

Working with people and communities in urban humanitarian crises

Leah Campbell

ALNAP is a unique system-wide network
dedicated to improving the performance of
humanitarian action through shared learning.
www.alnap.org/urban

About the author

Leah Campbell is a Senior Research Officer at ALNAP

Suggested citation

Campbell, L. (2017) 'Working with people and communities in urban humanitarian crises' ALNAP Working Paper. London: ODI/ALNAP.

©ALNAP/ODI 2017. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-non Commercial Licence (CC BY-NC 4.0).

ISBN 978-1-910454-57-2

Design and typesetting by Alex Glynn and Chloé Sanguinetti

Copyediting by Roo Griffiths

Bibliographic editing by Chloé Sanguinetti

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Targeting in urban contexts	5
3. Communicating with urban populations and communities	12
3.1 Communication in context	16
4. Involving and mobilising urban communities	18
5. Conclusion	23
Endnotes	24
References	25

Boxes and tables

Box 1: Definitions	6
Box 2: Leadership and representation	7
Box 3: Identifying marginalised populations	10
Box 4: Communicating Ebola to urban Liberian people	17
Box 5: Participation/consultation in Gölcük	19
Box 6: Community committees and mobilisers	22
Table 1. Targeting approaches for urban response	11
Table 2. Methods of communication in urban contexts	14
Table 3. Community mobilisation in rural vs. urban contexts	18

1. Introduction

Over 50% of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and these are growing larger year on year. Half of this population lives in dense informal settlements, and 90% of urban growth is occurring in the developing world (UN-Habitat, 2016). The scale, density and diversity of urban areas magnify challenges common to all humanitarian responses, and also pose new ones. Urban environments have rich and poor areas, new and old neighbourhoods, populated areas next to peri-urban peripheries, different administrative districts and industrial zones – all sitting side by side (Carpenter, in ALNAP, 2014a). Urbanisation is occurring differently across the globe, and no two cities are the same.

One of the biggest challenges for humanitarians responding to urban crises is that urban populations and communities are different from those with which humanitarians have traditionally worked.

Unlike in rural or camp populations, working in urban contexts means:

- There will be a significantly higher number of affected people (who may be gathered together densely or spread out over a wide area depending on the crisis).
- Multiple stakeholders exist (including various 'community' networks, local government, community-based organisations (CBOs), gangs and other groups), each with different priorities and accountabilities.
- Vulnerable people may be hidden in a dense population, and may not wish to be identified.
- The population is highly mobile – moving day-to-day between home and work, connected to other rural and urban areas and more likely to move home.
- It is difficult to identify who within a population can be considered representative of that group.
- The population, even in one dense space, is highly diverse, with no common level of vulnerability, capacity or need.
- There are often greater opportunities for communication and collaboration, given the availability of technology and infrastructure and the number of potential partners.

This Working Paper explores the topic of working with urban populations and communities. It draws on practical challenges and approaches in relation to targeting and communication with urban populations, and in the mobilisation of urban communities. The paper was informed by a literature review, as well as ALNAP's ongoing [urban webinar series](#) and [Community of Practice](#) discussions, which have consistently raised these issues over the past few years.

2. Targeting in urban contexts

One of the first steps in any humanitarian response is to determine where aid resources should go, according to who is most in need of assistance. Humanitarians use a variety of tools and approaches to assess the situation, obtaining information about needs in the area and using this to decide if and how to respond and how to prioritise resources and shape programming (Darcy and Hofmann, 2003).

Working with urban populations begins in this assessment stage, and carries on as organisations decide how aid should be targeted, according to criteria meant to make it fair, accountable and best utilise scarce resources (JEFAP, 2003). It continues as organisations then attempt to identify crisis-affected people meeting these criteria.

Effectively identifying crisis-affected people and targeting aid appropriately are just as important in urban contexts as they are in rural areas, to ensure the most appropriate use of resources to support those most in need (FANTA II, 2008). However, the complexity of urban crises means that the problems surrounding assessment and targeting more generally become even more pressing in such environments (UCL, 2014; see also Mohanty, 2011; Sanderson et al., 2012; Maietta, 2013). Despite increased understanding of the urban context among humanitarian organisations, most are still using tools and approaches designed for rural contexts, focusing on the needs of households rather than individuals or communities, and using concepts of community that may not be relevant in urban centres. This is a critical gap: by focusing exclusively on needs at a household level we may miss critical issues. As urban populations often work and eat outside the home, and households can vary from single or multiple families to single individuals sharing with others while working in the city, traditional approaches for understanding need at a household level may not apply. Using approaches designed to assess need by household can also leave gaps in understanding broader issues. British Red Cross conducted a participatory needs assessment which they hoped would identify communal needs. However, participants emphasised toilet and shelter support for individual households and scholarships for children (Clermont et al, 2011). The urban context, where populations may have weak bonds with their neighbours, lack a common identity and experience competition for space and resources, had limited participants ability to focus on needs affecting a 'community' or 'neighbourhood', and the approach used, despite aiming to understand communal needs, had not succeeded in doing so.

This gap has implications for targeting: if needs are not effectively understood or targeting is inappropriate, it will be impossible to effectively address needs, and existing inequalities can be inadvertently reinforced (Healy and Tiller, 2013). Humanitarians responding to urban crises need first to understand why targeting will be more complex in urban areas, and then to determine which method(s) will be most appropriate in that particular context. We explore the challenges and potential methods further below.

Box 1: Definitions

Assessment is the process by means of which organisations obtain the necessary information about a crisis and context to make decisions about programming, including scale, resources and criteria for targeting those most in need.

Targeting refers to the process of selecting whom aid will reach. Targeting involves defining target groups, identification (see below) and ensuring assistance reaches those targeted and meets their needs. Targeting can be at an individual (e.g. male/female), household (e.g. female-headed households or households with an income under a certain threshold) or community (e.g. neighbourhoods with X characteristic) level.

Part of the targeting process, level refers to the process of identifying the specific individuals who fall into a targeted group. For example, a programme may intend to target female internally displaced persons (IDPs) in specific neighbourhoods – but in order to move forward these women need to be identified.

Profiling takes identification one step further. It is a way of understanding a target population and providing a comprehensive picture of their demographics, strengths, vulnerabilities and goals. Often used in IDP contexts, it is an effective way of understanding preference for settlement, degree of social integration, etc. (Gupta, 2015). For more, see the [Joint IDP Profiling Service's work on urban profiling](#).

The first challenge for identification and targeting of urban populations comes from the lack of pre-crisis data. Understanding the baseline situation is vital to humanitarian response. However, in many urban areas, accurate data may not be available. In Lebanon, for example, official population estimates are (at the time of writing) over 10 years out of date. Records exist only for refugees who have officially registered with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), making it near impossible to generate an accurate population count of the number of Lebanese people or refugees in a given area. Without accurate baseline data, it is difficult to understand pre-crisis vulnerability vs. crisis impact, or 'when generalised situations of chronic deprivation surpass emergency thresholds' (UN-Habitat, 2011; see also FANTA II, 2008; Davies, 2010; Metcalfe et al., 2011; Levine et al., 2012; Haysom, 2013; Mosel and Jackson, 2013). Efforts should be made to identify groups that may be especially vulnerable, and that may be unable to access (or be unaware of) formal or informal social safety nets. Such groups may include the elderly, people living with disabilities, women and children, the chronically poor and those new to the area (Davies, 2010; Sanderson et al., 2012; Maietta, 2013).

One approach to filling the information gap is to work with local authorities and partners. Working with local leaders can improve the accuracy of targeting as it draws on contextual knowledge only those familiar with the area can provide (Davies et al., 2010; Sanderson et al., 2012). However, working with local actors is a challenge in and of itself. This can be time-consuming, and is more complex in an urban environment. Each of the large number of actors has their own goals and histories, with which humanitarians may not be familiar. In one example, the local partner organisation chosen to assist with targeting was a Christian church; some community members heard rumours that discouraged them from seeking aid, as they believed they would be betraying their own religion by registering for assistance (MacAuslan and Schofeld, 2011). In addition, humanitarians should remember that working with 'community leaders' does not necessarily constitute 'community-based targeting' as understood in a rural setting (MacAuslan and Phelps, 2012). This is because in busy, diverse urban contexts, where scale, space or lack of representativeness complicate the situation, 'leaders' are often chosen based on a pre-existing role/position (e.g. community health workers), whereas in traditional rural contexts it is possible to hold a public meeting where an entire community can select a leader together (ibid.).

