

Opportunities for Red Cross Red Crescent in Urban Disasters and Climate Crises

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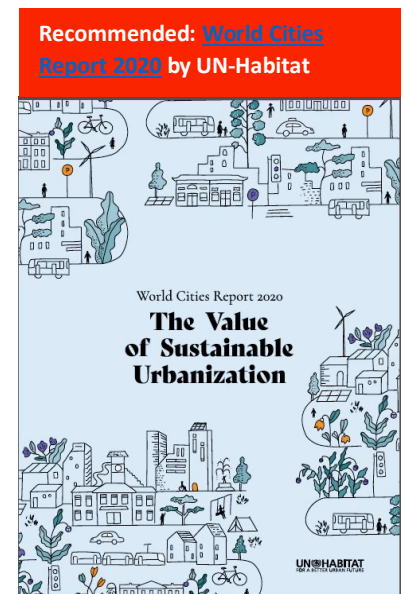
Executive Summary

The world is urbanizing faster than before bringing new challenges and opportunities for humanitarian action. We are witnessing growing number of people exposed to impacts of naturally triggered disasters, climate change, conflict and protracted crises and stresses. At the same time, cities have always been engines of economic prosperity and offers wider range of opportunities for people. Urban settings are not new to International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). The 192 National Societies have thousands of branches and millions of volunteers in cities, respond to urban disasters and contribute to reconstruction recovery efforts in a significant way. The National Societies worked alongside with local governments and city health service providers in responding to COVID in urban areas all around the World.

[IFRC Strategy 2030](#) calls for scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, with a strong focus on urban contexts. IFRC is also committed to contributing [SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities](#)ⁱ and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and promotes the role that Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) urban branches can play in achieving these global ambitions by bringing the community perspectives and local risks and resources to the discussions.

This paper aims to lay out why risks and vulnerabilities faced by urban communities matter to Red Cross Red Crescent and how the National Societies add value in building safer and resilient urban communities. It is also a call for our external partners to collaborate with us on:

- Raising awareness of the humanitarian impacts of rapid and unplanned urbanization, climate change, pandemics, and protracted crises on urban poor and marginalized communities.
- Enhancing individual and collective capacity to respond swiftly to humanitarian challenges in urban areas with a strong emphasize on local actors.
- Reducing the vulnerabilities of the urban poor, particularly those living in slums and informal settlements.
- Strengthening risk informed anticipatory action to minimize the loss of life, livelihoods, and civic assets in collaboration with national and city authorities.
- Promoting inclusive, equitable, and participatory city planning and development processes.



Risks and vulnerabilities faced by urban communities matter to Red Cross Red Crescent

Throughout history opportunities and connections that cities offer attracted people, and urbanization continue to shape how societies function and organize themselves physically, socially, and economically. But the rate and the nature of urbanization that we witness today is radically different from past trends. Today, urban population grows by roughly 1.4 million people every week and will constitute two thirds of world's population by 2050ⁱⁱ. The UN estimates that 90% of the added 2.3 billion people will be in the developing countries in Asia and Africa with majority of the growth happening in small and medium size cities. In Nepal and Mali, for example, the share of people living in urban areas more than quadrupled; in Nigeria and Kenya, they more than tripled in the last decades.

This rapid urban growth forces the newcomers, the poor and the marginalized communities to settle in the most hazardous areas, facing multiple risks stemming from lack of access to basic services, exclusion from governance and protection systems, and insecurities due to lack of property rights and sustainable livelihoods. COVID-19 pandemic which hit the cities hardest showed that the poor and marginalized paid the highest price in terms of health and socio-economic impacts.

Strategy 2030 of the IFRC anticipates a great many changes in the way we live and in the types of crises and vulnerabilities we are likely to encounter. These changes are expected to be more forceful and faster in dynamic urban contexts. As IFRC, our focus over the coming decade will be on reducing the current and future humanitarian impacts of disasters and crises -acute and protracted -and supporting people to thrive in the face of these impacts wherever there is need. Many National Societies are already working in cities. This includes both small-scale community work as well as engagement in significant infrastructure and services projects particularly in conflict contexts, in partnership with the ICRC. In this light, there are four main reasons why IFRC has committed through its member National Societies to make a deliberate effort to increase our engagement and impact in urban areas:

1. Rapid and unplanned urbanization exposes a growing number of people to disaster risks and the effects of climate change.
2. Protracted crises, violence, and the everyday struggle for living in cities are threatening the safety and well-being of disadvantaged urban communities.
3. Existing structural and systemic challenges in cities exacerbate the vulnerabilities and leave many communities behind.
4. Humanitarian and development efforts in urban settings are hindered by the disconnect between communities and key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.



Rapid and unplanned urbanization exposes a growing number of people to disaster risks and the effects of climate change.

Rapid and unplanned urban development damages the environment and increases disaster risks. It forces the most vulnerable –the urban poor, rural migrants, refugees, and displaced populations –to settle in areas often identified as informal settlements or slums. The communities living in these areas face multiple risks stemming from lack of access to basic services, exclusion from urban governance systems and insecurities due to lack of land and property rights and decent and sustainable livelihoods.

