health in cities, consisting of:

- > infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, pneumonia and diarrhoeal infections
- > non-communicable diseases and conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes
- > injuries, including those from road traffic accidents and violence.

For humanitarian agencies such as those in the Movement, all three dimensions of this health threat in cities are important to understand. First, National Societies often have a major role to play in scaling up their health activities in response to disease outbreaks, such as the cholera outbreaks in Haiti in 2011 and Sierra Leone in 2012 (see Box 5). Second, in conflict situations, or in disasters affecting populations with higher living standards and/or a large elderly population, access to diabetes and cancer treatment for displaced people can be a major issue, as with Iraqi refugees in Damascus and Amman, for example (Haysom and Pavanello 2011; Pavanello and Haysom 2012). Third, the risks to children and young

Box 5: Response to 2012 cholera outbreak in Sierra Leone

In August 2012, there was a serious outbreak of cholera in nearly all the districts of Sierra Leone, with the highest rates in the Western Area of the country, including the capital, Freetown. Over 14,000 cases were reported in August with 243 deaths, representing a continuing rise over the rainy months. In response, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation stepped up efforts to contain the disease.

There were a number of water and sanitation organisations operating in the country, although many had more of a development focus and found it challenging to scale up to meet the needs of this emergency. Médecins Sans Frontières, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, established five cholera treatment centres in

Freetown. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society mobilised volunteers to undertake cholera awareness and hygiene promotion activities. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society was supported by the Federation, as well as the emergency response unit system, which brought in technical support from the British Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Canadian Red Cross, and financial support from other National Societies. The emergency response worked both in the capital and across the country, supporting the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in clinical management, infection control, epidemiology and water and sanitation.

Source: British Red Cross internal communications

people of becoming gang members are real in many cities, and can lead to serious violent incidents. However, gang-related violence may just be the most visible of the many risks of violence faced by people in urban areas. Recent research from the Canadian Red Cross shows that it is also important to highlight the risks to children of physical, sexual or psychological abuse and/or neglect that is far more likely to happen within the household than in public spaces (Singh et al 2012). Although child abuse may occur at all levels of society, including in rural as well as urban areas, the densely packed living conditions and tensions created by a rapidly urbanising area may be a fertile ground for it (Singh et al 2012).

The distribution of health risk also varies within different vulnerable groups. For example, access to basic services for children in urban areas is generally uneven. In urban slums, there are significantly higher rates of death and illness due to

poor quality and overstretched basic services, particularly healthcare and water supply and sanitation. Gastrointestinal illnesses can lead to higher infant and child mortality. Pneumonia is a major killer of young children and can be a particular problem in urban areas due to overcrowding of dwellings and indoor air pollution. Road traffic accidents are also a significant threat to children's health (WHO and UN-HABITAT 2010).

Even in cities with modern hospitals and medical schools, vulnerable people living in slums or without identification may have little or no chance of receiving the treatment they need. Health inequities and the disproportionate impact of disease in slums and other disadvantaged areas are major public policy issues (WHO and UN-HABITAT 2010). The challenge for humanitarian agencies is that there are no defined triggers for responding to chronic urban health needs, which often exceed



 **Poor housing construction, Port-au-Prince, Haiti** (© Adrian Thomas/British Red Cross Society)

emergency thresholds but are rendered invisible by a lack of data (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke 2012). And even when agencies do respond, the vast scale of the urban health challenge in many slums unavoidably leads to discussion of the legitimate scope of humanitarian action in cities and the need for well-planned exit strategies. The toll of ill health on the most vulnerable in urban areas is a serious issue for the Movement, as in many countries it is known for providing community-based health and first aid programmes, which have vital links to the livelihoods of urban people and their resilience to the stresses to which they may be exposed.

Shelter, land and the built environment

In both rural and urban areas, shelter can be destroyed by a disaster or conflict. In urban areas, reconstruction can be complicated by factors such as population density, where people reside, dependency on local services, the materials used, the high cost of land and contested land ownership.

Poor choice of construction systems and building materials as well as poor design and workmanship can be a significant source of vulnerability in some cities, such as Kathmandu. In Haiti, poor building design was one of the major reasons behind the heavy death toll resulting from the initial impact of the 2010 earthquake. Supporting pillars were too slender and floors too thick. In light of this, the failure to enforce building codes is also a factor in determining people's vulnerability in the event of a major natural hazard hitting an urban area. One example of this was the earthquake in Sichuan, China in 2008, where a shallow earthquake hit a densely populated urban area. The earthquake killed around 69,000 people and destroyed about 80 per cent of the city's buildings, including a disputed number of school buildings, sparking an ongoing political controversy about the quality of construction (Jacobs and Wong 2009).

People's land and tenure rights, or lack thereof, can make them more vulnerable. Cities have a higher percentage of people

living as renters or squatters and in slums. This can make it more complicated to determine the appropriate humanitarian response to an urban disaster, as agencies will inevitably find themselves in difficult discussions about land rights, the role of landlords and legal protection for landless people. The 2007 evictions in Nairobi's Mukuru slum demonstrate the controversies around land tenure in contested territory. In a city where a reported 2.65 million people (out of a population of 4 million) live in slums, it is a politically explosive issue. After evictions and the demolition of their homes in 2007, a number of slum dwellers brought a lawsuit against the former president, Daniel Arap Moi, as well as a contender for the next presidential elections in 2013 and other powerful landowners (Howden 2012). The case has led to a temporary injunction against evictions for now, but future protection is uncertain. Some aid programmes, including an Oxfam water and sanitation project, would also reportedly be threatened if further evictions were to go ahead (Howden 2012).

4. New challenges, new approaches

Challenges and opportunities for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

With its focus on reducing vulnerability and building resilient communities, the Movement is in an important position to not only operate in changing urban contexts but also to improve the services it provides to the communities it works with. Urbanisation should concern the Movement because it changes the landscape of vulnerability, and it changes the impact of the hazards and crises to which the British Red Cross and its partners respond. For example, in Uganda's capital city of Kampala, road traffic accidents preoccupy Uganda Red Cross Society volunteers. In Kenya, the Kenya Red Cross Society responded to 126 fires between January and June 2011, most of these in informal settlements with little or no official firefighting or first aid services (the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2011c). In the British Red Cross' work with the Nepal Red Cross Society in preparing for earthquakes, within the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium, the more frequent emergencies experienced by people – such as fire, flash flooding, epidemics, storm damage, water shortages and landslides – seemed 'more real'. Urbanisation, therefore, demands a multi-hazard approach, an integrated understanding of sectors, an up-to-date context analysis and staff with the exceptional skills necessary to deal with complex communities, systems and institutions.

Five ways forward for the British Red Cross

This section focuses on five practical ways forward for the British Red Cross towards the ultimate goal of improving the appropriateness and quality of its operations in urban areas. These ways forward have direct relevance

for British Red Cross operations and were highlighted repeatedly in interviews with Red Cross staff experienced in working in urban areas. They are:

> sharpening context analysis and assessments

> understanding cash and markets better

> engaging and communicating with complex communities

> adapting to the challenges of land and the built environment

> engaging with urban systems and partnering with local groups and institutions.

Sharpening context analysis and assessments

One of the first stumbling blocks for programmes is often around context analysis. Red Cross staff interviewed for this study emphasised the importance of taking time to understand the urban context. It was often reiterated that resources deployed up front on context analysis and high quality assessments were vital in ensuring programmes were effective, particularly given the relative novelty of urban operations to many staff and the dynamic nature of urban areas.

The dense settlements and complexity of systems in urban areas can make needs assessment approaches that have historically been used in rural areas difficult to apply. MSF discovered that needs assessments were not designed for "large, complicated environments with a loosely defined population that may or may not want to be identified and assisted" (Lucchi 2012: 90). Indeed, specific assessment tools for urban areas do not, as yet, exist within the agency.

“ High levels of renters means more fluidity, moving more often over the course of the project. Most said in the participatory assessment that they wanted the canal fixed and improved drainage – they focused on the habitat, not just the house.”

British Red Cross staff member, Haiti

The RG MHCUA carried out a review of tools and guidelines for its constituent agencies and, perhaps unsurprisingly, found that the vast majority were created, deployed and developed in rural areas. There is no standardised urban vulnerability and capacity assessment. Yet in each sector, work has been undertaken to look at how to improve assessments for the urban environment, some of which are listed in Appendix 2. In isolation, the tools in Appendix 2 may not fully succeed in presenting the more complete picture demanded by urban areas. However, amalgamation of information across sectors can lead to an improved understanding of vulnerability and improved agency decision-making.

An overview of assessments carried out by HPG found that improving context analysis is of central importance. Referring to work on displaced people in Nairobi, Pantuliano et al (2012) argue that better understanding of the political economy of slums is essential, as is a better understanding of the role of criminal violence. Access and security can also hinder context analysis. This recognition of the need for deeper analysis has led humanitarian organisations to increasingly use self-assessment and community-based assessment tools, integrating information with other more traditional techniques such as focus group discussions (Pantuliano et al 2012). The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) is the closest tool the Movement has to a standardised approach to assessment. However, recent attempts to revise the document to take into account the risk of climate change and urbanisation have been challenging and are ongoing.

Urban assessments have the potential to integrate a range of data sources that may not be available in rural areas. For example, the British Red Cross' experience in Nepal for the earthquake preparedness for safer communities programme was that collating a range of secondary data sources worked very well. The British Red Cross employed an expert in geographic information systems (GIS) mapping who integrated data from satellite images with local government population statistics, building materials, availability of services such as health, education and police, and trained human resources such as search and rescue and first aiders. All this, combined with topographical maps, provided an excellent basis for discussions with a range of stakeholders from local government, communities and other agencies about vulnerability and preparedness (Brown 2012).

Assessments in urban areas may call for different staff, with different skill sets, to be involved. For example, MSF's work with a medical focus does not preclude the organisation from including social workers in assessments and as operational staff. Similarly, a British Red Cross staff member working in Mongolia noted that "... you're as much in need of a lawyer on staff as a WATSAN engineer".¹⁶

There is no single way to improve context analysis for a British Red Cross urban programme. Practitioner interviews and evaluations from other agencies point to the need for a strong multi-sector or integrated analysis, using a range of tools and staff trained in different approaches.

British Red Cross recovery assessments in Haiti trialled the PASSA which was developed by the Federation with British Red Cross support.¹⁷

¹⁶ Interview with British Red Cross staff member, 1 August 2012.