Box 2: Leadership and representation

In any crisis, community leaders can provide useful information and a central point of contact (Patrick, 2011). However, identifying leadership that is representative of a dense urban population, with complex power and authority dynamics, is easier said than done.

There are several reasons for this. Some may claim to represent a community when they don't. Alternatively, it may be impossible to find one individual who can represent the diversity found within urban contexts, and so the task becomes one of both understanding the various communities within a given space and working with them collectively to ensure no one is excluded or privileged (Camina, 2004; Kyazze et al., 2012; Mountfield, 2015). Where populations living side-by-side in urban areas lack trust, this can greatly complicate the search for representative leadership. UNHCR in Cairo, Egypt, where there was a huge amount of mistrust among Iraqi refugees, found attempts to communicate through meetings with community representatives didn't work: 'it became quite clear during the revolution that the so-called community leads are not necessarily representative of or taking info back to their communities' (Danielson, 2012: 9).

A related issue is that of congestion. In an urban environment, multiple authorities exist, from elected representatives to religious leaders, market and business leaders, labour unions, recreational coaches and so on, who may cooperate or compete (Currion, 2014). The informality of the city further complicates representativeness and congestion, resulting in a mixture of formal and informal leadership. Several case studies have highlighted that, while specific government agencies are responsible for managing displacement issues, in practice many communities rely on kinship networks/traditional structures for support (Haysom and el Sarraj, 2012). This is a critical challenge, because identifying leaders of informal and/or dispersed groups is not straightforward. It is a conundrum for humanitarians, as working with informal groups can result in parallel structures, but discounting them means missing opportunities, particularly in areas where informal leaders hold legitimacy for the populations they represent.

While it is difficult to identify leadership in urban areas it is not impossible. In Peshawar, Pakistan, humanitarians found neighbourhoods that commonly appoint leaders and committees to resolve problems and to coordinate basic services, security and protection with municipal authorities (Mosel and Jackson, 2013). In Kabul, Afghanistan, displaced communities and longer-term urban residents have been known to seek the protection of 'warlords' and other powerbrokers with whom they may have an affiliation (Metcalf et al., 2012). In Yei, South Sudan, the military, church, community organisations and local IDP leaders have taken over various governance functions normally performed by formal actors, including service provision, security, education and land administration (Martin and Sluga, 2011). In Nairobi, Kenya, 'slum' dwellers have formed CBOs and committees to provide basic services, including waste management, livelihood support and security (Metcalf et al., 2011). In other instances, informal actors act as gatekeepers, as observed in Mogadishu, Somalia, where access to camps and the delivery of aid is often negotiated with landlords or groups controlling public and private plots (Grünewald, 2012).

Finally, there are challenges relating to capacity and motivation. Where community structures are weak, organisations find it much harder to identify legitimate community leaders to work with (Morand et al., 2012). However, any actor seen to represent a community should not be ignored, even if they lack capacity (Macauslan and Phelps, 2012). These actors may still function as gatekeepers, who can be the key to identifying

and accessing community leaders (Grünwald and Carpenter, 2014). However, motivation must also be considered. Representatives ‘may have their own agenda and, in contexts where there are high levels of violence and organised crime, they may be involved or subject to the influence of illicit groups such as gangs’ (Knox Clarke and Ramalingam, 2012: 14). Learnings from previous urban responses note that a lack of legitimised leadership structures ‘made it difficult for NGOs [non-governmental organisations] to find appropriate ways of interacting with the local population’ (Clermont et al., 2011).

Humanitarians need to be open to adaptation and learning in identifying and working with leaders in urban communities. While community leaders may be identified through existing community and religious groups, informal leaders including vendors, traders and builders can also be important contacts. Informal networks can be vital to community-driven efforts, and should not be discounted (UCL, 2014). Assessments and other data-gathering activities should draw informants from a wide pool of interviewees to make it possible to understand the range of urban social and political institutions (ACE, 2010; SPHERE, 2015). One approach to address the congestion of multiple actors, as well as the mixture of formal and informal leadership, in urban communities is to work with different levels or types of leadership structures for different things.

Implementing the Katye (‘Neighbourhood’) programme in Ravine Pintade, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, challenged assumptions Global Communities held about what community engagement meant. Despite having identified sub-neighbourhoods and leaders in advance, community members soon rejected the defined area and claimed leaders chosen were unrepresentative. Global Communities changed its approach, decentralising and democratising its programme so all community members could be involved (Lebleu, in ALNAP, 2014b). To do this, it located its office in the centre of the neighbourhood and worked with a large number of mobilisation staff who were easily accessible by the community. Rather than relying on a handful of community leaders, it established sub-committees in each sub-neighbourhood. The community was asked to identify needs and priorities at public events and the mobilisation staff worked with each committee closely, informing residents about Global Community’s goals and methodology for the programme (ibid.).

The third challenge is that, often, those living in extremely dense urban areas do not know those living around them. This poses a challenge for humanitarians seeking to identify and target crisis-affected people, as communities (and ‘community leaders’) may be unable to identify vulnerable people in their neighbourhood. This makes techniques used for targeting in rural areas, like community validation or house-to-house targeting, more difficult (Macauslan and Schofeld, 2011), and may result in exclusion or inclusion error in targeting¹. In one example, when fire broke out in Mukuru Slum in Nairobi, Kenya, a slum-based organisation found that word spread to nearby areas, and relief packages were inadvertently distributed to those who were not from the affected area (Muthoni Wachira, in ALNAP, 2014a). While urban populations may be less willing to work together, having not known one another previously, this may also be an opportunity later on, as communities may be more open to new ideas (Maynard, 2015).

A fourth and related challenge relates to willingness to accept the targeting criteria humanitarians use. Unaware of whom the most vulnerable may be in their area, urban dwellers may be less willing to accept criteria based on vulnerability if this means those they know and believe to be in need are excluded from aid. In some areas, needs-based targeting poses more significant risks. In Mogadishu, Somalia, clan systems mean that needs-based targeting can appear to be providing aid to one side over another. Focusing on the entire population in a given area is more appropriate here (Sanderson et al., 2012; Lucchi, 2013). In other areas, urban dwellers may reject

targeting approaches that focus on specific areas (MacAuslan and Schofeld, 2011) as they may not perceive a geographic location to be their community. In rural areas, these potential challenges may be mitigated through community involvement in setting targeting criteria. While this is more challenging in urban contexts, it is important that humanitarians do seek to include community perspectives on targeting wherever possible to ensure the response is relevant and acceptable for the crisis-affected urban population (Sanderson et al., 2012).

The final challenge is that urban dwellers are highly mobile, moving within and between cities on a daily basis for work, school, community and family obligations. Depending on the nature of the crisis, affected people may be spread out across the city. These aspects of urban reality affect targeting and identification, as it may be difficult to locate the population to support. Households with very different levels of vulnerability may live in close proximity, further complicating the picture (MacAuslan and Phelps, 2012). Urban areas require humanitarians to expand beyond traditional targeting approaches, including the use of satellite technology to identify high-density areas. Self-targeting approaches are one way to address this. So long as they are communicated effectively, self-targeting allows affected people to identify themselves at a time most convenient for them. There are several successful examples where organisations have set up community-based centres for self-targeting, including for Iraqi and Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries (Pavanello, 2012). However, this approach poses risks of exclusion, as some people may not hear about the centres (MacAuslan and Phelps, 2012). If targeting is to be conducted in a specific geographic area using house-to-house methods, it is important to make several visits to the same location at different times of the day to ensure those who are working outside of the area are identified (MacAuslan and Schofeld, 2011). Working with existing civil society organisations can also help (Sanderson et al., 2012), keeping in mind earlier discussions about representation in urban communities.

Box 3: Identifying marginalised populations

Density and diversity can often mean marginalised populations are effectively ‘hidden’ in urban areas. This can be because of fear of ethnic/religious/political discrimination (Gupta, 2015), homelessness (MacAuslan and Phelps, 2012) or lack of ID/registration status (*ibid.*), and includes the ‘geographically marginalised’ (Loquercio and Dikkes, 2013), who lack access to urban services and spaces.