In Indonesia, research has suggested that the river flood risk may increase 166 percent over the next 30 years due to rapid expansion of urban areas, and coastal flood risk could be 4.5 times higher over the same period. Damages due to earthquake risk in Kathmandu -measured as the proportion of buildings that collapse in an earthquake- are expected to double to 50 percent by 2045 due to informal building expansion as result of rapid urbanizationⁱⁱⁱ.

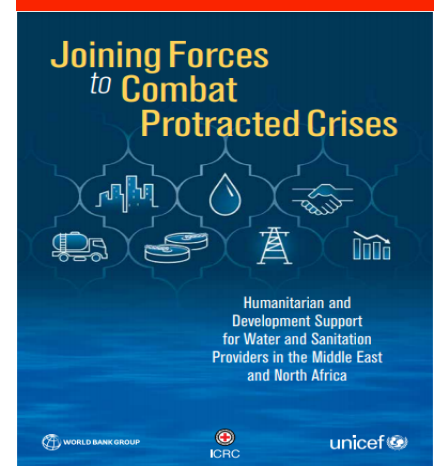
The IFRC [World Disaster Report](#) 2020 highlights the compounding impact of climate change on poverty, displacement and health. More frequent and extreme weather and climate events because of changing climate hit cities the hardest. Many of the world's largest cities are located in deltas and are highly prone to floods, sea level rises and other hazards due to expansion of impermeable surfaces, increased groundwater extraction and destruction of the natural environment. People living in urban areas, particularly in the densest parts of the city with the fewest greenspaces are among the hardest hit when a heatwave occurs^{iv}. The effects of climate change in rural areas –such as changed cropping patterns, depleted fishing stocks, and dried up water sources- push people into migrate to cities. A study in Mozambique suggested that 40% of migrants to urban areas had left their rural homes in part because of environmental problems, including 'those likely to result from climate change'^v.

COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-20 affected the urban poor and marginalized communities hardest. In addition to suffering from lack of access to health care, safe and adequate water and sanitation services, the widespread lockdown measures caused unprecedented pressure on urban poor.

Protracted crises, violence, and the everyday struggle for living in cities are threatening the safety and well-being of urban communities.

Displacement from conflict, persecution, and violence are at their highest levels in 70 years. According to UNHCR, by the end of 2018, 70.8 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide^{vi}. Over 80% of refugees are in low- and middle-income countries, which are also experiencing the fastest rates of urbanization, and increasingly refugees are settling in urban areas^{vii}. As highlighted by International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), conflict settings further complicate the existing challenges through impacts on urban services that can be direct (such as infrastructure being targeted), indirect (where services are damaged by conflict targeted elsewhere) and cumulative (effects over time; for instance, services may worsen or degrade).

Recommended: [Joining Forces to Combat Protracted Crises](#) by ICRC



Urban violence and other crime – ranging from muggings to gang shootings and organized crime – are a source of growing concern and fear^{viii}. Violence often coincides with high levels of poverty, discrimination, economic disparity, social inequality and drug abuse or trafficking.^{ix} ActionAid’s Women in the City report identifies poor urban development and infrastructure as drivers of violence and insecurity for women and girls, with a lack of safe public spaces and public transport and unreliable recourse to police or the authorities^x.

Domestic fires are often ranked as the highest everyday risk by the residents of the informal slum areas in cities where the narrow and irregular streets, extreme density, and flammable construction materials make it hard to prevent and respond effectively to fires. Even in the United States, home fires are ranked as the number one hazard and cause of deaths, with more than 3,600 per year dying due to fires.

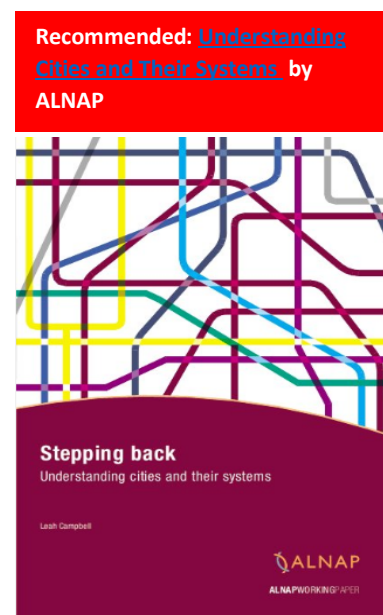
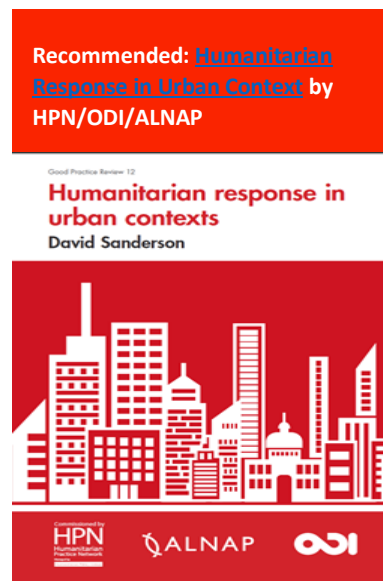
For urban residents, the everyday needs and risks such as securing safe shelter, finding and maintaining a job, caring for children when all the adults in the household are working, poor air quality, traffic accidents, acute and chronic health issues put an enormous and persistent stress; and often these everyday needs are prioritized over long-term disaster risks^{xi}. Being exposed to extremely distressing experiences also causes an increase in mental health and psychosocial needs.