¹⁷ PASSA is a tool that now has a training package for British Red Cross and Movement staff, available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/61429462/Participatory-Approach-for-Safe-Shelter-Awareness-PASSA-Manual>

The approach has been used before in rural areas but this was the first attempt to use it on a large scale in an urban humanitarian operation.¹⁸ Interviewees noted that the use of PASSA in Haiti was very successful, particularly in ensuring not only a participatory but also an accountable approach. The answers from the participants also brought the programme, which had previously been more narrowly focussed on shelter, into new territory. One British Red Cross staff member reported that:

“We were no longer looking at shelter, as the PASSA threw up a range of issues about the built environment, street lights, safety and, of course, the canal. This led us to a much more integrated urban regeneration approach, not just a shelter response with a short time frame.”¹⁹

It is clear that sharpening context analysis and assessments can make a significant contribution to improving the appropriateness and quality of our urban programmes.

Understanding cash and markets better

A strong understanding of markets is central to any assessment of vulnerability and resilience in urban areas. In recent years, agencies have made great strides in better understanding the role of cash and markets for a range of issues including livelihoods, food security, shelter and protection. Evaluations of urban responses have highlighted the importance of recognising the role of cash in urban areas, as people depend more on goods and services than on producing their own food or fetching water, for example (Clermont et al 2011). Agencies are increasingly sensitive to the fact that it is essential not to undermine accumulated resilience by undercutting markets or displacing private sector service providers that communities may rely on. This sensitivity follows experiences with the food system in Mogadishu, Somalia and health services in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (Clermont et al 2011).

¹⁸ There are other participatory assessments such as the WHO Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation or the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation’s (FAO) Participatory Urban Food and Nutrition Security Assessment Process. PASSA is just one that British Red Cross staff have piloted and found useful in engaging with urban communities. For more on tools and approaches, please see Appendix 2.

¹⁹ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti, 31 June 2012.

Box 6: Cash in the 2003 Bam earthquake in Iran

An earthquake in December 2003 in Bam, Iran, left more than 26,000 people dead, injured 30,000 and left over 75,000 homeless. The British Red Cross, working with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, implemented a cash transfer programme designed to provide financial support to allow families to buy household items as they moved from tents to transitional houses. Given the level of financial services development in Iran, the banking system was functional soon after the quake, so distributing cash through individual bank accounts was the most appropriate mechanism. And with the cash programme mainly reaching urban residents, banks were an appropriate method of disbursement as city residents found the cashpoints easily.

Vulnerable groups were identified as those already supported by the government’s welfare system. While this was designed to prevent lengthy processes in household identification and verification, it led to an unforeseen strain on the government welfare office, which struggled to cope. Reviews of the programme found that although this system was effective in reaching significantly vulnerable people, some vulnerable people may have been excluded from government lists. There was also some debate about whether a targeted or blanket approach was most appropriate in the aftermath of an earthquake that affected such a large section of the population.

Source: Bagheri et al (2006).

A study by UN HABITAT (2011) comparing findings from Port-au-Prince, Manila, Nairobi and Eldoret, found that cash distribution was the fastest way to provide relief in all these contexts, with immediate positive effects. An early focus on cash and livelihoods is clearly vital in helping to support affected communities' coping and early recovery strategies. As one British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti noted:

"The focus on cash and livelihoods in the programme was right, as it was what people wanted – to set up and do what they did before, how they lived. People were not as interested in rebuilding shelter – more than 50 per cent of them were renters."²⁰

Moreover, efforts to support people's livelihoods, for example through cash transfer programmes, are not just important for food security but also to early recovery efforts in


shelter, protection, education and health (UN-HABITAT 2011). Cash can be usefully linked with other programmes in urban areas, such as debris removal and disaster risk reduction, helping to meet immediate needs while supporting recovery and building resilience at the same time (UN-HABITAT 2011).



The British Red Cross has built up experience in cash and livelihoods programmes in recent responses in China, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The British Red Cross is also a member of the CaLP, established in 2005, with a steering group of five agencies.²¹ CaLP provides leadership, expertise and evidence to support cash transfer programming in emergency response, as seen, for example, in its recent toolkit, Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Emergencies (Cross and Johnston 2011).²² It also serves as a web-based repository of materials to

²⁰ Interview, August 2012.

²¹ These are Oxfam GB, the British Red Cross, Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Action Against Hunger / ACF International. In 2012, the partnership added work with the IFRC due to funding from the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

²² See Appendix 2 for further information.

 **British Red Cross and Croux Rouge**
Haitienne cash grant (© British Red Cross Society)

<p>Nimewo PHT Unitransfè (NIMEWO PIN)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">BRC-117-45</p>	<p> BritishRedCross</p>
<p>Yo remèt ou kat sa ou kòm rezidan nan kan Otomeka, nan kad pwogram relans Lakwa Wouj Ayisyen ansanm ak Lakwa Wouj Britanik mete sou pye pou ede'w nan bezwen ou yo.</p>	<p>Kat sa reprezante yon valè de nèf mil sèt san senkant Goud.</p>
<p>Kat sa ap pèmèt ou resevwa kantite lajan ou wè ki ekri sou bò adwat anwo kat la. Li valab jiskaske dat yo mete la rive. Se sèlman kat ki orijinal, kat ki pa refèt kap ka sèvi. Tanpri kenbe kat la yon kote ki ansekirite: li pap ka ranplase.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; text-align: center;">9,750</p>
<p>Non complè: Morancy Dieulain</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Goud (HTG)</p>
<p>Nimewo seri kat la: BRC/ATM/01/0188</p>	<p>Non moun ki sou kat sa dwe mache avèk kat la ansanm avèk yon pyès idantite (CIN, NIF, paspò, ou kat idantifikasyon fanmi ki deplase yo remèt pa Depateman Pwoteksyon Sivill) e prezante nan nenpot biwo Unitransfè pou resevwa lajan.</p>
<p>Nimewo kat Idantifikasyon Fanmi Ki Deplase yo: 51821</p>	<p>Dat ekspirasyon 07 SEP 2010</p>
<p>Tanpri prezante avèk kat la ansanm avèk kat idantite'w bay ajan Unitransfè a pou resevwa lajan an.</p> <p> Dat livrezon 10 AUG 2010</p>	

increase awareness of and share good practice in cash transfer programmes in humanitarian crises.

One way of adapting to the challenges of operating in an urban setting draws on the British Red Cross' expertise in HES. While appropriate for both urban and rural areas, it is an approach that is proving particularly useful for our work in urban areas. Its aim is to understand how a crisis has impacted on the ability of households to:

> meet their immediate essential food and income-related needs

> protect and sustain their livelihoods, and be self-sufficient and economically secure (in terms of food and income) in the longer term.

A HES programme supports households in accessing, strengthening and maintaining their cash and in-kind incomes so that they are able to cover essential economic security needs. In 2009, a standardised British Red Cross HES approach to assessment, analysis and programme design, based on the household economy approach (HEA), and incorporating commonly used livelihoods and market analysis tools, was developed.

Urban areas, however, present particular challenges for cash transfer programmes, especially in terms of identifying and targeting the most vulnerable. People often have multiple livelihood strategies. As one British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti observed:

“People had multiple coping strategies. It was much more complex. Most people have small petty trading, not just one trade. They are not only a fisherman or a farmer. They have multiple identities, multiple ways to make money.”²³

For an approach such as HES, which draws on the HEA, this means that identifying (geographical) livelihoods zones for analysis, assessment and targeting is particularly challenging. Even when there are clear groups, such as refugees or people who have been internally displaced in a conflict-affected situation, political and ethnic tensions may prevent these groups from identifying themselves. Gaining the trust of such groups, through a strong understanding of and sensitivity to local and national political and conflict dynamics, is essential to ensure the most vulnerable are not missed. As of September 2012, many urban refugees in Jordan, for example,

²³ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti, 31 May 2012.

Box 7: The household economic security roster

The British Red Cross supports responses to crises by the Movement through the provision of delegates at various stages of response and recovery. HES delegates undertake short-term missions to conduct needs assessments and determine appropriate responses. Since 2010, HES expertise has been provided to the Federation and National Societies in 16 countries. The British Red Cross HES roster comprises 32 experts with

skills in assessment, analysis, and programme planning and implementation (in food security, cash transfers and livelihoods approaches). The roster is intended to contribute to the Movement's ability to deliver economic security and cash transfer programmes in emergency relief and early recovery responses. In April 2012, the British Red Cross carried out additional training in urban humanitarian response and urban tools for its HES delegates.

have felt comfortable to register with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, based on its perceived independence and neutrality, while some of them have not registered with UNHCR (Cassagrande 2012).²⁴ The situation inside Syria itself highlights the complexities of urban displacement and targeting, with people living with other families, in schools, public buildings, parks and mosques, and often displaced more than once. Beneficiary lists need to take into account the heterogeneity of households, which may include multiple families or transient groups such as urban migrants (Cross and Johnston 2011).

These points are in line with the CaLP guidelines for rapid urban assessments, which recommend:

> mapping the city and livelihood zoning to understand local and economic dynamics

> determining urban-specific vulnerability criteria using focus groups

> conducting household assessments using modified urban poverty criteria

> mapping the markets and supply chains relevant to the sectors of priority (Cross and Johnston 2011).

There isn't space in this study to go into the details of urban cash-based response methodologies but the CaLP toolkit listed in Appendix 2 is a good source for further information.

British Red Cross staff have also found that agencies need to understand issues about labour, rental rates, access to microfinance services and financial systems, savings culture, debt and potential for extortion, to ensure that programmes help vulnerable people access cash and credit in urban areas, and do

²⁴ However, there is a degree of overlap between the datasets, as well as between the beneficiary lists of local organisations.

✔ Stall set up with a microcredit loan from the Djibouti Red Crescent Society, Djibouti-ville, Djibouti (© Djibouti Red Crescent Society)



not expose them to further harm. Assessments in Azerbaijan and Djibouti, for example, found it was very important to understand levels of household debt to ensure that any programme did not do more harm than good. This point highlights the need to better understand the complexity of communities and the social systems which protect and constrain them.

Engaging and communicating with complex communities

As discussed in Section 3, one of the major challenges of humanitarian action in urban areas is engaging with the diverse and complex communities and stakeholder groups present. Whether the programme is a large earthquake response, a medium-term recovery operation or involves longer-term preparedness or risk reduction activities, understanding the community, and engaging with a representative range of stakeholders in a sophisticated and sensitive way, is vital to its success. It is also important that the British Red Cross is accountable to beneficiaries.