Populations may be intentionally hidden and wish to remain so. They may fear further discrimination or exclusion (UN-Habitat, 2011; Global CCCM Cluster, 2014; UCL, 2014) and may especially not want to be identified to authorities (Gupta, 2015) for fear of arrest (UN-Habitat, 2011; Sanderson et al., 2012).

Marginalised populations pose several challenges for humanitarians responding in urban areas. They may blend into the area without being noticed (Global CCCM Cluster, 2014) and not appear on official lists (Sanderson et al., 2012), which makes them hard to locate and assist. At the same time, they are not necessarily a homogenised group (Global CCCM Cluster, 2014) and can be scattered around different areas and highly mobile (UN-Habitat, 2011; Global CCCM Cluster, 2014). Their potential lack of legal recognition (Sanderson et al., 2012) can pose challenges for humanitarians who wish to assist the vulnerable and also maintain positive relationships with authorities.

Identifying hidden populations in urban areas is quite a challenge. There are some things that humanitarians can try to keep in mind. First, the inevitable existence of marginalised populations must be acknowledged. Humanitarians need to recognise this and take steps to mitigate the associated challenges to ensure vulnerable people are not overlooked or excluded (Sanderson et al., 2012).

Second, humanitarians can build on existing connections and networks to identify marginalised people. One example from Kathmandu is the work of WaterAid and partner organisation Lumanti, who made use of existing networks of informal traders to identify otherwise hidden families renting in urban areas and used the connection as a stepping stone (Roaf, 2005).

Finally, especially where populations may be afraid to be identified, using an approach that allows individuals to self-identify and come forward on their own terms has been successful in numerous contexts. Often, this means opening a drop-in info centre, kiosk or safe house (Davies, 2010; Sanderson et al., 2012).

Keeping these challenges in mind, humanitarians have a number of targeting approaches to choose from. There is no one approach to target and identify urban populations that will work in all urban contexts. Rather, it is more likely that the right approach for any given context is a combination of various methods (Davies, 2010; Patel et al, 2017). It is important to emphasise the need for targeting approaches to be contextualised to context where possible, given the complex dynamics which leads each city and sometimes each neighbourhood to be a ‘microenvironment’ unique to itself (Patel et al, 2017).

Table 1 presents a selection of the most common and relevant for urban humanitarian response, focusing in particular on the potential advantages and disadvantages of each when employed in an urban crisis.

Table 1. Targeting approaches for urban response ²

Targeting approach	Description	Advantages for urban areas	Disadvantages for urban areas
Geographic targeting (including blanket targeting)	Selection based on geographic location (i.e. determining the most vulnerable district and providing assistance to everyone in that area).	Easy/quick; best used in immediate post-crisis phase when differences between households unknown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low targeting accuracy if vulnerable households are widely dispersed or aren't located in chosen areas. • May not reach everyone, such as those unable to line up in queues at distribution points.
Self-targeting	Crisis-affected people have the opportunity to self-identify, often at a community-based centre.	Avoids time/resources of other approaches; in principle open to all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of exclusion error, especially of the most vulnerable. • Resources may be insufficient as to provide for all who self-target.
Snowballing	Individuals or households are identified based on referral from another contact. For example, one household meeting the criteria suggests five additional households – one of these is chosen and again suggests five further households meeting the criteria.	Very effective for disparate but connected populations, such as displaced people (where households are likely to know other households in similar circumstances to them).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time. • Households may have bias. • Will not work where households have little social cohesion.
Administrative targeting	Individuals are selected from a population list based on certain criteria.	Simple if list is available and complete.	Risk of exclusion if lists are incomplete, especially of marginalised/new arrivals.
Community-based targeting	Community leaders or an assembled committee is used to identify individuals, often by providing input to an administrative targeting approach.	Community engagement; supporting existing community leadership; can help with legitimacy.	Exclusion error if leaders are biased; Committee may not be willing to work together/disagree on criteria; more common in rural areas with more cohesive 'community'.

Proxy targeting	Affected people are selected based on an observable characteristic (i.e. gender, social group affiliation).	Easy to use if traits obvious.	Risk of exclusion and inclusion if only one proxy. Proxies can be difficult to observe directly and objectively and take time to produce.
Means-testing	Individuals are selected based on their income, expenditure, wealth or assets. This is sometimes assessed using a survey or scorecard.	High targeting accuracy if information can be verified as correct.	Time/resource cost; households may give incorrect information (can be reduced by random verification); may not capture complexity.
Institutional targeting	Selection is made based on affiliation with a certain institution, such as being enrolled in a select school or receiving services from a certain clinic.	Fairly easy as only institutions are chosen.	Excludes anyone who may not be registered at the targeted institution but may be in need and otherwise eligible.

Source: Adapted from FANTA II (2008); Davies (2010); UN-Habitat (2011); Knox Clarke and Ramalingam (2012); Maccauslan and Phelps (2012); Sokpoh and Carpenter (2014).

3. Communicating with urban populations and communities

Communication with urban populations will occur throughout an entire humanitarian response, and is especially important given the complex environment of urban contexts and the accountability challenges that result (see Loquercio and Dikkes, 2013). Several evaluations of urban response have found that poor communication is a serious problem, particularly because in urban areas messages compete with a number of sources and rumours abound (Johnson, 2011; Danielson, 2012). Poor communication has in some cases increased conflict and violence (Channel Research and P-KIM, 2012). Despite an understanding of the overall importance of communication, as Currion (2014) explains, ‘there is little analysis available of the different requirements of urban and rural populations in terms of communicating with disaster-affected communities’.

Humanitarians face a number of specific challenges when communicating with urban populations. The first is that urban populations are highly mobile and diverse. This means crisis-affected people can be spread out across an urban space, and that households with very different levels of vulnerability can be located close to one another. This requires humanitarians to find new ways to communicate with affected urban populations across a large geographic area (Wilber, 2011; Knox Clarke and Ramalingam, 2012) and different strategies may be needed to communicate with different communities and actors (Lucchi, 2013; Currion, 2014). Crisis-affected urban populations can be missed if communications do not reach them (Wall and Chery, 2010). Responding in Sofia, Bulgaria, UNHCR found it had no systematic contact with refugees and asylum-seekers who had not sought the agency out directly, which meant a more comprehensive communication and outreach strategy was required (Bottnick and Sianni, 2011). As most media channels will reach outside the area an organisation may be working in, there is a need to be clear with messages both for the population being targeted and for others who may also receive the message. Global Communities experienced the challenge of urban populations

located in close proximity to other neighbourhoods while working in Ravine Pintade, Haiti. Because of funding constraints, it was unable to work with other settlements nearby, which raised internal questions about accountability to the wider city in an urban response. In a slum environment, extreme density makes it difficult to restrict any response to a target group. Word spreads quickly about any new programme and it can be a challenge to explain to the slum-dweller population why some receive assistance but not others (Muthoni Wachira, in ALNAP, 2014a).

Second, the impact of disaster creates confusion and tension, which can turn misinformation into rumour and break down trust. In urban contexts, density can encourage the rapid spread of rumours, requiring that effective communication management be ‘at the heart of urban disaster response’ (Grünewald and Carpenter, 2014: 29–30). This will help ensure trust both in the information and messages shared and in the communicating entity. The degree to which information will be actioned or passed along is determined by the amount of trust in both the message and the sender (Chazaly, 2011). In the Ebola response in West Africa, fear stopped urban populations from reaching out to healthcare providers, and public health messaging was often ignored (Alexander et al., 2015).

Humanitarians should also be aware that barriers may exist in the suspicion of ‘those in authority who have not confronted the same risks or undergone the same traumatic journey that they have’ (Blakey et al., 2012: 19). Humanitarians may need to build up trust over time. Global Communities in Haiti piloted its approach in one area and used this to demonstrate its ability to fulfil promises. ACORN, recognising the affected population’s frustrations and cynicism as a result of extreme delays, lack of services and poor information following Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, US, decided to build trust and credibility by starting with a small and simple initial project. It launched a free house gutting and de-moulding service, which demonstrated its commitment and effectiveness to the population and encouraged others to access services. ‘By successfully undertaking a series of small, doable and highly visible improvement projects like this, community development professionals overcame a significant barrier to community change – residents’ cynical belief that nothing will happen’ (ibid.: 68).