Existing structural and systemic in cities exacerbate the vulnerabilities and leave many communities behind.

Cities are highly complex systems with many sub-systems co-existing and interacting at a variety of levels. Disasters and other crises act like a magnifying glass, exposing pre-existing inequalities and weaknesses in these systems. In urban disasters and crises, humanitarians find themselves face to face with systemic challenges, conventionally deemed to be “development” issues such as complex infrastructure, city governance, poverty, and markets.

As mentioned above, Displacement from conflict, persecution, and violence are at their highest levels in 70 years. According to UNHCR, by the end of 2018, 70.8 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide^{xii}. Over 80% of refugees are in low- and middle-income countries, which are also experiencing the fastest rates of urbanization, and increasingly refugees are settling in urban areas^{xiii}. The Sendai VFramework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 stresses the need for more dedicated action on tackling underlying disaster risk drivers and strengthening good governance at all levels including the city.

It is often stated that cities are places of opportunity and engines of growth, but significant inequalities exist in access to these opportunities. Informality is woven into the fabric of the many systems in cities. While 30% of the urban population live in slums, overall, 80% of the urban workforce is informally employed in developing countries. In Africa this ranges up to a figure of 86% informally employed in Kampala, Uganda^{xiv}. Informality is an important risk driver not only because people live and work in unregulated and unsafe conditions and earn significantly less money, but also because these workers are often invisible with no legal rights. Women are more exposed to informal employment in more than 90% of sub-Saharan African countries^{xv}.



Humanitarian and development efforts in urban settings are hindered by the disconnect between communities and key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders

Despite these growing challenges, understanding by the humanitarian sector of the urban context remains surface level. ALNAP points out that, in the humanitarian sector surprisingly few definitions of 'context' exist, and the term is used inconsistently to mean a variety of different things such as situation, needs and conflict^{xvi}. This is a significant shortcoming especially in cities where the fluidity of spatial and socio-economic parameters, diversity of stakeholders, and layers of engagement necessary must be well understood to create a meaningful impact.

There is a wealth of data and information in the hands of city and municipal authorities in the forms of household surveys, building registries, service provision data, etc. However, these data are not generally easily accessible to the public -without impinging on people's private information. A number of international organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), UN-Habitat and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) are gathering data on disaster risks at the city level and support a variety of urban resilience actions including good governance, DRR and climate change adaptation. City governments/municipalities are undertaking their own efforts and collaborating as multi-city networks, such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI). In parallel, RCRC and many other grassroot organizations are conducting risk and vulnerability analyses to inform risk reduction actions at community level.

However, there is a persistent disconnect between the city and community levels, creating a significant barrier in the reach of our efforts and in our ability to scale up successful interventions to have a meaningful impact at city scale. It requires connecting and aligning approaches; innovative, open, and dynamic data collection; and mapping processes that are relevant and accessible to the communities and civic organizations as well as public authorities. [Urban Observatory](#), [Missing Maps](#), [Open Cities Africa](#) and [Open Data for resilience](#) are some of the initiatives attempting to bridge this gap.

What we achieved and learned so far

RCRC National Societies already have branches and millions of volunteers in cities and towns providing services such as first aid trainings, blood donation, and community disaster preparedness. As the disaster landscape is rapidly urbanizing, many National Societies have been exploring new areas and ways of working in urban areas ranging from building social cohesion among refugees and host communities to community-based waste management and setting up city resilience coalitions to tackle priority risks in cities. Annex 1 gives a summary of some of the initiatives and projects implemented by the National Societies.

What we have learned from these experiences leads us to overarching features of urban context to inform our approach and operational framework. These are:

Recommended: [No Time for Doubt: Tackling Urban Risk](#) by IFRC

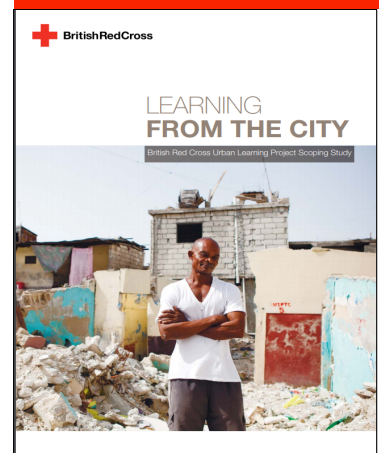


No time for doubt:
Tackling urban risk
A glance at urban interventions by Red Cross Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Recommended: [Learning from the City](#) by British Red Cross