However, identifying community leaders may be problematic. There may, for example, be multiple groups within a specific geographic area, with different individuals claiming to represent the majority, or the most vulnerable. The structures of the city – whether they are government, constituencies, voting blocs or neighbourhood associations – can be used, or abused, to garner power (Cross and Johnston 2011: xiii). Urban residents may be difficult to categorise as they may have different, overlapping identities. They may live in one neighbourhood but commute as a daily labourer into another part of the city. They may have married outside their ethnic or religious group, or have migrated recently from a rural area. A review of the Federation’s VCA approach, carried out in 2011 with a focus on climate change

“ In order to have successful dissemination of the Red Cross mission and emblem protection, vital for the urban programme, we found that you need to target people who travel, and people who talk... like motorcycle drivers. If you persuade a few, you persuade many, if you get your messaging right. ”

British Red Cross staff member working in Uganda

adaptation and urban risk, found that “the biggest challenge identified [to the VCA] was the lack of an obvious ‘community’ to work with”. Similarly, a study carried out by the EMI on behalf of Federation in East Asia points out that:

“compared with small rural villages, urban communities are heterogeneous, complex and engage in sophisticated methods of interaction. The most important aspect of city communities is their sheer numbers: there can be hundreds, even thousands, of coexisting communities, overlapping, interacting and competing for influence and resources... Multiple layers of systems and power structures considerably impact the daily lives of individuals.”

The success of the election preparedness work in Uganda supported by the British Red Cross (discussed in Appendix 1) rested on a solid understanding of who may be involved in or affected by political unrest, and where they were located. As well as mapping political ‘hotspots’ across the country, the programme also needed to disseminate information about the role of the Uganda Red Cross Society to a new range of community groups including market vendors and ‘boda-boda’ (motorcycle) drivers. The ability to reach communities affected by violence was improved by consultation ahead of time with key stakeholders, including the police, hospital administrators and radio operators.²⁵

²⁵ See Appendix 1 for further information on the Uganda election-related violence preparation programme.

Recognising that people in cities use their time differently is also important. As most people are tied formally or informally to the market economy, the daily rhythm of jobs, commuting and juggling priorities takes precedence. British Red Cross staff found that community meetings and training often had to take place in the evenings or on weekends. Another key difference is what motivates community members to get involved in humanitarian action, as observed in Kathmandu, Nepal:

“In urban areas, you might have more people keen on their professional development who see involvement in the consultation as an opportunity to learn. For example, instead of just asking questions, I’d explain ‘if you are ever involved in developing a communications strategy these are the four questions you would want to ask...’ And they’d be taking notes, quite motivated to take part. This isn’t a bad thing. It doesn’t mean that they’re selfish. It’s just different incentives. These are soft skills they want to gain, and we need to be aware of these soft incentives for involvement.”²⁶

For members of the Movement, there are additional considerations, as much of its work relies on volunteers. It may be more difficult to get people to volunteer their time if they are juggling different jobs, daily labour or multiple livelihood strategies. Alternatively, there may be eagerness to volunteer if there is high unemployment and a sense that involvement in Red Cross activities could lead to developing the professional skills and experience necessary to secure employment. National Societies may also need support to ensure that their volunteer base is representative of the diverse communities in which they work and not predominantly derived from one group.

Reviews have found that, in some contexts, urban beneficiaries and

“ In urban settings, it’s much harder to run a community meeting – you have one meeting with multiple communities. It needs to be carefully and strategically managed, in a neutral space. ”

British Red Cross staff member working in Nepal

non-beneficiaries are more savvy and vocal in advocating for their rights and in seeking redress (Cross and Johnston 2011). Mobile phones and social media can often compound this phenomenon, as seen in Haiti (see Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2011). Managing such dialogues effectively will require robust communications systems, dissemination of the purpose of the Movement and the particular programme, and more transparent accountability procedures. It also requires well-trained staff to manage demands and complaints professionally and positively. In some programmes, particularly those that have grown quickly or where recruitment has been difficult, the Red Cross may not have put enough emphasis on the importance of training in community participation and management of stakeholders.

A workshop held in Haiti by the Federation in September 2011 explored the meaning of information and communications in this urban setting. The participants developed a two-part definition (the Federation 2011d):

1) Beneficiary communication (two-way) is delivered through a number of different channels that should prioritise feedback from the beneficiary. It is important that beneficiaries participate in improving their situation. This two-way communication engages communities in dialogue and ensures that feedback is integrated into the decision-making of the programme.

²⁶ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Nepal, 7 August 2012.



²⁷ This links closely to the idea of information as aid, see <http://infoasaid.org/> for further information.

²⁸ For further information, see <http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/projects/large-grants/ifrc-haiti>

2) Beneficiary information (one-way) is used to deliver messages and content through a range of channels, such as radio, SMS, adverts etc. This can be useful in sharing life-saving information quickly to a large number of people, such as warnings about cholera or an approaching hurricane.²⁷

A Federation review of programmes in Haiti, Indonesia and Pakistan in 2011 looked at beneficiary communication and accountability, and cited urbanisation and new technologies as two of the main reasons why better consideration of communication channels and procedures is needed (the Federation 2011d). The authors argue that communication is more than just the delivery of information, and should include asking, receiving and acting on information received. Investment in information management technology and capacity is critical (the Federation 2011d). In Haiti, for example, the Haiti Red Cross Society and the Federation, in partnership with telecommunications firm Trilogy International, are creating an interactive communication platform using SMS and interactive

voice response technology to enhance accountability to affected communities.²⁸

There is no one tool that was found to be the magic bullet for urban community engagement and accountability. However, nearly all those interviewed emphasised that understanding the context and the community where the programme is working may be the most important preparation a British Red Cross staff member could undertake prior to deployment and throughout their work. As one staff member noted:

“Do people understand power dynamics? Possibly not ahead of time. Do we learn this on the job? Somewhat but maybe what we need to get better at learning about is power and stakeholder analysis. People don’t often use that word, power, they feel they don’t know much about it. But it is very important. If you talk about it with committees, you might need to ask about it in different ways. Who has a big effect around here... who has very little voice in this place...?”²⁹

“ Finding people in the slums is super difficult. There were no marked streets, worse than camps. Our movements were based on volunteers’ ‘mental maps’ – and a good driver. If the driver was sick that day, forget it. ”

British Red Cross staff member, Djibouti

²⁹ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti, 31 May 2012.

³⁰ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti, 19 June 2012.

³¹ This video is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6VU67POUD8>

Another pointed out that:

“You need to know who you’re talking to. You can’t sideline people with power, people who have control. They have had it for decades. Power – that’s understanding who can stop us achieving our objectives. And why they’d want to block us. And who can help. We’re there for a very short period of time. That’s also why the community mobilisation team is so important.”³⁰

Adapting to the challenges of land and the built environment

Although the word ‘city’ is certainly not synonymous with ‘slum’, there are many places with great exposure to disasters and violence or conflict-related emergencies that are in cities. Of the 1.5 billion people living in informal settlements worldwide, many will be at risk of natural hazards such as floods, cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes and epidemics, as well as man-made hazards such as crime, fires and industrial accidents. And as some 10,000 people move to slums every day in the developing world, we are often not just facing an

urban landscape, but an urbanising one, where change is constant and where patterns of migration to and within the urban area are continually evolving.

Since the 2004 Asian tsunami, there has been recognition that getting shelter solutions right is a very important element of humanitarian response and (early) recovery, without which successes in other areas such as livelihoods and health will be more limited. In fact, the 2011 Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) commissioned by the UK government found that shelter work in recent emergencies was one of the worst performing sectors, partially because of issues around co-ordination, but also simply because “shelter is difficult” (Ashdown 2010: 37). The HERR goes on, however, to reaffirm the UK government’s commitment to working with others on the issues of shelter, as it is “critical to health, employment, family and safety. Without adequate shelter, in all but the most benign climates, people are terribly vulnerable” (Ashdown 2010: 37).

Box 8: Dakar: floods in the slums

In 2009, seasonal rains – after a period of drought – brought floods into wide swathes of Senegal’s capital city, Dakar. A quarter of a million people were affected, many of whom had no idea they were living on a flood plain. A short video

has been produced about the issues involved and the response of the Senegalese Red Cross and the Federation.³¹

Source: Croix Rouge Sénégalaise and the Federation

Yet after a disaster, in the absence of increased reconstruction and development investment, the typical temporary shelter solutions may be stretched in an effort to make them last for years, with miserable results for the families living with them. More sustainable approaches to shelter reconstruction in urban areas are required (see Box 9), particularly ones that build resilience rather than undermine it.

The Movement has been increasingly involved with the provision of shelter after disasters since 2005, when the Federation agreed to take on the role of convenor of the Shelter Cluster in disasters (the UNHCR handles this responsibility in conflict-affected situations). In the last decade, the British Red Cross and the Federation have invested resources in training and recruiting staff with skills in shelter and recovery, as demonstrated by the collaboration on the handbook outlined in Box 9.

The issue of land tenure is often critical in urban areas, and navigating legal and political systems is important in ensuring the success of an urban shelter programme. Indeed, land tenure issues were among the

biggest challenges faced by the British Red Cross team in Haiti. There may be entrenched political reasons why a slum has been allowed to develop where it has – often in areas at risk of natural, technological or health hazards. Local authorities may not want to acknowledge the constituency living in the area, labelling them as criminals, drug dealers or illegal immigrants. Private interests may want to clear inner city land to build more profitable estates, as in the case of Nairobi's slums (Metcalf et al 2011). A British Red Cross staff member working in Mongolia noted that in urban areas, the legal issues become much more prominent, necessitating a greater understanding of territory and ownership than in rural areas.³³

While the Federation, British Red Cross and other National Societies have been developing their work on sustainable reconstruction, they also recognise that there are legal barriers to the provision of equitable emergency and transitional shelter. Under the leadership of the Federation's disaster law programme³⁴ Red Cross legal experts have been examining the legal barriers to shelter, the

³² The handbook is available at <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95526/publications/Urban%20reconstruction%20Handbook%20IFRC-SKAT.pdf>

³³ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Mongolia, 1 August 2012.

Box 9: Sustainable reconstruction in urban areas

Aimed mainly at staff implementing projects in shelter, water and sanitation, and waste management, the Federation handbook on Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas is a thorough exploration of how an urban environment demands different considerations, for example in damage assessment, land management, contested ownership, demolition and debris, and building conversion. Using examples from Haiti, Indonesia and Chile, the handbook provides technical information on sustainable neighbourhoods and integrated approaches. The sections on

infrastructure and implementation (chapters six and seven) are of particular importance, although practitioners would also need more detailed guidelines based on the programme being considered (for example retrofitting or planning water supplies). One challenge faced by the handbook is the difficulty of integrating technical information with the soft skills necessary for working in urban areas, such as context analysis.

The handbook is being rolled out in workshops across Latin America and Asia in 2012 and 2013.³²

impact on vulnerable people and some ways forward.³⁵

In 2011, the Federation, in consultation with the ICRC and National Societies, published a paper on this issue (the Federation 2011e). The main regulatory barriers to equitable and adequate emergency and transitional shelter provision include:

- > gaps in documentation around ownership rights
- > opportunistic land claims
- > insecurity of renters and squatters
- > absence of rapid and effective dispute resolution mechanisms
- > inequitable assistance between documented owners and others
- > common biases such as discrimination against women in land ownership
- > absence of effective procedures for temporarily requisitioning of land
- > problems with land planning rules, building standards and environmental protection regulations
- > corruption
- > problems specific to international shelter assistance (the Federation 2011e).