Third, the scale of the urban context in terms of both population size and the amount of information being communicated by and between different actors can mean many conflicting messages and a dense space for communications. As Grünewald and Carpenter (2014) explain, ‘urban centres are “noisy”, with many stimuli and messages competing for people’s attention’. Humanitarian messages compete with those from other sources, such as rumours, commercial and political messages (IFRC, 2013). Similarly, messages received from urban dwellers may be better directed to other urban stakeholders such as the police or government. This density can also affect the reputation of an organisation. As the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) found in Haiti, ‘It’s not just what you tell the community, but it’s what they’ve already heard about you, or what’s been said about you on the radio’ (Reader, in ALNAP, 2014a). Urban populations are also more likely to be critical of existing media; while this may be an opportunity for deeper two-way engagement, it also makes urban audiences more cautious about the messages they receive (Currion, 2014).

Finally, urban populations generally have access to a wide range of communication channels, which in turn presents challenges and opportunities (Currion, 2014). The biggest opportunity is the ability to use multiple communication channels, which has proven effective in a number of urban crises (Zinyama and Mlalazi, 2007; Wall and Chery, 2010; Jean, 2014; Sokpoh and Carpenter, 2014; Reader, in ALNAP, 2014a). Having a comprehensive communications strategy that uses a variety of methods helps avoid misunderstandings and

creates opportunities for deeper engagement. It can also make it easier to communicate with different segments of the population (Carpenter, in ALNAP, 2014a).

There are a number of approaches available for humanitarians seeking to communicate with urban populations. Table 2 explores some of these options, identifying potential advantages and disadvantages based on the nature of communities, as well as the specific communication challenges outlined above.

Table 2. Methods of communication in urban contexts

Method	Advantages for urban context	Disadvantages for urban context
SMS (text messages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rate of mobile phone ownership. • Opportunity to use data from mobile phone companies to inform response. • Many different approaches/uses possible. • Can be a two-way information exchange. • Example: In Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed an SMS alert system in partnership with SoukTel allowing school officials to send alerts to parents and emergency responders in the event of a security incident at the school (SoukTel, 2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages can be overwhelming, especially when there are multiple senders. In some cases, for-profit companies have used SMS to send false information or advertisements. • Repeated content in messages can be ignored. • Over-congested networks can fail. • If not set up in advance, mobile companies can be overwhelmed. • Example: In the Haiti earthquake response, IFRC experienced a number of challenges relating to congestion and network issues. It also wanted to target messages to relevant recipients. To address these challenges, it established a protocol for SMS that geographically targeted messages based on cell tower location; reduced message volume by only sending messages to phones turned on; and included an opt-out function for recipients.

Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to be connected to the Internet. • Provides opportunity for two-way information exchange. • Ability to share diverse range of info including pictures, documents, links. • Increasingly used by people around the world, platforms developing features for use in crisis such as Facebook's 'Safety Check'. • Example: In the Ebola response, organisations successfully used WhatsApp, Twitter and even an app to disseminate health information (Smout, 2015; Thomas et al., 2015). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot assume Internet connectivity, particularly if telecommunications disrupted. • Difficult to target messages – platforms used globally.
Phone hotlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective two-way communication. • Can be through a (neutral) third party provider, so information received can be anonymous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires time to set up and maintain (not an instant solution). • Can inadvertently receive feedback for other organisations.
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to spread message widely using existing communication method, which can dispel rumours and can also be an effective way to disseminate information. • Especially effective at ensuring consistency and reach of message (Cross & Johnson et al., 2011). • Example: IFRC used Radio Kwa Wouj in the Haiti earthquake, a call-in show to answer questions on health and sanitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often just one-way communication. • Depends on number of people who listen to radio in a given area. • Not targeted, the same message is received by everyone listening. • Example: CARE used radio to share key information with the public about targeting criteria and distribution points. However, it encountered protests at distribution points from men who disagreed with the gendered targeting criteria (Maxman, 2006).
Message boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be an effective way to disseminate basic information to a large population. • Effective where technology and infrastructure have been destroyed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost for maintenance. • Only seen by those passing board location(s). • Requires high rate of literacy. • Works well in some areas, poorly in others. • Example: In Haiti, it took one full-time IFRC staff member to keep board information updated.

Face to face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a relationship to build. • Can be instant. • Reduces the chance of miscommunication and emphasises understanding. • Allows non-verbal communication. • Example: In Haiti, the J/P Haiti Relief Organization (JPHRO) was working in a spontaneous settlement on the Petionville Club Golf Course when the site became a flooding risk and people relocated. It quickly opened 14 information kiosks across the Course with staff on hand to answer questions immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-intensive. • Message received by each person can be inconsistent. • Can be a cost to crisis-affected people, if they have to travel to an office or are unavailable owing to work schedule. • May be unrealistic to hold large group meetings where populations have more ‘diverse time commitments’ (Maynard, 2015). • Example: Large meetings or distribution points can be unrealistic and even dangerous in urban areas. In Columbia, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) used mobile clinics to provide services and a point of communication across large areas.
---------------------	--	---

3.1 Communication in context

In utilising these various communication methods, it can be helpful to determine what channels of communication already exist. What does the target population already use to get information? How do urban communities raise issues or provide feedback outside of a humanitarian response? What information is most trusted? Working with existing channels can increase the credibility and reach of your message (Grünwald and Carpenter, 2014; Practical Action, n.d.a.).

Similarly, it is important to understand the broader urban context. Many urban environments have complex social issues, including violence, migration and livelihoods – these can all impact the reach and credibility of communication, and so it is helpful to map out the social structures and demographics that make up urban areas (Sokpoh and Carpenter, 2014; Wall and Chery, 2010; Dickinson, n.d.). Understanding context can also help ensure the message is designed for that particular context (Practical Action, n.d.a.).

In the Hurricane Katrina response, a group of business and community leaders, ‘Bring New Orleans Back’, launched a campaign to bring residents back home. They created maps to illustrate inhabitable areas that could be turned into wetlands. However, confusion about the maps meant the initiative became entangled in race and land rights politics (Blakely et al., 2012). The initiative had not involved the population adequately or understood the local culture – and subsequently got the messaging wrong.

Finding the right message and communicating it clearly can be quite a challenge, but is of utmost importance given the issues presented above, particularly around the scale and density of the urban environment. Humanitarians need to consider language and simplicity of phrasing (Sanderson et al., 2012; Practical Action, n.d.a.). Repeated messaging is also important: for one project in a Nairobi slum, participants had forgotten the criteria and were unclear on process by the time it began (MacAuslan and Schofeld, 2011). Most people need to hear a message a number of times, in part for comprehension and in part because it can take time to accept a new idea (Practical Action, n.d.a.).

Humanitarians can also work with communities and community leaders to identify communication channels and provide feedback to improve contextual relevance. Thinking creatively and out of the box is also helpful. Research following the Kobe Earthquake identified that the traditional top-down approach to disaster communications, sharing information on a ‘need-to-know’ basis, wasn’t working: the diversity of actors and the interests of urban dwellers led to calls for an open access communication style, allowing for inputs from a wide variety of actors and open access to information shared (Noam and Sato, 1996, in Townsend and Moss, 2005). Working with community leaders has been a successful approach in numerous responses. In Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, a local NGO partnering with Oxfam used a network of outreach volunteers to act as promoters, meeting individually with families to share information. In Guyana, more creative approaches were used, including street performance and school training sessions (Pelling, 2010). In Haiti, JPHRO established a number of kiosks and followed this up with community mobilisers conducting tent-to-tent outreach for informal discussions (Wall and Chery, 2010).

Box 4: Communicating Ebola to urban Liberian people

During the West African Ebola response in 2014–2015, communication was a critical gap that had an impact on effectiveness. Research conducted by a team of anthropologists (Abramowitz et al., 2015) looked at community perceptions of communication during the response. It noted, ‘When community leaders called for the creation of a communications infrastructure, it was because their calls to hotlines had gone unanswered. When they called for the training of community members to provide care to the sick, manage holding centres, administer quarantines, and isolate or bury the dead, it was because they had experienced the social, medial and ecological consequences of response teams not arriving in a timely manner or failing to come at all.’