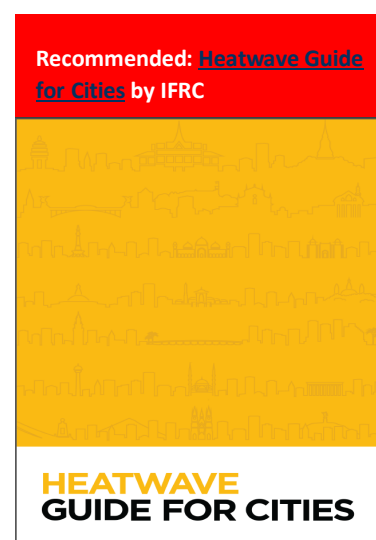
1. Cities are complex systems. There are many interrelated, co-existing formal and informal networks, diverse communities and a much larger range of actors making decisions and taking actions. There are also a multitude of “communities of identity” that often overlap (e.g. people can be part of different networks religious, professional, or family networks) in cities.
2. A lack of adequate and reliable access to basic services, when coupled with exposure to hazards and limited economics means, is one of the most important determinants of vulnerability in cities. Access is controlled and enabled by laws and policies, as well as culture and social norms, during disaster and non-disaster times for formal and informal systems in cities.
3. The complexity of urban environments requires repeated engagement with a larger, more diverse group of stakeholders and partners and over longer periods to build relationships to ensure the sustainability of the interventions.
4. Many of the hazards, risks and vulnerabilities that communities face in cities and towns cannot be fully mapped or understood without a city scale perspective. Similarly, community-based resilience efforts will not have the desired impact unless they are linked to city level key stakeholders, most prominently the local governments and municipal authorities.
5. Urban disasters and crises intrinsically are fluid and dynamic; the changing level of severity and needs and the unfolding of new vulnerabilities demand that response capacities and preparedness plans be flexible and allow for complementarity and redundancies.
6. Understanding of inter-linkages with rural and peri-urban areas and reflecting those in the action plans are critical. Urban areas do not exist in isolation, and disasters do not have administrative boundaries. Cities often serve larger catchment areas in the surrounding areas.



RCRC can have a meaningful impact in cities

Since 2015, the IFRC network has helped 200 million people take actions to protect their safety, health, and well-being before crises strike including people in urban areas. The IFRC [Road Map to Community Resilience](#) provides the holistic approach needed to make communities resilient. It puts the communities identifying their risks and vulnerabilities and priority actions at the center and encourages RCRC National Societies to connect with diverse stakeholders.

While the **essence of the programs and services provided by the IFRC network including disaster management (prevention, response and recovery), livelihoods, health, WASH and others remains the same, there are significant differences in terms of how we design and implement these programs in and for urban contexts^{xvii}**. Working effectively in urban contexts requires an intentional focus on how National Societies and their partners can get better at understanding and navigating the complexities of urban environments,



leveraging their strengths, and improving their skills to help growing urban communities not only become safer but also thrive in cities. There are four impactful ways National Societies can play a significant role and add value in building urban resilience:

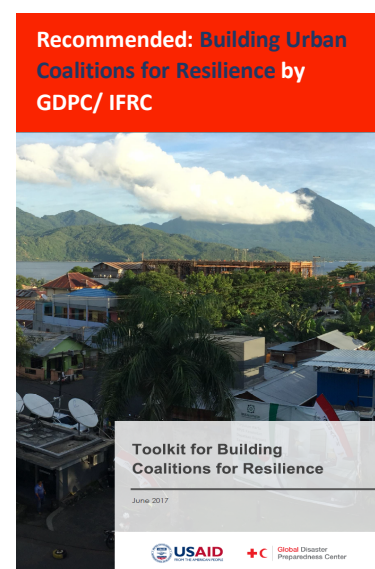
1. Convening diverse city stakeholders for connecting analysis and action for community resilience.
2. Leading community driven, sustainable, and scalable solutions for reducing risk and vulnerabilities.
3. Strengthening inclusion, equity, and social capital as the glue for urban resilience
4. Advocating for increased investment in risk reduction, social inclusion, and equity for the most vulnerable.

Convening diverse city stakeholders for connecting analysis and action for community resilience

In cities, solving problems often means working in partnership to draw in organizations with diverse skills and abilities beyond those of any single organization. People living in cities are themselves agents of change and have significant resources, skills, and capacities to bring to resilience efforts both in their own communities and at a broader civic level across their cities and districts.

Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies are well positioned to convene partners around resilience and enable greater level of multi-stakeholder problem-solving and local investment in community and household resilience. The National Societies are also auxiliaries to their governments, which can also be interpreted and applied at local level. This provides a unique opportunity to connect the most vulnerable and often invisible people and communities to city authorities, planners and decision makers while still maintaining our fundamental principals of neutrality and impartiality. In urban areas, working closely with city authorities and municipalities is particularly important since they have direct influence over the well-being of the communities and the sustainability of cities through their roles in urban planning and delivery of basic services, transportation, energy supply, and solid waste management.