Some innovative approaches have proven useful when faced with these entrenched problems. Examples from the Movement include: setting up rapid, community-based approaches for verification of land tenure in partnership with local authorities; targeting shelter-related solutions at landless populations; and working with local experts to establish high quality building standards that are locally appropriate (the Federation 2011e).

Ultimately, however, it is the state, rather than national or international humanitarian organisations, that is responsible for durable solutions to shelter in urban areas or other disaster-prone situations (see Table 1). The role of the Movement or any National Society may well be advocacy on behalf of people affected by disasters. This is why the question of regulatory barriers to shelter has been brought to states, within the framework of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. In 2011, the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent encouraged states to work with their respective National Societies to undertake an informal audit of their

³⁵ The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is the supreme deliberative body of the Movement, where its representatives meet with State Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to examine and decide on matters of humanitarian concern.

📍 **The persistence of temporary shelter solutions, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (© Adrian Thomas/British Red Cross Society)**



national regulatory environment for providing post-disaster shelter and, where necessary, to put in place procedures to enable rapid and equitable shelter after disasters.³⁶

The use of and right to land, as well as the ability of citizens to hold their local authorities to account, are inherently legal and political issues. This subject may be uncomfortable for National Societies at times due to their auxiliary role in relation to government. Working to gain access to housing for vulnerable people may lead to accusations of a lack of neutrality if the debate is politicised, as it often is. Moreover, some staff may not feel comfortable raising such matters with local or national authorities on behalf of a vulnerable group, if it is government policy that is the central problem (such as forced removal of a slum). Other National Societies feel more able to be creative in their approaches on behalf of vulnerable communities, navigating the legal issues as best they can to ensure that the objective of the programme is achieved.³⁷

Another challenge of working in urban areas is that humanitarian programmes must grapple with issues around water and sanitation. British Red Cross colleagues working in Haiti found that water and sanitation solutions for recovery were stymied by a lack of understanding of urban materials, for example classic latrines do not work where the ground is concrete or bedrock. It has been argued that observation of local human waste disposal practices would have facilitated a more rapid development of appropriate responses, such as the use of 'peepoo' bags, which residents of informal settlements can use to defecate into and bury in the absence of access to pit latrines (Bhattacharjee et al and Grünwald et al cited in Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke 2012). However, this is far from an ideal practice and should only be employed when there are no other practical options as it brings a number of related challenges such as safe disposal of the excreta and how to change this habit later on, before it becomes further entrenched.

³⁶ Resolution 7, 'Strengthening normative frameworks and addressing regulatory barriers concerning disaster mitigation, response and recovery', 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, available at http://www.rccrcconference.org/docs_upl/en/R7_Disaster_Laws_EN.pdf

 **Reconstruction in Delmas 19, Port-au-Prince, Haiti** (© British Red Cross Society)



As Lucchi (2012) notes, a focussed humanitarian response will never be able to solve many of the waste management and environmental health issues typical of urban slum areas. Yet she urges humanitarians to consider engaging nonetheless, arguing that:

“if there are critical health consequences due to acute water and sanitation conditions in an urban setting, humanitarian agencies could set a small-scale example of good practice, which other actors can replicate or implement on a larger scale” (Lucchi 2012: 94).

The British Red Cross has managed to deal with some of these issues in its longer-term programming. For example, staff working in Mongolia integrated water and sanitation activities within a wider housing programme, addressing a major health problem related to the extremely harsh winters experienced there.

The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and organisations such as Shack/Slum Dwellers International have collected some creative approaches to urban water and sanitation projects. Examples include using microfinance to help slum communities upgrade their households with piped water, underground sewage and storm drains, in partnership with a local association, and self-help schemes in electricity, clean water and housing in the favelas of Sao Paulo, Brazil, in consultation with local government (Patel 2010). Such innovative approaches to the urban environment require new types of partnerships. One example is Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, a non-profit partnership between the private sector, NGOs and research institutions focussed on solving the global problem of inadequate water and sanitation in low-income urban communities.³⁸ Such partnerships are relevant not just to shelter or water

and sanitation programmes but to all aspects of humanitarian action in urban areas.

Engaging with urban systems and partnering with local groups and institutions

The ways forward on situational analysis and needs assessments, better understanding of markets, the complexity of communities and the challenges of the land and built environment, lead to the wider conclusion that humanitarian agencies need to better understand and engage with urban systems, and in turn partner with local groups. Recognising the likely scale of future urban disasters (Sanderson et al 2012), our own limitations as a sector and the range of skills required to engage with issues such as urban violence, it is clear that partnership is not only necessary but unavoidable to ensure an effective response in urban areas.

Recovery activities may involve ensuring that a neighbourhood has access to electricity, or is served by private water companies at an affordable price. But no humanitarian agency, nor the humanitarian sector as a whole, can meet all the needs on the ground alone. As a result, non-traditional humanitarian actors are increasingly being accepted into the global humanitarian system, albeit not without significant caution on behalf of traditional humanitarian agencies such as the UN, the Movement and international NGOs (Taylor et al 2012). For the Movement, it is vital that engagement with those outside the humanitarian sector does not undermine adherence to the fundamental principles or perceptions thereof. That said, it cannot be ignored that local governments, not to mention NDMA, have a particularly important role in urban disaster management (see Table 1) and should be a key contact point.

“Urban problems require urban solutions. The aid system is just starting to discover how specific aid in cities at war should be, both from an organisational and a technical standpoint.”

Francois Grünewald,
Groupe URD

³⁷ British Red Cross staff, and other humanitarian practitioners, wanting more support in how to advocate for shelter solutions at the local level are encouraged to contact the British Red Cross' international legal department or look at the Federation's resources on equitable solutions for shelter, available at <http://ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/about-disaster-law/regulatory-barriers-to-emergency-and-interim-shelter-solutions>.

³⁸ For more information see www.wsup.com

Table 1: The role of city/municipal governments in disaster management

Role of city/municipal government ³⁹	Long-term protection	Pre-disaster damage limitation	Immediate post-disaster response	Rebuilding
Built environment				
Responsive, appropriate and enforced building codes	High		High	High
Land use regulations and property registration	High	Some		High
Public building construction and maintenance	High	Some		High
Urban planning (including zoning and development controls)	High		High	High
Infrastructure				
Piped water including treatment	High	Some	High	High
Sanitation	High	Some	High	High
Drainage	High	High	High	High
Roads, bridges, pavements	High		High	High
Electricity	High	Some	High	High
Solid waste disposal	High	Some		High
Waste water treatment	High			High
Services				
Fire protection	High	Some	High	High
Public order/police/early warning	Medium	High	High	Some
Solid waste collection	High	High	High	High
Schools	Medium	Medium		
Healthcare/public health/environmental health/ambulances	Medium	Medium	High	High
Public transport and transport management	Medium	High	High	High
Social welfare (includes provision for child care and old age care)	Medium	High	High	High
Disaster response (over and above those listed above)			High	High

Source: Dodman et al (2012)

³⁹ The actual allocation of responsibility and of access to funding between city/municipal governments and other institutions will differ between countries. The intention of this table is to make clear the many roles city/municipal governments have in disaster protection and response. High denotes that they have the sole or main responsibility, medium indicates that they have substantial responsibility, some means some role or responsibility but with other institutions having the main responsibilities.

Engaging with and building the capacity of state structures is common practice in development programmes. However, one key criticism often levelled at humanitarian agencies is that this engagement is limited at best and generally does not take place. Grünewald (2012), for example, notes that the threats facing the population of Mogadishu, other than those relating to the conflict itself, are overwhelmingly linked to the lack of critical public infrastructure, including the provision of drinking water, sewage systems, shelter and transport to get the injured to hospital rapidly. In such a context the SPHERE minimum standards in humanitarian response that refer to wells are meaningless when water provision in an urban area is from the water network (Grünewald, 2012: 121).

Grünewald (2012: 122) draws from experience in Haiti and Somalia to call for a new method of co-ordination, based on areas, in order to have better “city and neighbourhood coherence”. Such an approach is appealing given the absence of many public and private actors from the cluster system convened by OCHA, with the exception of the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters in terms of private sector companies. This approach is one which the British Red Cross took in Haiti, dubbed the integrated neighbourhood approach (see Haiti case study in Appendix 1). A geographic approach linked to urban systems is not without problems, for example knowing where a humanitarian mandate ends and that of development and government agencies begins, and what to do if state and development partners fail to meet the basic needs of vulnerable people. However, if well managed, such an approach provides a significant

opportunity for a more joined-up response from government agencies (including civil defence, emergency services, line ministries and service providers), the private sector and civil society. Humanitarian agencies have important lessons to learn from developed urban settings in which responses are almost exclusively the preserve of national and local government such as Japan’s ‘triple crisis’ (earthquake, tsunami, nuclear meltdown).

The challenges highlighted in the preceding section, such as inadequate basic service provision, land tenure and insecurity, bring into stark relief the need for greater collaboration between humanitarian and development organisations, which is unfortunately quite rare at present. The British Red Cross is meeting some of these challenges in its longer-term resilience programming. In Mongolia, for example, an important element of the British Red Cross’ urban health and care project involves registering people with the government to receive the benefits to which they are entitled. As one British Red Cross staff member described it, these benefits – such as pensions, healthcare, disability allowance and education grants – can be a “lifeline” for people.⁴⁰ The team in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, concluded that training volunteers to do the registration was one of the best things that could be done to protect vulnerable people, even though it fell well outside the classic remit of a humanitarian programme. The success of this approach is confirmed by research carried out by the Women’s Refugee Commission, which found that helping refugees get better access to government services and protecting their rights is very important to supporting their livelihoods (Krause-Vilmar 2011).

⁴⁰ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Mongolia, 17 July 2012.

UN-HABITAT has played a leading role in recent years in co-ordinating humanitarian action in urban areas. But the agency's roots are in development partnerships with governments. The UN agencies review (UN-HABITAT 2011) of responses in four urban contexts highlighted this engagement as one of the most important learning points from its experience. Drawing on the findings of the study, UN-HABITAT (2011) also recommends better connections with community-based organisations, local and national authorities, and the private sector.

In Haiti, several British Red Cross interviewees noted that a major breakthrough for the programme occurred when the relationship was (re-)established with the local mayor's office. One noted that:

"It'd be easier to make the situation worse, doing aid in a way that gets gangs to come into a new area. How do you work around this? We found you really need to work with the local authorities. When they are good, you can tap into their knowledge of dynamics."⁴¹

⁴¹ Interview with British Red Cross staff member working in Haiti, 31 May 2012.