A significant part of the problem was messaging. Communication campaigns focused on basic health messages (What is Ebola? What are the symptoms?), but people felt they already understood this basic information and needed a deeper level of message, about how to proceed given the collapse of the health infrastructure and practical advice on caring for families in quarantine, transporting the sick to health facilities and what to do when health teams were delayed in collecting bodies. Public health messaging about physical contact failed to address the fact that care cannot be given without contact. Messages were at times inconsistent (‘Don’t touch’ in some messages; ‘Touch only with plastic gloves’ in others), which decreased confidence in the message, which seemed impractical and unhelpful in the context.

The research also found that the population wanted a greater range of communication channels to be used, including video, door-to-door and billboards, all in local languages. They emphasised the need for daily communication with consistent messaging.

4. Involving and mobilising urban communities

The involvement and ownership of crisis-affected people in any humanitarian response is important. They ensure the humanitarian response builds on existing coping mechanisms and resources and understands the scale and context, in particular the needs and capacities of the community (Brookings Institution, 2008; Pavanello, 2012; Gupta, 2015). Disasters can be a triggering event that mobilises communities to collectively identify problems and potential solutions, and thus result in social change (Anderson, 2008). Where populations feel ownership over the response, this can improve social capital, even in ‘potentially antagonistic communities’ (Canadian Consortium on Human Security, 2006). Mobilisation also affirms the dignity of crisis-affected people, and can support inclusion and human rights (Roaf, 2005; Lyons and Schilderman, 2011; Riiskjaer and Bonnici, 2011).

In urban contexts, populations are grouped in diverse ways. There is no singular ‘typical’ community (Cordaid, 2013a). People belong to many different communities – spatial (because of living in the same geographical area, being exposed to the same disaster risks in a shared location, etc.) and social (often intangible social connections among individuals formed as a result of culture, identity and social capital) – and therefore no community is a homogenous entity (*ibid.*). While there are many ways to think of ‘community’, the nature of urban environments (including the diversity, scale, mobility and pattern of labour, transport and services) means social and spatial aspects are particularly important, and certainly interconnected.

Careful consideration of participation and mobilisation is especially important in urban areas, where there are large numbers of people, who are unlikely to fall into one cohesive ‘community’ (Davies, 2010). Building on its work in Indonesia, MercyCorps (2009b) identified a number of differences between urban and rural community mobilisation, which Table 3 presents in adapted form.

Table 3. Community mobilisation in rural vs. urban contexts

Rural	Urban
Concepts of participation and mobilisation are new, take time to communicate.	Population is more educated, easily grasps new ideas.
Strong community unity and solidarity.	Lack identity as collective unit.
Lack of attention from government, remote. However, able to mobilise a greater total contribution, perhaps because of community solidarity.	Able to advocate and press for resources to be allocated.
A broad range of people from across a village mobilise and address a range of issues within the community.	A narrower group mobilises around an institution (school/water user association) that affects them specifically. However, working with other groups/institutions can emerge over time.
Greater access to materials and skilled labour.	Greater access to cash.

Among these factors, lack of a cohesive community is particularly problematic for humanitarians working in urban areas – and even more of a challenge when humanitarians do not understand the dynamics of community in this space. The challenges manifest in a number of ways.

One of the biggest obstacles to participation of crisis-affected people in urban areas is that the population may be unable or unwilling to be involved. This can be for a number of reasons, including differing work schedules, lack of time or burnout. The opportunity cost of taking time to participate may be too high (Patrick, 2011). Negative experiences with one organisation may influence willingness to engage again – and there is also a risk of over-participation, whereby the same population is repeatedly consulted (Brookings Institution, 2008). Given the large number of stakeholders in an urban area, inclusive participation can take longer, which may also be a barrier for engagement (Practical Action, n.d.a.). Where a group of urban residents living in an affected area does not have prior ties (because their neighbourhood does not exist as a ‘community’ or because the number of different priorities will be greater), it can take even longer, and ultimately people may be unwilling to engage in a participatory exercise together (Practical Action, n.d.b.). It is important for humanitarians to reflect on the fact that, ‘particularly in the context of displacement, communities simply may not possess a familiarity with the local context that would make all types of participatory activities beneficial’ (Brookings Institution, 2008: 57).

There can also be institutional obstacles to participation, including lack of legal frameworks and failure to leave room for participation in planning processes. There may also be no physical space to gather people together. These issues can be particularly problematic where populations have been encouraged to participate, and thus have higher expectations, which cannot be fulfilled or which are unrealistic (Brooking Institution, 2008).

Finally, there are challenges around involvement at different scales, particularly informal versus formal processes. In creating or supporting smaller-scale participatory actions, there is the risk of working against the democratic participation of those engaged in more formalised representative structures, for instance opportunities to engage with committees established by local government.

Box 5: Participation/consultation in Gölcük

In the city of Gölcük, Turkey, following the 1999 earthquake, reconstruction efforts faced barriers to participation at three levels. Institutionally, there was no legal responsibility to seek participatory input. The World Bank held two rounds of public meetings with the affected population, which were well attended. However, reconstruction plans did not leave room for feedback received from these participatory exercises. At the practitioner level, speed was prioritised over consultation, and there was a narrow stakeholder definition. Recovery practitioners had different priorities to those of the affected population, and did not seek the opinions of local government, community organisations, area businesses or other relevant actors. Finally, at the affected population level, individuals were sceptical of government recovery processes and psychologically not ready to participate in the immediate term. Learning from this experience, Blakey et al. (2012) gave the recommendation that practitioners build trust by ‘standing back, listening and learning from the survivors as well as speaking a language free of technical jargon that the survivors can understand’. In sum, recovery planners need to put the people before their plans.

Keeping in mind the particular differences between involvement and mobilisation of rural and urban communities, a number of strategies and approaches have been effective in past urban crises.

The first is to ensure participation is considered before a crisis occurs; if this has not been done beforehand, it will be difficult to engage urban communities (ACHR and IIED, 2008), particularly as it requires clear goals, contextual understanding, good coordination and facilitation (Brookings Institution, 2008). Participation does not happen simply because stakeholders come together. It succeeds only when properly organised, structured, focused and supported – in short, facilitated (Practical Action, 2012).

Second, as part of this preparation, a clear understanding of existing community structures and how they relate to one another is vital (Channel Research and P-KIM, 2012). Humanitarians can use tools such as action planning workshops and participatory stakeholder mapping to identify community structures and use these as a basis for engagement (MercyCorps, 2009b). In particular, ‘understanding the roles and relationships among business, government and civil society stakeholders in a community is important for any mobilisation effort’ but especially so in urban areas, given the number of different stakeholders (ibid.). In particular, understanding existing capacity is important, and can help humanitarians understand how best they can support urban communities. Several organisations have had success in using ‘coaching’ as a form of capacity-building. Developed by the Norwegian Refugee Council in camp responses, coaching can be ‘an effective capacity building methodology for communities, providing procedures and tools for regular follow-up and supporting sustainability through self-management’. It encourages the ‘community identifying their own goals and taking action towards achieving them by using local means and resources’ (Global CCCM Cluster, 2014: 62).

Second, participation requires humanitarians to go beyond the traditional conception of crisis-affected people as ‘beneficiaries’ (Gupta, 2015) and to see them as partners. In Haiti, Global Communities used a participatory planning process to select which reconstruction activities to implement in Ravine Pintade. This process involved negotiation between various stakeholders within the community. It approached residents more as clients than as beneficiaries. If community members were unhappy with work being done, they would speak up. Having been involved in the planning, they were invested in the programme and shared concerns freely (Lebleu, in ALNAP, 2014b). Similarly, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has tried to incorporate feedback mechanisms with participation, setting up systems where communities act and are accountable to themselves. During implementation, community contracts are signed, with the community becoming a full partner in the response (Meeuwissen, in ALNAP, 2014b).