The RCRC toolkit for Building Coalitions for Resilience aims to assist National Societies to initiate and co-lead a civic engagement process with the local governments in cities. It is based on the premise that coalitions are necessary for addressing the problems in complex settings like cities, and no organization can do it alone. As the [experience](#) in Indonesia and Vanuatu demonstrates, this kind of coalition-building process enables National Societies to engage a wide set of interested stakeholders from local government, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and community volunteers to identify and pursue locally developed solutions for resilience^{xviii}.



Ensuring relevance to the concerns of urban communities and creating a sense of shared vision among all stakeholders requires investing time in building relations and trust, understanding the context, and being flexible and agile to adapt changing dynamics. The City-wide Assessment toolkit helps National Societies to facilitate a participatory process with the coalition members to identify city-wide risks and resilience priorities, agree on a resilience vision for the city, and co-design solutions.

Leading community driven, sustainable and scalable solutions for reducing risk and vulnerabilities

The RCRC is people-centered and people-led. We seek to ensure that local communities and people have control over resources and decision-making that affects them and that their engagement with us enhances their power and agency. The richness of the urban context in terms of social and economic resources as well as high levels of density and connectedness allow National Societies to be instrumental in assisting communities to self-organize and find viable and scalable solutions to reduce their risks and improve their well-being and safety.

Cities are highly dense and diverse connection hubs. Successes in community resilience have a higher chance of being replicated due to the diverse range of skills and knowledge in cities, the fluidity and power of urban markets –which can span beyond national borders- and the proximity to local decision-makers. This enables scaling up and increasing the visibility and value added of RCRC in cities and towns. Building on the groundwork of the global localization agenda^{xix} which promotes local leadership, the National Societies can leverage their auxiliary role at local levels and lead community-based solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the crucial role that the National Societies play in times where the response almost solely depends on local actors.

The growing prevalence of mobile phones and digital technologies that enable people to take direct action, share and access “peer to peer” information, and conduct convenient financial exchanges are already profoundly changing human interactions. For effective and sustainable urban programs, having a future oriented perspective is also important, particularly when working in rapidly urbanizing countries. For humanitarian organizations like the RCRC, this means helping urban communities to meet immediate needs and to anticipate future needs, factoring in how people will likely live and work and how their needs may be affected by changes mobility, public space, and social connectedness^{xx}.

In urban contexts, predicting program outcomes is a challenge. A process of ongoing learning and questioning and iterative planning is essential. The [Urban Action Kit](#), developed with the basic concept of urban communities as agents of change, provides low-cost, do-it-yourself activities for RCRC branches and any community leader that require little to no funding. The [Designing Solutions for Urban Resilience](#) and [Participatory Assessment for Shelter and Settlements \(PASSA\)](#) bring in participatory human-centred design principles and enable a

Recommended: Designing Solutions for Urban Resilience by GDPC/IFRC



Recommended: [Urban Action Kit](#) by IFRC



wide set of stakeholders as well as affected people to be part of the assessment process and solution.

Strengthening inclusion, equity and social capital as the glue for urban resilience

IFRC prioritizes and fosters inclusive growth and diversity so that all people feel represented, seen, and heard and that they belong everywhere. The IFRC is committed to leave no one behind which is the fundamental concept behind the inclusive cities commitment stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11) and the New Urban Agenda, which has been endorsed by over 165 governments. The concept of inclusive cities involves a complex web of multiple spatial, social and economic factors. Socially inclusive cities are places where equity is translated into three-dimensional physical reality in the form of affordable and equitable housing, public transport solutions, public spaces that are open for street vendors, and open green areas.

Gender- and diversity- sensitive disaster risk reduction and resilience efforts not only improve the conditions for one particular ‘target’ group of people, they also reduce overall community vulnerability and increase community resilience. In cities and towns there is a higher level of diversity and resources as well as conflict, and in some places widespread violence, due to competition over access to limited resources. Increasingly cities are becoming points of destination for migrants and displaced populations where, in many cases, they face discrimination.

Cohesive social structures providing support at individual, household and local community level is an integral part of community resilience as well as city resilience^{xxi}. The RCRC National Societies are well placed to help urban communities to strengthen inclusion and social capital, ease tensions between host and migrant communities, and prevent violence in urban areas through community mobilization and facilitating dialog and interaction between different community groups, city authorities and other stakeholders.

Advocating for increased investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in favor of vulnerable communities

Reducing the exposure of vulnerable urban populations to disaster and climate change risks is the key motivator for the IFRC. Addressing underlying risk drivers, such as poverty and inequality; poor living conditions; unplanned urbanization processes; environmental degradation; and weak regulations and enforcement requires a close collaboration and effective advocacy at national and sub-national levels as a complement to community driven initiatives.

Recommended: [Gender and Diversity for Urban Resilience](#) by IFRC



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Gender and diversity for urban resilience: An analysis

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The World Bank estimates that the global need for urban infrastructure investment amounts to over \$4.5 trillion per year, of which an estimated premium of 9-27% is required to make this infrastructure low-emissions and climate and disaster resilient^{xxii}. The future of sustainable cities calls for significantly increased community engagement, strengthening of social capital, and leveraging of local resources in addition to improving infrastructure and services by governments and development organizations.