Box 10: The political economy of urban areas

An urban learning review conducted by Creti (2010) for the World Food Programme and Oxfam GB looked at the practical guidance given to staff in different agencies, such as CARE, ACF and UNHCR, among others, particularly on food security and livelihoods. The review recommended that agencies consider greater use of political economy analysis. This is due to the range of networks and institutions present in urban areas with formal and informal roles in relation to vulnerable groups, and different responsibilities and goals. Some of these networks and institutions will have well-defined policies and plans. However, there will also be undercurrents of vested interests and unwritten rules, made more complex by the multitude of groups present in urban areas and an active citizen base.

The review samples different agencies' approaches to mapping the political economy of an urban area, particularly institutions, governance and corruption patterns, as well as informal systems such as hidden economies and illegal settlements. For example, ACF recommends a list of secondary sources to

compile a patchwork of information about urban planning and the role of public institutions. Oxfam GB's food security assessment tool approaches complex political situations by asking questions such as why certain groups enjoy more or less access to services, opportunities and assets than others.

Applied political economy analysis (see DFID 2009; Fritz et al 2009; Harris et al 2011) has proven useful in better understanding the governance barriers to and entry points for effective development programmes. However, beyond the work of Collinson (2003), which focuses on conflict-affected situations, it has been insufficiently applied to the humanitarian sector. There are significant challenges in the use of political economy analysis by humanitarian agencies, as gaining information can not only be sensitive but also dangerous in terms of perceptions of adherence to humanitarian principles, and, therefore, staff safety and security. There are also questions over the reliability of the information gathered.

Source: Creti (2010)

While they may be vital to the success or failure of a programme, especially in the initial phases, the potential of local authorities to helpfully engage must always be critically assessed. British Red Cross experience across the world is understandably mixed. The drivers of vulnerability and resilience, and the impact of violence, conflict and disasters, are always linked to political decision-making (hence 'disasters', not 'natural disasters', for example). When authorities are unable or unwilling to ensure the protection and basic needs of their population, as in fragile and conflict-affected states (see, for example, DFID 2005), engagement is problematic. Moreover, in situations of intense urban violence, it may be that authorities are responsible for human rights violations or colluding with other groups – such as private militias – to do so on their behalf. The Movement – drawing on the expertise of the ICRC in conflict situations – will have to be very careful in navigating these issues while still serving the most vulnerable and maintaining the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.

In a review of the protection response to the Haiti earthquake, Ferris and Ferro-Ribeiro (2012) emphasise that the failure of protection in Haiti is largely a failure of government. For it is unlikely that humanitarian agencies, even if the system had worked perfectly, would have been able to ensure the protection of civilians in such a complex environment. Médecins Sans Frontières' work in Haiti and other places leads to the same conclusion about the limits of humanitarian response. Even though their work may be initiated due to the effects of urban violence, violence is a chronic problem in many cities and "in most instances the possibility of it stopping completely is unrealistic" (Lucchi 2012: 101).

Even where public authorities are more responsive, there is often a high turnover of people in public posts. It is very common for staff to be quickly changed, with the gains made by negotiations or links established with them vanishing overnight, necessitating restarting advocacy efforts from scratch. What is clear is that while engaging with urban systems and partnering with local groups and institutions is imperative, it is not easy and requires significant patience and the investment of resources to bear fruit.

5. Conclusion

This study is the first step in the British Red Cross better understanding the challenges posed by operations in urban areas, and how it might approach them more systematically. From this study, it is clear that the patterns of humanitarian need are shifting globally. In light of the changing nature and scale of crises in urban areas, this study has highlighted five ways forward for the British Red Cross:

- 1) Sharpening context analysis and assessments
- 2) Understanding cash and markets better
- 3) Engaging and communicating with complex communities
- 4) Adapting to the challenges of land and the built environment
- 5) Engaging with urban systems and partnering with local groups

The study has also drawn out a number of important reflections on the part of Movement practitioners with experience working in urban areas (see Box 11).

While it is evident that the British Red Cross and other agencies need to adapt to meet the challenges of humanitarian action in urban areas, urbanisation does not change everything. The fundamentals of good programmes such as high quality contextual analysis and locally appropriate assessments are common to both rural and urban areas. However, given the scale of the humanitarian challenge in urban areas, there is a need for significant strategic planning and institutional adaptation. British Red Cross staff and other humanitarian workers can draw on the tools included in Appendix 2 to help them. The Urban Learning Project will also seek to

Box 11: Summary reflections from interviewees

Among other, more specific questions, interviewees were asked what aspects of the urban programmes they were working on could be replicable in other contexts, what advice they would give to colleagues about to deploy to an urban context and what surprised them. A selection of their answers are provided below:

What could be replicated from your programme?

“The PASSA worked well. It takes ten weeks, so we were surprised by the commitment from people involved. It takes human resources, facilitation skills and time. It also really strengthened engagement with communities.”

“In the consultation, everyone was there – communities, staff, police, ministries, other agencies. So some days were more useful for the communities, some were more important for the ministries (who came in and out). But it was completely transparent about stakeholders and plans for the programme.”

What advice would you give to colleagues about to deploy to an urban area?

“The advice I would give to British Red Cross colleagues would be to take time to understand. You need to strike a balance between investing time to understand and the pressure to do something. But it might be better to veer slightly to the side of analysis. Commitments made are very difficult to get out of later. Understand the context with a good stakeholder analysis.”

“My advice would be to take a couple of weeks to understand where you are... ICRC does this whenever they start a new programme, and also

in yearly planning. Not just planning activities but revisiting the context, assumptions and predictions for the next year/next five years. This is especially important in urban areas if something has changed. This shouldn't be confused with a security plan; this is actually about programme design.”

“The advice I'd give is to get the assessment right. Get control over databases. Get the basics right. Join up data. Understand it's not just for now but for a future joined up programme. Don't dither over the value of proper assessment. You need it. You need GIS, survey impact, if you don't spend that 30k on a good assessment your programme will suffer. The impact of not doing it and time lost due to delays and problems – you could haemorrhage money later.”

“Listen to the volunteers. That's what I try to do every time I'm out. They are the ones who can identify the need, the new arrivals, the changes.”

“My advice would be to be super excited about the things you can do – there's a lot you can do in urban preparedness.”

What surprised you?

“Dealing with the complexity and diversity of stakeholders, targeting is much more challenging... Equity – in the sense of fairness of distributions, much more challenging.”

“I was surprised by how willing everyone is to learn. We were open that we're not experts in urban environmental issues. The National Society and community groups are very willing to learn with us and engage with us as we go along.”

Source: Interviews with British Red Cross staff members and delegates

ensure that the five ways forward identified in this study are effectively integrated into British Red Cross operations, as well as those of its partners within and outside the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). A series of recommendations are provided in Appendix 3 relating to learning within the British Red Cross, the Movement and the wider humanitarian sector.

There is also a need to recognise the limits of what can be achieved through humanitarian action in urban areas. While humanitarian action is at times life-saving and critical to people in need, it is important to be humble about its ability to truly transform certain situations, particularly given the time frames of most humanitarian programmes. This may be particularly true in situations of chronic violence or food insecurity.

The impact of humanitarian efforts may not be so visible or comprehensive in urban as in rural areas. For, in a city, agencies will only be able to focus on a certain area or sector. This requires prioritisation, which must be conducted carefully and transparently in order to avoid miscommunication with the community. This means that it is essential to understand how humanitarian assistance is relevant and connected to other urban groups and processes. A failure to understand these interconnections can lead to a reduction in trust, poor engagement with authorities, businesses and communities, and bad decisions about programmes, leaving people vulnerable on the ground.

Given the limits of what humanitarian action can achieve in urban areas, there is a clear need to develop effective and timely exit strategies. In light of the range of programmes that the British Red Cross supports, the questions of when to engage, when to exit and how to support vulnerable



✓ “Radyo Kwa Wouj”, communicating with disaster-affected communities, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (© Adrian Thomas/British Red Cross Society)

communities in urban areas often involve very difficult decisions. This is made all the more challenging by the fact that the British Red Cross works in partnership with host National Societies that do not ‘exit’ a country, although specific programmes do need to start and finish responsibly.

Recognising the factors that will ultimately contribute to strengthening a vulnerable person or community’s resilience in the face of both large-scale and everyday crises remains vital in guiding decisions around the added value of the Movement in urban areas.

Appendix 1: Selected British Red Cross programmes in urban areas: successes and challenges

Haiti: recovering from a large-scale urban disaster

The earthquake on 12 January 2010 and subsequent aftershocks that struck just south of Port-au-Prince in Haiti caused the loss of more than 220,000 lives, more than 310,000 injuries (including more than 2,000 amputees) and extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure in the city and surrounding areas. In total, over two million people were affected, of whom an estimated 1.5 million were displaced, moving to around 1,200 spontaneous settlement sites. More than 660,000 people migrated from the West Department, staying largely with host families throughout Haiti but also in camps scattered around the earthquake zone. As of May 2012, around 460,000 families still remained in camps in Port-au-Prince. The effects of the earthquake were magnified by the chronic poverty and underdevelopment that plagues Haiti and were further compounded by the subsequent cholera epidemic in October 2010.

The earthquake had a devastating impact on the Haiti Red Cross Society, which, combined with the enormous scale of the disaster, led to a major International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement response, with 15 National Societies involved. The initial Red Cross effort focussed on distributing safe drinking water, tarpaulins and hygiene kits. The British Red Cross contributed funding, people and logistics to this large-scale effort.

As of April 2010, the British Red Cross decided to run a recovery programme in Haiti. This was due to the fact that, while immediate

needs were overwhelming, it was clear there would also be significant need for reconstruction, livelihood support and strengthening of basic services in a country with entrenched poverty, weak governance, conflict and insecurity. The recovery programme ran both in camps for people who had been internally displaced and in an urban neighbourhood known as Delmas 19. There was also a rural site in Les Cayes, to the south of Haiti where many people who had been displaced were living with host families. The main focus of the recovery programme was on public health, livelihoods, shelter and school fees.

The programme has had a number of successes. In October and November 2010, there was a quick response to the cholera outbreak. Observation units were set up in Port-au-Prince and grew quickly. Despite the lack of cholera response experience, the mid-term review of the British Red Cross response in Haiti found that staff applied other epidemic prevention knowledge (for example, in relation to swine flu), while good co-ordination with other Movement partners led to a sound approach.

The range of programme provision later expanded in response to community assessments. The British Red Cross led work on responses to gender-based violence (GBV), community-based first aid and advocacy for security and protection. Service provision included hygiene promotion, latrine and shower construction, and working with 'community committees' to organise cleaning, information exchange and assessments.

With government and private pressure to close the many formal and informal sites for people who had been displaced, the British Red Cross found that many communities in need of assistance were moving away from the camps for a range of reasons. Thus, the programme shifted to be almost entirely focussed on Delmas 19, and was transformed into a pilot for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' integrated neighbourhood approach, using tools such as PASSA).