Third, to address more practical barriers of time/schedule constraints, humanitarians need to be flexible and adaptable. Participatory activities can be planned for holidays/weekends, or conducted on site at businesses, schools or hospitals (Patrick, 2011). Where populations are widely dispersed, there is a need for more creative approaches. After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans residents who had dispersed around the country participated in simultaneous meetings in cities around the country, linked via satellite (Brookings Institution, 2008). Where different stakeholders are not willing to participate with one another, humanitarians can provide space for different groups at different times (ELLA, 2011). Technology can also be helpful in achieving the outcomes of community mobilisation as well as working through the process. Working together to map a dense urban area using GPS mapping tools can provide a valuable information product as an output, and also brings residents together to generate an understanding of one another throughout the process (UN-Habitat, 2011; Baker, 2012).

Another approach that is particularly helpful in urban contexts that lack trust and cohesion is to focus on shared goals and resources. One of the advantages or opportunities found in urban environments is the potential resource a community can mobilise. Writing about the recovery in Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch, Blakey et al. (2012) noted that, 'the communities that recover best will be the ones that have been empowered to capitalise on their own money and manpower'. Focusing on achieving collective goals can also be useful. MercyCorps (2009a) used systematic data collection plotted on spider graphs to visually depict progress towards targets when working on an urban nutrition programme in Jakarta, Indonesia. In another example, active participation in a large slum with water, sanitation and hygiene and housing challenges encouraged trust and social cohesion in a community that otherwise experienced high levels of violence and youth unemployment. While the project resulted in a number of new facilities and infrastructure for the community, most 'noteworthy' was 'the positive impact on social inclusion and cohesion... they built social networks, increasing trust between neighbourhoods' (del Valle, n.d.).

Finally, as many of the above examples suggest, involving and mobilising communities in urban areas requires more than a technical skill set. In many ways, 'soft' skills, including the ability to relate to communities and understand their needs, can be more important than technical knowledge (Fortune and Rasal, 2010).

Box 6: Community committees and mobilisers

One common approach to participation is the establishment of a group of community representatives, often called a ‘committee’. This model was first used in camp and rural environments and is often also called a ‘camp committee’. They are at times pre-existing and self-organised but in other places are assembled with support from humanitarian or development practitioners. Many of the challenges presented earlier in this paper around representativeness are important to consider when thinking of establishing a committee (MFA Netherlands, 2011). However, they have been used successfully in a number of urban responses, and lessons learnt have been successfully captured (Mathew and Kelly, 2008; Fortune and Rasal, 2010; Gasagara et al., 2010; Ievers and Pacaigue, 2010; Pelling, 2010; Clermont et al., 2011; MFA Netherlands, 2011; Mukpo, 2015; del Valle, n.d.). The role of the humanitarian community in supporting the development of a committee is important. As Clermont et al. (2011) explain, ‘You can’t just set up a committee. You have to work with them and help them with management, show them how to organise a meeting, how to manage a small kitty, etc.’

Many self-appointed camp committees claimed leadership roles in the Haiti response. These were in some cases used to communicate and facilitate distribution of aid, though they often received criticism for being untransparent and inequitable (Clermont et al., 2011). IFRC came across a camp committee in Annexe de la Marie, Haiti, comprising the loudest and strongest gang leaders. The surrounding community did not feel they could challenge the committee, and, because of safety concerns, neither could IFRC. It was a major challenge, having to work with the committee in order to continue working in the area, but at the same time trying to ensure the most vulnerable were reached (Reader, in ALNAP, 2014a). As Sharon Reader explains, ‘It was not the camp committee that we would have chosen, but what we did try to do was work with them while working around them... We challenged them where we could and gave in where we had to’ (ibid.). IFRC addressed this by adding additional members to the committee where possible, verifying information through liaison volunteers and opening up committee meetings to the wider community. ‘We tried to make sure as much as possible, that the community were hearing things from us directly, as well as from the committee’ (ibid.). Similarly, Concern found adopting a strong negotiation approach was an effective way to reduce outlandish requests from camp committees. It focused on making an agreement and encouraging the committee to stick to it (Clermont et al., 2011). The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) developed an assessment tool for camp committees, which they employed to increase participation of community members, particularly women and people with disabilities (Gasagara et al., 2010).

Community members can also participate as mobilisers, engaging with other urban residents as a sort of liaison, drawing on their understanding of the context but not necessarily making decisions on behalf of a broader community. In Liberia, informal groups of local people served as community volunteers and were able to promote health awareness and obtain critical information for Liberian health officials. ‘Although many Liberians initially refused to acknowledge the existence of Ebola, these groups convinced their neighbours to adopt preventative measures and seek treatment if ill’ (Mukpo, 2015). It can be a challenge to mobilise people following a disaster, as the impact on a crisis can be hard to overcome. In urban areas, communities may be less willing to participate on an unpaid basis, particularly as they may be more reliant on employment income (rather than agrarian income in rural areas) and be unable to take the time off work. This can be addressed by offering cash incentives for participation, though there are risks of corruption (Clermont et al., 2011). Others have found success by using inspirational and motivational techniques to encourage people to get involved (Fortune and Rasal, 2010). Depending on the context, it may be important to provide psychosocial support to mobilisers, who may encounter emotional and psychological difficulty in engaging with their communities, particularly where they themselves have suffered loss and trauma from the crisis (Wall and Chery, 2010)

5. Conclusion

Working with crisis-affected people in urban areas calls on humanitarians to carefully consider their approach, and to adapt as necessary. Urban populations, and their diverse range of communities and social groupings, vary in the spatial and social characteristics that bind them. Because communities differ in shape, size and composition, it can be a challenge to understand what constitutes a community, where the boundaries are drawn and who is in and who is out.

Recognising the diversity of urban people and communities is important for humanitarians, as the heterogeneity of the population and the dispersal of vulnerable people across a wide area has impacts on the ability of humanitarians to effectively understand urban crises, target vulnerable populations, communicate with affected people and support participation and ownership/recovery.

Humanitarians have successfully employed a number of strategies in order to work effectively with urban populations. However, given the range of different urban contexts where crises can occur, more work is needed to identify a broader range of approaches to find and engage with urban communities, particularly where vulnerable populations are marginalised and may be hidden.

Endnotes

1. Inclusion error in targeting refers to those benefiting from a programme who should not (not part of target group), whereas exclusion error is the likelihood of people being missed out from a programme they should benefit from (are part of target group but do not receive aid) (USAID, 2008).
2. Patel et al, 2017 have conducted a systematic review to note the existing evidence base on various targeting approaches for urban contexts which may also be useful.

References

- Abramowitz, S.A., McLean, K., McKune, S., Bardosh, K., Fallah, M., Monger, J., Tehoungue, K. and Omidian, P. (2015) 'Community-centered responses to Ebola in urban Liberia: the view from below'. *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20097>
- ACF. (2010) *Identification of vulnerable people in urban environments*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7038>
- ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights) and IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) (2008) 'People and disasters'. Presentation at World Urban Forum 4, Nanjing. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24756>
- ADPC (2002) Community-based initiatives in Kathmandu Valley: Pioneers in earthquake mitigation and preparedness. *Safer Cities*, 1. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7247>
- Alexander, K.A., Sanderson, C., Marathe, M., Lewis, B.L., Rivers, C., Shaman, J., Drake, J., Lofgren, E., Dato, V., Eisenberg, M. and Eubank, S. (2015) 'What factors might have led to the emergence of Ebola in West Africa?' *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23722>
- ALNAP (2014a) 'Engaging urban communities in humanitarian response'. ALNAP Annual Meeting, London, 11 March. <http://www.alnap.org/resource/10793>
- ALNAP (2014b) 'Engaging communities in urban areas'. Urban Webinar 7, London, 15 April. <http://www.alnap.org/webinar/8>
- ALNAP/Groupe URD (2009) *Participation handbook for humanitarian field workers - Involving crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response*. <http://www.alnap.org/resource/8531>
- Anderson, J.L. (2012) *Urban displacement and peacebuilding an analysis of South African social cohesion interventions*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12150>
- Anderson, W.A. (2008) 'Mobilisation of the black community following Hurricane Katrina: From disaster assistance to advocacy of social change and equity'. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 26(3): 197–217. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24237>
- Assadourian, E. (2008) Engaging communities for a sustainable world. In: *State of the world: innovations for a sustainable economy*. The World Watch Institute. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24238>
- Baker, J.L. (ed.) (2012) *Climate change, disaster risk and the urban poor: Cities building resilience for a changing world*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19906>
- Batchelor, S. and Scott, N. (2001) *Community participation in urban water services*. Tearfund. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9754>
- Blakey, E.J., Fisher, P. and Horne, K. (eds) (2012) *Managing urban disaster recovery: Policy, planning, concepts and cases*. Crisis Response Press. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24740>
- Bottnick, L. and Sianni, A. (2011) *No place to stay: A review of the implementation of UNCHR's urban refugee policy in Bulgaria*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6730>