Besides increasing civic engagement in city disaster and emergency planning, response and recovery mechanisms, urban inequity is another aspect of urban development process where National Societies can make a difference. Working together with local governments, RCRC National Societies can advocate for increasing disaster risk reduction investments, adaptation of climate change adaptation measures, incorporation IFRC disaster law checklist, strengthening local disaster management capacities^{xxiii} and inclusion of disadvantaged urban citizens in policy decisions to resolve unequal and an unjust distribution of services or resources, or health outcomes. IFRC is a member of the Steering Committee of UNDRR Making Cities Resilient Campaign ([MCR](#)) with contributions from all National Societies in local DRR and resilience actions.



Annex: Examples of IFRC Urban Initiatives

The IFRC dedicated the World Disasters Report in 2010 to “Urban Risks”. Besides putting a spotlight on the rising vulnerabilities, the report highlighted that urban communities are capable of finding their own solutions, asserting their rights, and playing a full role in post-disaster recovery and risk reduction. In 2012, the IFRC Asia Pacific (AP) region completed a strategic direction study to explore the RCRC niche and services in urban settings in the Asia Pacific region. The Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) has conducted Urban Risk Dialogues and organized a series of workshops in 2013 - 2014. While highlighting existing challenges, these workshops set a vision for urban resilience for RCRC National Societies. The IFRC Urban DRR initiative resulted in the Tehran Call for Action, adopted in May 2015 and a comprehensive guide for urban resilience^{xxiv}. The No Time for Doubt: Tackling Urban Risks publication profiled key urban initiatives in the Latin America region. As the eco-lead of the Shelter Cluster IFRC has been promoting equitable land and housing rights and leading area-based approaches in urban recovery efforts. ICRC has been working in urban conflict zones including Iraq, Gaza, Ukraine, Syria and Yemen for 30 years, maintaining essential infrastructure along with provision of humanitarian services. The annual knowledge exchange workshops that the IFRC Urban Collaboration Platform organizes aim to capture and share these experiences and learn from each other and external partners^{xxv}.

The set of toolkits for Urban Community Resilience developed by the Global Disaster Preparedness Center of (GDPC) provides National Societies and their partners guidance for setting up and facilitating city coalitions and undertaking city wide risk assessments. The process leads to identification of a shared vision and resilience priorities for their cities, and organizing a co-design process to develop sustainable, feasible and viable solutions for the most pressing problems.

At the global level, the RCRC Movement takes pride in actively participating in global urban events such as Habitat 3 and World Urban Forums to represent and be the voice of most vulnerable urban communities drawing attention to the impacts of disasters and crises on sustainable development as well as to the tremendous untapped capacities and resources that these communities have including the 13 million Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers. IFRC has also actively engaged in the multi stakeholder Global Alliance for Urban Crises (GAUC) and UNDRR’s Making Cities Resilient Campaign, as a member of its Steering Committee.

Urban Empowerment and Resilience Project– Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

The Urban Resilience and Empowerment project aims to build Community and Stakeholders ownership for creating a sustainable governance structure in urban slums in Gazipura in Bangladesh. The main threats faced in the area are identified by the community as lack of drainage, waste management and safe water, high drug usage, poverty and unemployment. The application of resilience radar methodology led the Bangladesh RC to focus on development of a city governance system consisting of cluster committees at the community level up to city corporation at the city level and a cost-sharing mechanism in their interventions. The achievements include improved waste management and sanitation awareness, improved knowledge about rights and entitlements and higher school attendance.

Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Project in China – Hong Kong Red Cross

Due to the rapid urbanization, different types of settlements such as urban villages, old towns, shantytowns, village turned communities and rural-urban fringes have emerged in China. These towns shared common challenges such as low potential to mitigate disasters, low self-help capacity, highly dense living environment prone to security risks, inadequate infrastructure, ineffective urban governance systems. The project activities included building community clinics, warehouses, and provision of equipment, as well as trainings and community awareness activities. As a result, communities were able to manage the clinics and warehouses, felt stronger feelings of cohesiveness and connection. The challenges encountered

during the project implementation are summarized as difficulties in mobilizing the community, building trust and coordination between different stakeholders.

Coalition Building for Urban Climate Resilience— Indonesia Red Cross and Vanuatu Red Cross and Myanmar Red Cross Society

Indonesia Red Cross (PMI) piloted the Coalition Building in Cities Program in two very different cities. Semarang is a large city in Java that has already carried out some coalition and resilience-building work through the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities initiative. Ternate is a small city located on a small island in North Maluku in eastern Indonesia where the project was a very new concept. PMI learned that although city size may make a difference in whether the project activities have city-wide reach and impact (due to project resources and funding), overall, the key factor for a successful coalition was the commitment of the coalition partners. The Vanuatu Red Cross (VRC) implemented similar approach in the city of Luganville. Working collaboratively with a wide range of partners and facilitating a coalition was a new experience for both PMI and VRC, involving a new and challenging methodology that led to strengthened relationships at city level, community-level action, and a renewed commitment to working together. The same model is being implemented in Mawlamyine city along the coast of Myanmar.