The original project in Delmas 19 was planned to be a combined shelter and livelihoods programme, involving a series of cash transfers (one unconditional and two conditional) linked to vocational training and business planning. This required adaptation of the British Red Cross approach to supporting livelihoods for urban areas. Registration processes were complicated and, in some cases, significant staff time was spent on cleaning up databases and ensuring that proper procedures were being followed. But a partnership with Unitransfer, a private company, facilitated distribution of cash grants using mobile phones to alert people to payments and vouchers for those without phones. Relationships were also developed with local and international NGOs and microfinance institutions, as well as with local and national government agencies. This aspect of the programme highlights two key learning points identified in this study:

- 1) the need to understand cash and markets better
- 2) the need to engage and communicate with complex communities more effectively.

Since April 2012, and with the results of the PASSA assessments, the programme has been re-oriented to become an urban regeneration and reconstruction programme, incorporating efforts to reduce the risk of disasters, improve community health and shelter, and support livelihoods. This development of the programme has resulted from improved communication with community members and local authorities. It is envisaged that around 4,000 households will benefit from different packages of shelter solutions, and improved security and public health. In this way, the programme highlights the potential of urban recovery operations to improve community resilience.

The mid-term review of the British Red Cross' recovery programme found some real successes, as highlighted above, but also significant challenges. The programme was cited as "brave" and ambitious by other agencies but was very complicated to manage. A significant challenge was the lack of re-assessment of communities once the camp population had largely returned to Delmas 19. In addition, the implications of the very high proportion of renters in the neighbourhood, as well as their propensity to move from different parts of the city due to work, labour and family connections, complicated the British Red Cross' response. This highlights the challenge of engaging and communicating with complex communities in urban areas. The challenge was addressed through more structured communications using a 'community mobilisation unit', which was responsible for all community liaisons, across all sectors, as well as data management.

Uganda: preparing for election-related violence in urban areas

In the Buganda riots of September 2009, the Uganda Red Cross Society was caught up in a significant urban emergency. Two Red Cross ambulances were attacked by angry mobs and the National Society's volunteers found themselves in a volatile situation. This was a very challenging incident for the National Society since it was not clear if the mob was targeting the Red Cross specifically, or whether the volunteers were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some of the Uganda Red Cross Society staff thought that the mob made statements to the effect that the organisation was perceived as part of the government.

Learning from that experience, the Uganda Red Cross Society, with the support of the ICRC, decided to strengthen related aspects of its work by increasing dissemination and communication of its fundamental principles and mandate, and building capacity for dealing with incidents of political violence through increased training and preparedness. The British Red Cross supported these efforts in 2010 and 2011, facilitating a proposal to the UK's DFID.

The Ugandan Red Cross Society began its preparations for the February 2011 Ugandan presidential and parliamentary elections a whole year in advance. Through its contingency plan, the Uganda Red Cross Society focussed its activities on 35 'hotspots' where political activity could potentially turn violent. Drawing on their previous experience of political violence, volunteers and staff analysed trends and developed scenarios for possible election violence. They also made preparations at branch level, recruiting a greater number of volunteers and increasing networking

and communication with relevant authorities, such as the police, local leaders and hospital staff.

Information about the purpose of the Uganda Red Cross Society, including its auxiliary role to government in emergency response, Red Cross fundamental principles and the importance of protecting the emblem was the starting point for engagement with communities and targeted leaders ahead of the election. Communities or individuals likely to be caught up in the political demonstrations were targeted with communications and first aid training. Four simple messages were recorded and aired over 200 times on national and local radio stations before the election. There were also interviews about the Uganda Red Cross Society's activities and first aid programmes, and how to contact them in case of an emergency. Key groups were identified, such as policewomen, local leaders, campaigning groups and motorcycle drivers.

At the heart of the operation were Red Cross action teams. They were collections of no more than 20 volunteers from each targeted branch responsible for covering hotspots across several districts. Mini teams of two could then be deployed to carry out first aid or mobilise back-up as needed. There were also mobile teams on motorbikes to boost capacity and reach. Communications for the entire operation relied on the internet, radio and mobile phone networks.

The programme saw significant successes, particularly in engaging with urban systems, groups and institutions, a key way forward for the British Red Cross and Movement operations highlighted in this study. As well as explaining Red Cross activities and the use of the emblem, it was important to distinguish the role of the Uganda

Red Cross Society from the role of the government of Uganda. At times of political volatility, the fundamental principle of independence from government is of utmost importance. At the same time, the National Society needed its auxiliary role to co-ordinate with and work alongside the government, as well as the police, hospital administrators and community leaders of different political persuasions. It was a difficult line to walk but the final evaluation found that the communication campaign was successful and enabled the Uganda Red Cross Society to ensure safe access and work largely unimpeded by attacks or confusion about its role (Galperin 2011).

In the end, the elections passed more peacefully than the Uganda Red Cross Society's worst-case scenarios had predicted. From 18 February to 15 March, the National Society reported 590 incidents that left 943 people injured and 20 dead. They responded to 581 of these incidents, providing first aid and referring 173 patients to hospital (Galperin 2011). Volunteers also provided psychosocial support to patients, families and survivors of violence.

The preparations paid off in another, unexpected, way. A few weeks later, the political opposition called for 'Walk to Work' demonstrations in protest against the political establishment and the high cost of food and fuel. These protests saw much more violence than the election period, with protesters clashing with riot police right across the country, particularly in Kampala, Entebbe, Mbale and Gulu. This highlights the importance of preparing for emergencies for National Societies and the ways in which projection-based programmes to address urban violence can help build readiness for response.

Uganda Red Cross Society volunteers were again mobilised to help communities caught up in volatile situations. Though the number of injured was lower, over 300 of the 480 injured needed hospitalisation, 44 of these with critical gunshot wounds. In many cases, Red Cross volunteers navigated the patients through the hospital facilities, ensuring impartial access to healthcare. In some cases, the individuals were in hiding and too frightened to seek medical help. On these occasions, family members or members of the community who knew about Red Cross services and its commitment to impartiality sought out Red Cross volunteers to transport the wounded to hospital.

However, there were two important challenges relating to the urban nature of the programme. Firstly, the programme highlighted the need for sensitivity to the security implications of urban violence for Red Cross staff, delegates and volunteers, with some over-enthusiastic volunteers, eager to save lives, getting caught up in situations that endangered their own safety and security. Secondly, while engagement with urban systems, groups and institutions can be judged a success within the programme, to ensure sustainability of the gains achieved, the Uganda Red Cross Society needs to ensure it defines a strictly auxiliary role in relation to government. This will help the Society sustain its clearly defined humanitarian role, based on the fundamental principles of the Movement. A final challenge related to ensuring effective multi-agency planning due to a lack of pre-crisis agreements on engagement. For example, there were problems with other agencies duplicating Red Cross efforts, compromising the potential gains of an effective co-ordination approach.

Djibouti: supporting peri-urban livelihoods and markets

In December 2008, following extensive regional assessments, the Federation launched an appeal for the Horn of Africa to address pressing needs in the region's drought-affected countries, whose plight was worsened by the impact of the global financial crisis and rising food prices. The appeal included Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, and was followed by a comprehensive plan of action drafted in June 2009. This plan encompassed a wide range of potential programmes including emergency food aid, health, water and sanitation and support for people's livelihoods.

The British Red Cross and the American Red Cross together identified specific components of the plan that they could jointly fund. Both National Societies agreed to fund a programme by the Red Crescent Society of Djibouti designed to protect and support the livelihoods of vulnerable groups affected by the economic and food security crisis in the country. The programme focussed on providing vulnerable families living in peri-urban areas of Djibouti with one-off microfinance loans to initiate small, yet viable income-generating activities. This was intended to improve the overall economic security of households and to increase their resilience in the face of future stresses.

The programme focussed on an expansive squatter community, known as Balbala, with a population of around 250,000-300,000 including people from the Afar, Bedja and Somali tribes, all of whom were extremely poor. This peri-urban area, near the capital, Djibouti City, had very little access to basic services such as health, education and water and sanitation.

The aim of the programme was to help a minimum of 1,000 households, focussing mainly on women. The women received one-off reimbursable loans to initiate viable income-generating activities according to their wishes and capacities. Women who had been unable to access official micro-credit services were encouraged to apply. The long-term aim was that women, and the affected communities more broadly, would use this opportunity to improve their creditworthiness and would gain entry to existing micro-credit schemes to pursue their own livelihoods further after the British Red Cross-funded programme came to an end. The reimbursed funds would then be used to finance a series of community-based projects to provide benefits to the targeted communities as a whole.

To ensure that the micro-credit project was accepted by all stakeholders and was implemented in a way that complemented the work of other groups, a step-by-step approach was taken that sought to avoid doing any unintended harm to the beneficiary communities themselves or to the existing micro-credit system that served them. The approach was piloted from January 2010 with the disbursement of 100 micro-loans. It was hoped this approach would both benefit the community and establish the Red Crescent Society of Djibouti with a good reputation for this type of programme.

The project saw important successes in terms of delivery and impact, with the project providing 946 micro-loans, with a repayment level of around 93 per cent. Women used the loans to increase their base of productive assets and every beneficiary has now become a member of the micro-loan provider, while lending groups have applied for new loans after repaying their first loan.

Yet the programme encountered two central challenges relating to its urban setting. The first challenge was the identification and targeting of beneficiaries. Targeting the poorest people in an area where the British Red Cross had never worked took some time and a good deal of community sensitisation. Available socio-economic data was unreliable. Targeting was further hampered by security and access problems. Due to the unplanned nature of the settlements, the slum areas were very difficult to navigate. Indeed, households were often hard to locate. Self-targeting through community meetings was deemed the best option but this proved time-consuming and demanded the support of an in-country programme manager.

A related challenge was the need to better understand household economies and existing debt burdens. Many people in the project lived day to day, barely earning enough to cover basic survival. Taking on debt in hard times is a coping mechanism, and no livelihoods approach can succeed without taking this into account. This point, again, highlights the need to better understand urban markets and financial systems and how they are both formed by and shape the communities that engage in them.

Appendix 2: Tools for humanitarian action in urban areas

This appendix outlines a selection of programme tools and a brief description of their suitability for use in urban contexts. The humanitarian sector's increasing engagement in urban areas has resulted in constant adaptation of tools as well as many new tools being developed. This selection is only a snapshot of what is currently available that is of particular use to British Red Cross and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement staff, delegates and volunteers, and is not meant to be exhaustive.

With a few notable exceptions, most of the tools described below were originally designed for rural areas. In some cases they have been informally adapted by practitioners working in urban areas to ensure they are relevant to urban communities and

systems. In other cases, the tools have undergone (or are undergoing) a formal adaptation process which often requires substantial technical and financial resources. As a result of the 2010 earthquake response in Haiti, as well as preparation work in disaster-prone urban contexts like Kathmandu in Nepal, some agencies have responded to the need for urban-specific tools by developing whole urban assessment methodologies. However, this is not widespread as yet.