- Camina, M. (2004) *Understanding and engaging deprived communities*. London: UK Home Office. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24239>
- Campbell, E., Crisp, J. & Kiragu, E. (2011) *Navigating Nairobi: A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Kenya's capital city*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6445>
- Canadian Consortium on Human Security. (2006) *Human Security for an Urban Century: Local Challenges, Global Perspectives*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6570>
- Chazaly, C. (2011) *Beneficiary communications evaluation: Haiti earthquake operation*. Geneva: IFRC. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6157>
- Church World Service (2013) *Accessing Services in the City: The significance of urban refugee-host relations in Cameroon, Indonesia and Pakistan*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12435>
- Clermont, C., Sanderson, D., Sharma, A. and Spraos, H. (2011) *Urban disasters: Lessons from Haiti*. London: DEC. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9263>
- Clinton, L. and Wendell, E. (2013) *Urban refugee assistance and the informal settlement: past precedents and unrealized potentials*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24240>
- Cordaid (2013a) *10 years: Cordaid community managed DRR – the essence, results and way forward*. The Hague: Cordaid. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9291>
- Cordaid (2014) *Serious gaming to strengthen urban multistakeholder processes*. The Hague: Cordaid. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24241>
- Cordaid (2015) *Smart solutions for slums*. The Hague: Cordaid. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24242>
- Crisp, J., Obi, N. & Umlas, L. (2012) *But when will our turn come? A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Malaysia*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6798>
- Crisp, J. et al, (2009) *Surviving the city: A review of UNHCR's operation for Iraqi refugees in urban areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6651>
- Cross, T. and Johnston, A. (2011) *Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Emergencies: A toolkit for practitioners*. Oxford, Cash Learning Partnership. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7056>
- Currión, P. (2014) 'Rapid humanitarian assessments in urban settings'. Technical Brief. Geneva: ACAPS. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20125>
- Darcy, J. and Hofmann, C.-A. (2003) 'Humanitarian needs assessment and decision-making'. HPG Briefing 13. London: ODI. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24243>
- Davies, A. (2010) *Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas*. <http://www.alnap.org/resource/6466>
- Danielson N. (2012) 'Urban refugee protection in Cairo: The role of communication, information and technology', in *New Issues in Refugee Research 236*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24244>

- Del Valle, J. (2011) *Urban upgrading with social inclusion: The case of Villa Tranquilla*. London: ELLA, IIED. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10084>
- Dickey, V. & Allen, R. (2009b) *Indonesia: Mobilizing urban communities*. Portland, OR: MercyCorps. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12839>
- Dickinson, J. (n.d.) *Accountability and feedback mechanisms in an urban vs rural setting: What are the questions we should be asking?* <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23483>
- Dubini, R. et al. (2013) *A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Ecuador*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9063>
- ELLA (Evidence and Lessons from Latin America) (2011) 'Multi-stakeholder participation in city governance'. Case Reflections Brief. Focus Cities Programme. London: IIED. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10081>
- FANTA (Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance) II (2008) *Emergencies in urban settings: A technical review of food-based program options*. Washington, DC: USAID. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6488>
- Farnell, F et al. (2003) *'Faith' in urban regeneration? Engaging faith communities in urban regeneration*. Policy Press Bristol. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24245>
- Field, S. (2010) From urban risks: moving from humanitarian responses to disaster prevention. Conference report. Wilton Park. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23487>
- Freeman, R. (2013) MENA workshop on urban disaster risk reduction and management: Building urban resilience. Beirut Dec 2013. IFRC. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24246>
- Fortune, U. and Rasal, P. (2010) *British Red Cross mass sanitation module 2010 Haiti Earthquake Response Post Deployment Learning Evaluation*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6038>
- FS Cluster Urban Working Group (2014) Adapting to an urban world – desk review. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21953>
- Gasagara, E., Sorenson, T.E. and Rogers, E. (2010) *HAP deployment tool Haiti Final Report*. Haiti: HAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10553>
- Global Alliance for Urban Crises (2016) 'Urban Crises: Recommendations'. Global Alliance for Urban Crises. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23250>
- Global CCCM Cluster (2014) 'Urban displacement and outside of camp'. Desk Review. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24248>
- Global Cities Research Institute (2011) *Annual Review 2011 – Global Cities*. RMIT University. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/11112>
- Groupe URD (2011). *Beyond emergency relief in Haiti*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6044>

- Grünewald, F. (2012) 'Aid in a city at war: the case of Mogadishu, Somalia'. *Disasters*, 36 (S1), pp. 105-125. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8809>
- Grünewald, F. and Carpenter, S. (2014) *Urban preparedness: Lessons from the Kathmandu Valley*. London: British Red Cross and Groupe URD. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10884>
- Guay, J. (2016) *Social Cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host communities in Lebanon and Jordan*. World Vision. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21419>
- Gupta, H. (2015) *Home sweet home: Housing practices and tools that support durable solutions for urban IDPs*. Geneva: IDMC. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19887>
- Haysom, S. and el Sarraj, W. (2012) *Sanctuary in the city? Urban displacement and vulnerability in the Gaza Strip*. London: Humanitarian Policy Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8358>
- Haysom, S. (2013) *Sanctuary in the city? Urban displacement and vulnerability: Final Report*. London: Humanitarian Policy Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23494>
- Healy, S. and Tiller, S. (2013) 'Out of the spotlight and hard to reach: Syrian refugees in Jordan's cities'. *Humanitarian Exchange*, 59, pp. 22-25. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9211>
- Ievers, J. and Pacalgue, S. (2010) *Evaluation of Christian Aids Response to Typhoon Ketsana*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/5992>
- IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (2012) 'Two-way SMS communication with disaster affected people in Haiti'. CDAC Network Media and Tech Fair, March. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/11540>
- Jean, I., with Bonino, F. (2014) "'We are here": IFRC's experiences with communication and feedback channels for affected populations in Haiti'. ALNAP/CDA Case Study. London: ALNAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12815>
- JEFAP (Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme). (2003) *Manual for the provision of general food distributions during emergency programmes in Malawi*. Lilongwe: JEFAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/5291>
- Johnson, A. (2011) *Haiti RTE of the 2010 earthquake response: Findings, recommendations and suggested follow-up*. London: CRS. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6074>
- Knox Clarke, P. and Ramalingam, B. (2012) *Meeting the urban challenge: Adapting humanitarian efforts to an urban world*. London: ALNAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6606>
- Kyazze, A.B., Baizan, P. and Carpenter, S. (2012) 'Learning from the city'. Urban Learning Project Scoping Study. London: British Red Cross. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7954>
- Levine, S. et al (2012) *The Relevance of 'Resilience'?* London: Humanitarian Policy Group <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10970>
- Li Rosi, A., Formicano, M. & Jandrijasevic, L. (2011) *Lives in Limbo: A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Tajikistan*. UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6732>