Community Mobilization in Urban Areas – Ivory Coast Red Cross

The emerging settlements around the capital city Abidjan have common characteristics, such as lack of proper electricity, water, sanitation and waste management, non-existent or adapted urban development plans. The project aimed at addressing the sanitation and flooding risks by contributing to the resilience of communities against the challenges identified. Activities focused on trainings, awareness campaigns, which allowed the formation of community volunteers as well as clubs in schools and simulation drills. The biggest challenges were demotivated volunteers and weak community participation and cohesion. Activities to overcome these included organization of football games, cooking, dancing, sketching and hygiene competitions in which different age/gender groups participated.

Safaru Community Inclusion Currency: Localized Credit Supporting the Most Vulnerable - Kenya Red Cross

Through Community Inclusion Currencies people have a way to exchange goods and services and incubate businesses, without relying on scarce national currency and volatile markets. The Kenya Red Cross Society supports and implements the Safaru network in Kenya which provides local credit to communities allowing small businesses to accept Safaru as payment for goods and services. As of March 2020, Safaru had a rapidly growing distribution network with 11k (mostly very small) businesses located in informal settlements in urban areas and in some of the poorest regions of the country. From the consumer side, any Kenyan can sign up to use Safaru and receive 100 Safaru credits to redeem at participating vendors. Additional Safaru is distributed on a weekly basis and as the number of users has grown, and the more credits circulate, the more resilient local economies and vulnerable households become.

Urban Resilience Project and Youth Innovation— Kenya Red Cross

KRCS has been operating informal settlements in Nairobi since 2008 with the support of the Danish Red Cross. These settlements face multiple challenges such as congestion, illegal and undesignated dumping sites, water contamination and drainage blockages as well as the disposal of non-biodegradable debris. The project aims to make urban communities in 7 informal settlements in Nairobi more resilient through community level activities including disaster risk reduction (DRR) and improving livelihoods.

The national society was able to engage the youth through hackathons, a form of innovation competition around three thematic areas: Environmental conservation and water use; Open and public space innovation; and Livelihood/business solutions for youth unemployment. The winning ideas include organo-

briquette, a compressed block of combustible biomass material, creating safe, affordable, healthy and child-friendly play spaces for children and lactating mothers in market-place contexts.

Urban Resilience in Saida, Lebanon – Lebanese Red Cross

The Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) project aimed to build resilience of vulnerable people and communities through collaboration in the city of Saida. The project activities include the creation of safe spaces for children, improving the infrastructure of schools, firefighting and disaster awareness trainings and conducting school evacuation drills. It was highlighted that when communities are engaged early on, they are aware of their ability to achieve change which creates a sense of ownership of the program implemented. LRC is also implementing projects in the old city of Saida targeting the refugees in collaboration with Saida governmental authorities.

The activities include creating Community Emergency Response Teams, renovation of water supply points. One of the lessons learned is the importance of working with existing structures and creating space for communities to manage their internal challenges. It is also important to provide services in an integrated manner bringing together host and refugee communities to build social cohesion.

Challenges of Data Collection in the Urban Context – Mexican Red Cross

The Flood Resilience Program consisted of two phases from 2013-2018 and from 2018-2023 focusing on community flood resilience enhancement and improvement of resilience measurement in semi-urban communities. Currently there is no empirically verified measurement tool for disaster resilience and the Flood Resilience Measurement framework developed under the project aimed to enable assessing and demonstrating the impact of our interventions leading to increased social, political and financial investment in building flood resilience. The lessons learned include the importance of including decision-makers, local authorities and key stakeholders in the design phase, complementing the data collection process with VCA and repeatedly socializing the program to increase ownership of the community.

Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience – Myanmar Red Cross Society

The project aimed to strengthen resilience and reduce the vulnerability in targeted communities in the cities of Yangon and Mandalay. The project activities included small-scale mitigation activities approved and included in the community plan of actions developed; conducting risk reduction awareness sessions and activities at community and school level; and continuing to develop the competency and capacities of the Red Cross township branches and its volunteers to manage DRR activities at the community level. The DRR activities/action plans developed by the community members based on multi-sectorial risk and needs assessment targeting the most vulnerable people in selected Wards. The city-wide risk assessment conducted by RC branch and other stakeholders completed under the Coastal Cities resilience project implemented in the city of Mawlamyine.

Strengthening Urban Resilience and Engagement (SURE) - Nepal Red Cross

The SURE (Strengthen Urban Resilience and Engagement) program is implemented by the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) in partnership with the British Red Cross (BRC) focused on multiple hazards, natural and man-made. The SURE program has supported seven municipalities across three of Nepal's major urban centers over a 5-year period (2016-2021), to improve the urban disaster resilience of municipal governments, the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and citizens, including specific vulnerable groups, across the seven targeted municipalities. Heavily emphasizing participatory led approaches to engage urban populations, the program uses citizen voices, targeting most vulnerable groups and fosters 'champions' to create bottom-up demand to local governments for improved disaster resilience. The SURE program has directly reached 973,000 people thus far, and generated 1080 champions (739 female), trained in UDRR, and in disseminating messages in the local community, and with strong involvement in municipal and ward level planning activities, in addition to 7,178 students and teachers engaged in the urban DRR safer school

package. SURE moves away from geospatially-defined program interventions and uses a network-based approach. SURE also works with the 'missing middle' or local government (municipalities) to provide technical disaster management support and create linkages between government and 'hard to reach' and vulnerable populations who are most affected by disasters.