One of the challenges practitioners face when working in urban areas is that the availability of tools varies greatly across the different sectors, as is evident below. Language can also become a barrier when trying to select a tool to be used in a certain context. Many of the updated tools

are in English which has become an obstacle for implementation in non-English speaking countries. But there is also a need to ensure the long-standing experience from the Americas, for example, in urban areas is properly incorporated.

What is clear is that the main challenge regarding tools for humanitarian action is the same whether in rural or urban contexts. There is also a pressing need to ensure they are relevant to the local contexts in which agencies are working. This requires tools that are simple and effective, staff who are properly trained and a thorough understanding of the situation in which the approach or tool will be used.

Table 2: Tools for humanitarian action in urban areas

Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
Water and sanitation and hygiene promotion	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) – World Health Organisation	An approach designed to promote hygienic behaviour, improvements in sanitation and community management of water and sanitation facilities using participatory techniques. PHAST has been successfully field tested in a number of African countries in both rural and urban areas.	http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/envsan/phast/en/
	and Child Hygiene and Sanitation Training (CHAST) – Caritas	CHAST is an adapted version of PHAST which focuses specifically on children.	http://www.sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/BOCKHORN%20VONDERBANK%202004%20CHAST%20Practical%20Guide.pdf
	Community-based health and first aid – the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation)	This is a comprehensive approach within the Federation to primary healthcare, first aid and emergency healthcare at the community level. This approach mobilises volunteers to use simple tools, adapted to the local context to address the priority health needs of a community and to empower them to be in charge of their own development. It can be used both in urban and rural areas but some amendments are still needed. For example, it does not differentiate between urban and rural vulnerabilities, and the links with other urban groups need to be expanded.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53437/145600-1-CBFA-IG-en_LR.pdf?epslanguage=en

Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
	Guidelines on gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian areas – IASC	The primary purpose of these guidelines is to enable communities, governments and humanitarian organisations to establish and co-ordinate a set of minimum multi-sectoral interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phase of an emergency. The accompanying resource tools have been adapted to consider urban issues : http://afg.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/default/files/GBV.pdf	http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/documents/subsidi/tf_gender/GBV/GBV%20Guidelines%20AS1%20Coordination.pdf
Maternal, newborn and child health	Action against sexual and gender-based violence: an updated strategy – UNHCR	UNHCR recognises that there are particular challenges in urban situations. The insecure status of vulnerable people in urban areas may lead to specific risks including detention, refoulement (the forced return of a person to a country where they face persecution), harassment, exploitation, inadequate shelter, and sexual and gender-based violence. In countries where some people have no official right to work, for example women and children, they often work in unregulated employment where they are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, or engage in harmful coping strategies such as sex work. The complexity of urban areas requires UNHCR operations to incorporate outreach programmes for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR has identified six action areas to increase the quality of protection and improve services for particular at-risk groups. These areas emphasise the need to expand preventative activities.	http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4e01ffeb2.pdf
	Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency areas – IASC	These guidelines reflect the insights of practitioners from different geographic regions, disciplines and sectors, and demonstrate an emerging consensus on what constitutes good practice in the field. The core idea is that social support is essential to protect mental health and well-being in the early phase of an emergency. The guidelines also recommend selected psychological and psychiatric interventions for specific problems that can be adapted to urban contexts.	http://psp.drk.dk/graphics/2003referencecenter/Doc-man/Documents/docs/IASC_GUIDE_MHPSS.pdf
Psychosocial support	Guidelines for assessment in emergencies – the Federation and the ICRC	These guidelines provide a framework within which an assessment can be organised. They include specific considerations for urban and peri-urban areas.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.01.%20Guidelines%20for%20assessment%20in%20emergencies_IFRC%20and%20ICRC.pdf
Shelter	Guidelines for assessments in emergencies – IASC	Developed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster Working Group as a compilation of tools to carry out the initial rapid assessment of needs and resources in emergency situations. The guidelines do not include specific considerations for urban contexts but have been recommended as a general tool with significant potential for adaptation to urban areas.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.02.%20Guidelines%20for%20Assessments%20in%20Emergencies_IASC-ESC.doc
	Disaster assessment – OCHA	Methodology to plan UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination rapid shelter assessments after an emergency. Contains specific considerations relating to urban search and rescue.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.03.%20Disaster%20assessment-OCHA-UNDAC.pdf

Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
	Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response – US Agency for International Development	Designed as a reference tool for individuals sent to disaster situations to undertake initial assessments or to participate as members of an Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance Response Team. The guidelines contain information on general responsibilities for disaster responders and reference materials for assessing and reporting on people at risk. The guide is very detailed and contains specific advice on assessing urban damage and urban search and rescue.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.08.%20Field%20Operarions%20Guide%20for%20Disaster%20Assessment%20and%20Response_USAID.pdf
	Urban shelter guidelines: assistance in urban areas to populations affected by humanitarian crises – Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Shelter Centre	These guidelines, developed by NRC and the Shelter Centre, offer general guidance for urban shelter responses. The document provides guidelines to help: > define and target the affected population > use and combine the 18 assistance methods > decide on standards. It also provides an overview of: > available profiling methods > available assessment tools and handbooks > housing, land and property at a glance.	http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6510
	Assessing building damage – the Federation	Simple guidance on how to quantify the impact of a disaster on infrastructure. Suitable for urban contexts.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.10.%20Assessing%20building%20damage_IFRC%20STT.ppt
	Final mapping of key emergency needs assessment and analysis initiative – OCHA	This report covers the main assessment and analysis frameworks currently in use at the global level, including major humanitarian standards, multi-cluster assessments, cluster or sector-specific assessments and analysis framework initiatives, as of February 2009. It includes the 'Risk Mapping and Shelter Response Planning' initiative developed by UN-HABITAT and the Global Risk Identification Programme on behalf of the IASC Emergency Shelter Global Cluster, as part of a disaster risk reduction strategy, to systematically incorporate risk management into urban planning.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95882/C.02.12.%20Final%20Mapping%20of%20key%20emergency%20needs%20Assessment%20and%20analysis_initiative_OCHA.pdf
	Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing After Natural Disasters – The World Bank	This handbook is designed to help policy-makers and project managers engaged in large-scale post-disaster reconstruction programmes make decisions about how to reconstruct housing and communities. It includes a specific section analysing the differences between urban and rural disasters, and the differences between planning processes in urban and rural areas. It also includes a case study on the 2003 Bam earthquake describing the different approaches to reconstruction taken in urban and rural areas of Iran.	http://www.housingreconstruction.org/housing/Chapter2
	Sustainable reconstruction in urban areas: a handbook – the Federation	The handbook provides step-by-step guidance on how to design and implement housing reconstruction programmes in cities.	http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95891/Urban%20reconstruction%20Handbook%20IFRC-SKAT.pdf

Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
	PASSA – the Federation	<p>This manual presents PASSA, a tool which raises awareness among the ‘everyday vulnerable’ of the ‘everyday risks’ related to their built environment, in order to foster locally appropriate safe shelter and settlement practices.</p> <p>The manual is part of a toolkit which also includes a shelter safety handbook, video and training package. The tool was developed in Uganda and Bangladesh, and has been adapted for use in Haiti.</p>	http://www.scribd.com/doc/61429462/Participatory-Approach-for-Safe-Shelter-Awareness-PASSA-Manual
	Guidelines for emergency assessment – the Federation	<p>The guidelines include some mention of urban particularities, but this is not very substantial. For example, there is no discussion of livelihood mapping but specific urban damage assessment is included. However, the tool is general enough to be adapted to urban areas.</p>	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/guidelines/guidelines-emergency.pdf
Economic security and livelihoods	Global food security assessment guidelines – the Federation	<p>This guide provides National Societies with a practical tool for undertaking initial food security assessments. It covers the different stages of a food security assessment, and offers techniques and examples for carrying out such an assessment. The guide is valid for both rural and urban areas.</p>	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/global-fsa-guidelines-en.pdf
	How to conduct a food security assessment: a step-by-step guide for National Societies in Africa – the Federation	<p>In 2003, the Federation adopted the Policy on Food Security and Nutrition in which it encouraged National Societies to conduct food security assessments. This guide is intended for National Society staff and volunteers in Africa who want to undertake food security assessments but have no background knowledge in food security or assessments. This tool can be used in both rural and urban areas</p>	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/food_security/fs-assessment.pdf
	Better Programming Initiative – the Federation	<p>The BPI started in 1999 as an impact assessment tool with the aim of developing the Federation’s ability to plan and implement relief and rehabilitation programmes which encourage longer term, sustainable recovery. It does this by supporting systematic context analysis to help ensure that programmes strengthen local capacities for recovery and avoid reinforcing inequality. It also consolidates opportunities for peace through better understanding of relationships between people in conflict-affected communities. During 2002, BPI has been successfully introduced in other, non-conflict-affected contexts.</p> <p>The document capturing the ‘lessons from the better programming initiative’ includes several references to work undertaken in urban areas and the complexities it involves. The lessons learned paper is available here http://www.ifrc.org/Global/bpi.pdf</p>	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/bpi.pdf
	VCA, a Federation guide – the Federation	<p>A basic tool which can be applied at different levels to map local threats and resources. As early as 2005, the Federation and Red Cross Societies in the Americas collaborated with the ProVention Consortium and the Organisation of American States (OAS) to develop community-based VCA toolkits for semi-urban communities. The toolkit is currently undergoing formal adaptation so it can be used in urban areas.</p>	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/vca/Vca_en.pdf