- Loquercio, D. and Dikkes, M. (2013) Preparatory notes for session on urban humanitarian action at WVI Accountability to Communities Workshop, September. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24757>
- Lucchi, E. (2013) *Humanitarian interventions in situations of urban violence*. London: ALNAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9810>
- Lyons, M. and Schildeman, T. (2011) *Putting people at the centre of reconstruction*. Rugby and London: Practical Action and London South Bank University <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6761>
- Macauslan, I. and Phelps, L. (2012) *Emergency food security and livelihoods urban programme evaluation: Final report*. Oxford: Oxfam. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7074>
- MacAuslan, I. and Schofield, L., (2011), *Evaluation of Concern Kenya's Korogocho Emergency and Food Security Cash Transfer Initiative*. Concern Worldwide and Oxford Policy Management. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9189>
- Macklin, C. (2014) *Ready! Lessons in the design of humanitarian games*. Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre & PETLab, Parsons The New School for Design. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23295>
- Maietta, M. (2013) *Key lessons to learn for Typhoon Haiyan response*. Paris: MEAL Humanitarian Technical Working Group, Save the Children and IRIS France. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/9736>
- Martin, E. & Sluga, N. (2011) *Sanctuary in the City? Urban displacement and vulnerability in Yei, South Sudan*. London: HPG. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6430>
- Mathew, A.B. and Kelly, K. (2008) *Disaster preparedness in urban immigrant communities: Lessons learned from recent catastrophic events and their relevance to Latino and Asian communities in Southern California*. Los Angeles, CA: Romas Rivera Policy Institute. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7783>
- Maxman, A. (2006) 'Humanitarian relief in chronically vulnerable urban and peri-urban contexts – responding to Tropical Storm Jeanne in Gonaives, Haiti' in *Humanitarian Exchange*, 35: 13–15. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6552>
- Maynard, V. (2015) *Humanitarian response to urban crises: Experiences following Typhoon Haiyan*. London: DFID. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20190>
- McGearty, S., O'Hagan, P., Montinard, M. (2012) 'Together we are stronger'. *Independent final evaluation of the ACT Alliance Haiti Appeal HTI-101*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7466>
- MercyCorps (2009a) *Community mobilization sector approach*. Portland, OR: MercyCorps. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12840>
- Metcalf, V. et al (2012) *Sanctuary in the city? Urban displacement and vulnerability in Kabul*. London: Humanitarian Policy Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7092>
- Metcalf, V. et al. (2011) *Sanctuary in the city? Urban displacement and vulnerability in Nairobi*. London: Humanitarian Policy Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6429>

- MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Netherlands (2011) *Assisting earthquake victims: Evaluation of Dutch cooperating aid agencies support to Haiti in 2010*. The Hague: MFA. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6191>
- Miller, J. and Stoltz, K. (2008) *Moving beyond rhetoric: Consultation and participation with populations displaced by conflict or natural disasters*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8751>
- Mohanty, S. (2011) *Nairobi Urban Social Protection Programme*. Oxford: Oxfam. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7072>
- Morand, M. & Crisp, J. (2013) *Destination Delhi: A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in India's capital city*. UNHCR <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8570>
- Morand, M., Mahoney, K., Bellour, S. and Rabkin, J. (2012) The implementation of UNHCR's policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas. Global Survey. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10816>
- Mosel, I. and Jackson, A. (2013) *Sanctuary in the city? Urban displacement and vulnerability in Peshawar, Pakistan*. London: Humanitarian Policy Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8282>
- Mountfield, B. (2015) 'Using the Sphere Standards in urban settings: Guidance for humanitarian practitioners'. Draft, 25 November. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23536>
- MSF (2011) *Urban survivors: Humanitarian challenges of a rising slum population*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22250>
- Mukpo, A. (2015) 'Young people played a game-changing role in the battle against Ebola in Liberia' in *The Guardian*, 15 April. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23921>
- Pardeshi, G. and Kakrani, V. (2006) 'Challenges and options for the delivery of primary healthcare in disadvantaged urban areas' in *Indian journal of community literature*, 31 (3) pp 132-136. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6548>
- Patel, R.B., King, J., Phelps, L. and Sanderson, D. (2017). *What practices are used to identify and prioritize vulnerable populations affected by urban humanitarian emergencies? A systematic review*. Humanitarian Evidence Programme. Oxford: Oxfam GB. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22444>
- Patrick, J. (2011) 'Haiti earthquake response – emerging evaluation lessons' in *Evaluation Insights*, 1, June. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6125>
- Pavanello, S. (2012) *Rethinking the humanitarian response: Emerging approaches for engagement in urban areas*. Stockholm: ATHA. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20067>
- Pelling, M. (2010) *Review and systematization of disaster preparedness experiences in urban areas in the Caribbean region*. Oxford: Oxfam. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7323>

- Power, A. and Willmot, H. (2007) *Social capital within the neighbourhood*. London: CASE. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24254>
- Practical Action (2012) *Community based urban planning toolkit: A step-by-step approach to community based urban planning and development in Zimbabwe*. Rugby: Practical Action. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23549>
- Practical Action (2010a) 'Communicating better building'. PCR Tool 9. Rugby: Practical Action. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6792>
- Practical Action (2010b) 'Participatory design'. PCR Tool 8. Practical Action. Rugby: Practical Action. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6793>
- Practical Action (2010c) 'Planning with the people'. PCR Tool 7. Practical Action. Rugby: Practical Action. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6794>
- Rayos, J.C. (2010) *Community-driven disaster intervention: experiences of the homeless people's federation philippines, incorporated*. IIED. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6913>
- Riiskjaer, M. and Bonnici, G. (2011) *The way to San Jose: A review of the implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Costa Rica*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6733>
- Roaf, V. (2005) *Community mapping: A tool for community organising*. London: WaterAid. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24255>
- Sanderson, D., Knox Clarke, P. and Campbell, L. (2012) *Responding to urban disasters: Learning from previous relief and recovery operations*. London: ALNAP. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7772>
- Schmeidl, S. and Tyler, D. (2015) *Listening to women and girls displaced to urban Afghanistan*. NRC. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19957>
- Shaw, R. (2002) Sustainable recovery of Afghanistan: Focus on community-based initiatives. Presented at Annual Meeting of Japan Society for International Development <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24758>
- Sherwood, A. et al. (2014) *Supporting durable solutions to urban, post-disaster displacement: challenges and opportunities in Haiti*. Brookings Institution and International Organization for Migration. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24256>
- Smout, E. (2015) 'Communicating in a crisis like Ebola: Facts and figures' in *SciDevNet*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23873>
- Sokpoh, B. and Carpenter, S. (2014) *Urban livelihoods recovery: Lessons from Port-au-Prince, Haiti*. London: British Red Cross and Groupe URD. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12858>
- SoukTel (2012) 'UNESCO uses SoukTel online messaging system: Sending SMS emergency alerts to families in Gaza'. Case Study. CDAC Network Media and Tech Fair. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/11538>

- Stanley, D. (2003) 'What Do We Know about Social Cohesion: The Research Perspective of the Federal Government's Social Cohesion Research Network' in *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28 (1) pp. 5-17. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24257>
- Thomas, A., Rezvan, M. and Frankuchen, A. (2015) *From response to recovery in the Ebola crisis: Revitalizing health systems and economies*. Dalberg Group. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/23874>
- Townsend, A.M. and Moss, M.L. (2005) *Telecommunications infrastructure in disasters: Preparing cities for crisis communications*. New York: NYU. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24258>
- Tyler, K., MacClune, K. & Allan, C. (2014) *Engaging Stakeholders in a Preliminary Urban Assessment: Workshop Facilitation Materials and Background Reading On Using Stakeholder Engagement and The Resilience Approach to Identify Entry Points for Building Urban Resilience*. American Red Cross. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12801>
- UCL (University College London) (2014) 'A literature review on humanitarian response in urban areas'. First draft for review. London: UCL. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12885>
- UN-Habitat (UN Human Settlements Programme) (2011) *Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas: Review of urban humanitarian challenges in Port-au-Prince*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6466>
- UN-Habitat (2016) 'Informal Settlements'. Habitat III Issue Paper 22. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20567>
- UNHCR. (2009a) *UNHCR Policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20204>
- UNHCR. (2009b) *A community-based approach in UNHCR operations*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24259>
- USAID (2008) *Emergencies in Urban Settings: A Technical Review of Food-Based Program Options*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6488>
- Wall, I. and Chery, Y.G. (2010) *Ann Kite Yo Pale: Let them speak – best practice and lessons learned in communication with disaster-affected communities*. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6188>
- Weiss, L and D Ompad, S Galea, D Vlahov, (2007) 'Defining Neighborhood Boundaries for Urban Health Research', in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2007 June 32 (6 Suppl): S154-S159. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/24260>
- Wilber, R. (2011) *Leveraging women's community leadership: A model for outreach in urban refugee populations*. Cambridge, MA: Institute for Inclusive Security. <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10999>