Damascus Water Emergency Response Project – Syrian Arab Red Crescent

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) has developed the Damascus Water Cut and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) in response to the dire water situation in Damascus in December 2016 when 4.5 to 5 million people in Damascus and its surroundings lost their water sources for 40 days. The SARC working closely with the city authorities and the affected communities developed a contingency plan and started immediate rehabilitation of main water sources and main tunnels and pipelines once the area is safely accessible. The experience demonstrated the importance of having a contingency plan, skills and availability of community members and the communication of all steps of the plan with relevant stakeholders including community members and authorities to ensure funding, technical support and proper implementation.

Urban Community Centers for Refugees and Host communities – Turkish Red Crescent Society

The Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) [Community Centers](#) have been providing services to help migrants live with dignity and in harmony with host communities. The activities carried out by the Community Centers also cater specifically to children, who are among the most vulnerable, and who are key in facilitating social cohesion and development among communities. These efforts aim at reducing vulnerabilities through understanding their needs and taking necessary actions and strengthening their individual and social well-being. As one of these efforts, the Kızılay Community Centre in the city of Şanlıurfa, brought refugee children with hearing impairments together with students at the School for Impaired Children in a four-week social cohesion workshop.

Pioneering Urban Anticipatory Action for Heatwaves: Vietnam Red Cross

Vietnam Red Cross a forerunner in Community-based Disaster Risk Assessments (CBDRA) and Management (CBDRM) in urban areas, linking ward-level CBDRM reports to urban planning processes, such as Climate Action Plan, Urban Master Plans and Socio-economic Development Plans. In addition, in recent years VNRC has become widely recognized as the first National Society to develop an Early Action Protocol for Heatwaves in urban areas. VNRC's efforts began in 2018 supported by the German Red Cross "FbF Ready" project in Hanoi, where the average daily temperatures have risen in recent years; past heatwaves have led to a 20.0% increase in hospital admissions for all causes and 45.9% for respiratory diseases. VNRC applied a suite of tools to map urban stakeholders, identify heat vulnerability and exposure in urban areas, and worked closely with the Hydro-Met agency Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change (IMHEN) to set triggers for early action, while training volunteers in unique urban heatwave Standard Operating Procedures. VNRCs successful efforts have been scaled up in multiple cities, reflected in its approved 2021 Early Action Protocol.

Endnotes:

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- ⁱ IFRC's work is also closely related to SDGs 1, 2, and 13 through their volunteers' work to foster resilience and climate-smart action at the community level as well as efforts in many countries in relation to reforestation and anti-desertification initiatives, which contribute to SDG 15.
- ⁱⁱ UNDESA (2018), *World Urbanization Prospects* <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>
- ⁱⁱⁱ GFDRR (2016) *The making of a riskier future: How our decisions are shaping future disaster risk*.
- ^{iv} Singh, R., Arrighi, J., Jjemba, E., Strachan, K., Spires, M., Kadihasanoglu, A., *Heatwave Guide for Cities*. 2019. Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre.
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- ^{vi} UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>
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- ^{viii} ICRC, *War in Cities*, <https://www.icrc.org/en/war-in-cities>
- ^{ix} ICRC (2010) *Urban Violence*, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/international-review/review-878-urban-violence/review-878-all.pdf>
- ^x Action Aid (2015), *Women in the City* <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/women-and-city-iii>
- ^{xi} IFRC (2010), *World Disasters Report*, <https://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/world-disasters-report/wdr2010/>
- ^{xii} UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>
- ^{xiii} UNDRR (2019) *Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Strategies*,
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- ^{xvii} ODI/ALNAP (2019) *Good Practice Review: Humanitarian Response in Urban Context*
- ^{xviii} Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjVaRyhVzc&feature=youtu.be>
- ^{xix} The Grand Bargain, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>
- ^{xx} Shelter Cluster (2018) *Global Status of Shelter and Settlements Report: Shelter in the City chapter*
- ^{xxi} ARUp City Resilience Index <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/city-resilience-index>
- ^{xxii} openknowledge.worldbank.org
- ^{xxiii} IFRC (2019) *The Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response* https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/11/DPR_Checklist_Final_EN_Screen.pdf
- ^{xxiv} IFRC (2017) *Building urban resilience: A guide for Red Cross and Red Crescent engagement and contribution*.
- ^{xxv} More information on the RCRC urban projects can be found in the UCP workshop reports: <https://www.preparecenter.org/activities/red-cross-red-crescent-urban-collaboration-platform>