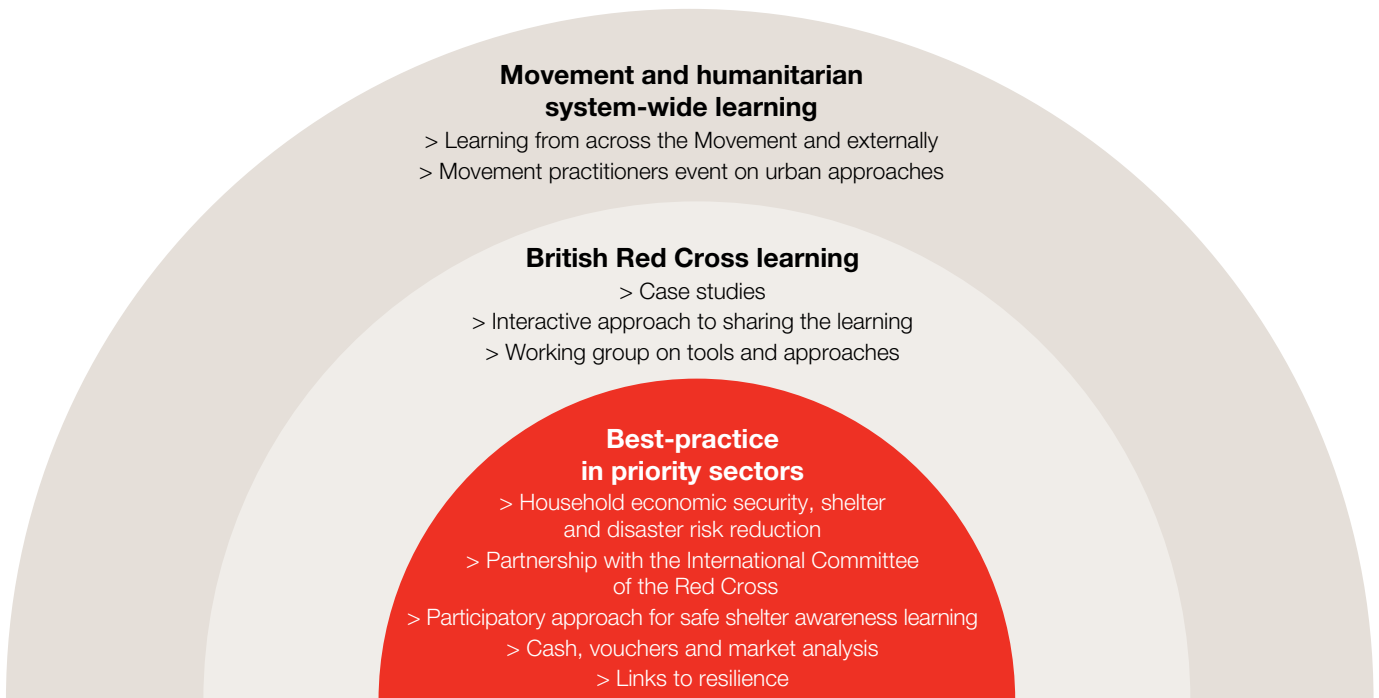
Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
	HES guidelines – the British Red Cross	Guidance for household economic security assessments updated to include urban context analysis and vulnerabilities.	
	Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis toolkit (EMMA)	Assessment that focuses on understanding the damage done to markets by the crisis. EMMA can be directly used in urban areas (for example, through the analysis of urban markets and collection of information on urban poor and their ability to access markets post-crisis).	http://emma-toolkit.org/
	Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA)	Framework to evaluate the feasibility of options given market conditions, and household circumstances and preferences. MIFIRA can be directly used in urban areas. An example of MIFIRA applied to an urban setting in Kenya can be found here: http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/documents/mifira-kenya-full-report-09-01.pdf	http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS361.pdf
	Micro-economic initiatives: handbook – ICRC	Framework for the implementation of micro-economic initiatives. Has not been formally adapted but has been used in urban contexts.	http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0968.pdf
	The Household Economy Approach: A resource manual for practitioners – Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme, Food Economy Group and Save the Children UK	Quantitative analysis of strategies to support livelihoods, divided into geography and wealth groups. Contains guidance on urban adaptation.	http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/The_Practitioners_Guide_to_HEA_contents_pages_1.pdf
	Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook – World Food Programme	Provides guidance on planning and organising an initial investigation or a rapid assessment, and commissioning an in-depth assessment. It contains specialised information on urban context analysis.	http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp142691.pdf
	Cash transfer programming in urban emergencies toolkit – CaLP	Specialised toolkit containing the collective knowledge of best practices, key issues in programmes, and adaptations of cash transfer programme methodologies for urban areas.	http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/calp/CaLP_Urban_Toolkit_web.pdf
	Guidelines for cash transfer programming – ICRC and the Federation	Additional frameworks for analysing whether cash is the best response option. Recommended for use in urban contexts.	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/guidelines/guidelines-cash-en.pdf
	Identification of Vulnerable People in Urban Environments: Assessment of Sustainable Livelihoods and Urban Vulnerabilities – ACF International	This guide is designed for use by field practitioners, and was conceived in response to several problems: proliferation of food crises in urban environments, difficulty targeting the most vulnerable people among those affected by urban poverty, breakdown of social structures and official non-recognition of disaffected neighbourhoods. Although it focuses on cities and urban areas in developing countries where life is precarious and the population is divided between individualism and communitarianism, the guide is designed for urban areas in general. It includes a step-by-step approach to random sampling in cities.	http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/2010_acf_identification_of_vulnerable_people_in_urban_environments_guideline_en.pdf

Sector	Tool/approach	Description and urban adaptability	Available at
	Household Hunger Scale: Indicator Definition and Measurement Guide, Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA-2 Bridge) – FHI 360	Simplifies and builds on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFAS), a measurement scale used to assess the access component of household food insecurity in resource-poor areas. Can be used as an assessment tool for urban contexts with some modifications.	http://www.fantaproject.org/downloads/pdfs/HHS_Indicator_Guide_Aug2011.pdf
	Delivering Money: cash transfer mechanisms in emergencies – CaLP	This report documents lessons learned from previous experience and provides guidance for project managers needing to make choices about how best to deliver cash to people in emergencies. Contains several examples of cash programmes in urban areas.	http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Delivering_Money_low_res_1.pdf
	Participatory Urban Food and Nutrition Security Assessment Process – Disaster Mitigation Institute with FAO	A method by which local communities are trained to investigate their problems and generate their own solutions regarding food security. This method was tested in seven communities in Bhuj, in the State of Gujarat, India. It is intended as an aid for others wishing to conduct similar assessments.	ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/007/ae590e/ae590e00.pdf
	The Coping Strategies Index: Field Methods Manual – CARE and the United Nations World Food Programme	A tool for rapid measurement of food security programmes and food aid programmes in humanitarian emergencies. Measures behaviour – particularly the things that people do when they cannot access enough food. Core questions need to be replaced with urban coping strategies or the assessment will be misleading.	http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/coping_strategies_tool.pdf
	Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI)	The PPI estimates the likelihood that an individual falls below the national poverty line, the USD 1/day/ Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and USD 2/day/ PPP international benchmarks. The PPI can help programmes target services, track changes in poverty over time and report on poverty rates. Because the PPI is used frequently by micro-finance institutions in 43 countries, the survey includes questions that would be relevant to urban and rural populations.	http://progressoutofpoverty.org/
	Simple poverty score cards	– The simple poverty score cards are an indirect way of measuring vulnerability in order to target services, measure poverty rates and track poverty changes over time. This tool can be adapted for use in urban contexts.	http://www.microfinance.com/English/Papers/Scoring_Poverty_Simple.pdf
Disaster risk reduction	For a comprehensive analysis of tools and approaches to reducing the risk of disaster, and their adaptability to urban contexts, please consult Earthquakes and Megacities Initiatives (2012) 'Programmatic directions for the Red Cross and Red Crescent in building urban community resilience in the Asia Pacific Region' available at http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/emi-ifrc-study-final-version-april-30-2012.pdf		

Appendix 3: British Red Cross recommendations

Within the British Red Cross, the recommendations arising from the ULP come from three different levels, as illustrated by the figure below:

Figure 1: British Red Cross learning at three levels



Given the cross-cutting nature of urban humanitarian action, it is clear that there will be accumulated urban learning and planning of urban work across all the departments in the British Red Cross international division. It is therefore envisaged that the urban working group will continue to provide a way to share innovations and plans in different programmes and sectors. It will also be essential to continue to engage with host National Societies and other partner National Societies, as well as the Federation and the ICRC, to ensure sharing of best practice and a joined-up approach within the Movement.

Based on the work of the urban working group to date and this

scoping study, there are a number of recommendations for the British Red Cross ULP in 2013. The central recommendation is that the ULP and the cross-divisional urban working group continue until at least end 2013, and the working group should always involve a mix of British Red Cross staff from country programmes and regions as well as from UK Office.

Movement and humanitarian system-wide learning

1. The ULP should continue to facilitate Red Cross staff in learning from across the Movement and externally, including participating in conferences, evaluations and other learning

opportunities. The programme of bringing in external speakers, who have expertise in urban issues, to British Red Cross UK Office, should continue. A calendar of relevant events for informing approaches to urban areas in the wider sector should be maintained by the humanitarian policy team.

2. The British Red Cross should facilitate an event looking at urban approaches, bringing together practitioners from different parts of the Movement.

This could take place on the margin of the next Movement General Assembly or Council of Delegates in Sydney in November 2013. The aim would be to join up work on urban violence, and

on reducing the risk of and preparing for disasters in urban areas into one project with shared resources.

British Red Cross learning

3. Two or more in-depth country case studies should be conducted in 2013

to explore country-specific learning from British Red Cross programmes and partners, as well as to go into greater detail on one or more of the key learning points identified in this study. These case studies are provisionally Haiti and Nepal, with one more in a smaller city still to be determined. These case studies should be taken forward in quarter one and quarter three next year, in order to best capitalise on learning.

4. An interactive approach to sharing the learning should be pursued,

linking this scoping study and the case studies with presentations, roster training and inductions. A particular programme could be developed covering the five ways forward for the British Red Cross identified in this study (see Section 4). An interactive game could also be developed for training purposes to help communicate the different approaches needed in urban areas. This could be made available on the Federation's Fednet and other online portals. This should be explored with the Red Cross Climate Centre and possibly the Federation's new Centre of Excellence for Shelter and Urban Planning.

5. A smaller working group looking specifically at tools and approaches

should build on the catalogue initiated in the inception phase of the project and determine a smaller number of tools that British Red Cross staff find useful for their work in urban areas. There is a pressing need to ensure the tools are relevant to the local context and are simple and effective, and that staff are properly trained and have a thorough understanding of the situation in

which the tool will be deployed. This work should be in conjunction with colleagues outside the British Red Cross such as partners within the Inter-Agency Steering Committee's Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas.

Pursuing best practice in priority sectors

6. The British Red Cross should continue to build on its expertise in household economic security, shelter and disaster risk reduction, incorporating urban learning and innovation into training of staff on rosters and programme evaluations.

7. The British Red Cross should develop its thematic partnerships with the ICRC to include working in urban contexts.

8. Documenting urban approaches and urban learning should be incorporated into any British Red Cross member of staff's terms of reference when undertaking a programme review in an urban area.

9. As the PASSA tool is trialled in other urban settings, lessons learned should be recorded as part of any evaluation.

10. The British Red Cross' international division should facilitate cross-sector learning about the use of cash, vouchers and market analysis across Red Cross programmes and partnerships. Cash is not just useful for food security approaches but can also be an important tool within a range of urban programmes.

11. Explore the links between learning from the ULP and British Red Cross' work on resilience.

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British Red Cross

44 Moorfields
London
EC2Y 9AL

Tel 0844 871 1111
Fax 020 7562 2000

redcross.org.uk

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Email: production@redcross.org.uk
Tel: 020 7877 7029