



gFSC Urban Working Group Lessons Learned in the Urban Response Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Level 3 Emergency

The Philippines humanitarian assistance included urban areas strongly hit by the Typhoon. The city of Tacloban which counts 220,000 people was badly affected. This highlighted the specificities of a response in urban settings and the need of urban ad-hoc approaches and tools. The Urban Working Group of the gFSC put together some lessons learned on this particular case that could serve as input for encouraging and developing specific tools and mechanisms and for guiding other urban responses.

The findings in this document are part of a greater post-emergency Lessons Learned Mission to the Philippines and the result of consultations with Co-Lead Agencies and all gFSC partners, both at national and global levels that were involved in the Typhoon Haiyan Response. The gFSC Urban Working Group would like to thank all partners for their valuable contributions.

Gaps and Needs: *Did you identify any specific gap/need while working in the urban settings in the Philippines – in terms of tools, guidance and preparedness? And specific needs of the urban affected population that were or should have been taken into consideration?*

- Massive gap on what urban means in terms of relief and recovery contexts
- Difficulty in classifying urban settings as many livelihoods are depending on agricultural activities
- Difficulty in identifying what an urban livelihood is – people recur to different jobs according to the demand
- Difficulty in understanding which operational modalities to apply due to the high diversity of livelihoods in urban areas
- Therefore it's difficult to conduct assessments on livelihoods and to evaluate the damage and needs
- Urban livelihoods are more vulnerable compared to rural to shocks from the cost of food as they buy up to 100% of their food on the market
- Need to adjust programmes to a chronic and development model – including linking with governmental social protection and safety nets programmes; engaging with civil society organizations; integrating ad hoc gender and protection into activities
- There is a high unemployment rate in Tacloban – important to rethink livelihoods
- Alternative urban livelihoods options could be explored for coconut farmers and fishermen
- Emergency preparedness in urban areas need to take into account the different stakeholders present in these settings and plan how to engage with them
- A need to establish standardized work norms and wage rates early on - different partners implementing at differing wage rates causes confusion with beneficiaries – some agencies stressed the need for the government to set the norms/recite the relevant laws
- Targeting and coordination in urban areas are essential due the multiple small administrative units and diversity of income levels
- Urban targeting remains the biggest gap – existing social protection systems are not enough to ensure the targeting of all vulnerable households
- Targeting could be conducted on a geographical basis – for a given area of the city, a specific group of people are targeted – difficult to think of a broader targeting method
- Community-based targeting in urban areas i.e. Tacloban is a bit of challenge as due to timing issues, there a tendency to take the information from the municipalities but it's not often correct/matching – especially vulnerabilities
- The use of micro-level/smallest geographical unit is essential for targeting purposes
- The complexity of urban livelihood landscape argues for self-targeting mechanisms, as other kind of targeting could be difficult as too data dependent
- Links/access to credit sources for small urban businesses/stores is also an issue – how to target those institutions offering credit
- Cash and vouchers programmes proved to be highly effective in urban areas
- Very few agencies applied programmes targeting small business rehabilitation
- In general there was not much of a specific attention to what a response in urban settings implies and needs

Coordination: *Any specific gap/aspect to be taken into account in terms of coordination in the urban response?*

- The Early Recovery and Livelihoods Cluster (ERL) listed urban livelihoods among their areas of intervention
- Lack of clarity by the ERL cluster on which non-agricultural livelihoods support activities would fall under their supervision – this led to confusion among humanitarian partners in the implementation of their activities to affected populations
- Difficulty in understanding reporting lines to clusters – a greater coordination in advance between the FSAC and ERL clusters could have helped
- Division of ERL and FSAC was not useful at any level - it created confusion with international partners who work in other contexts where livelihoods regardless of location (urban vs rural) fall under food security and early recovery is mainstreamed. Additional work was required to create artificial lines dividing turf and then sensitizing partners. One of the big advantages of the cluster system is that international partners can enter any emergency context and have a relatively good idea of what the cluster covers and the services it provides - changing this structure loses the advantages of standardization
- With regard to cash transfers, there was confusion between the CFA and CFW roles – poor guidance on what types of cash activities had to be reported to which cluster – some NGOs did not report to any of the two
- More coordination on this by the Cash Working Group could have helped
- Poor communication between FSAC, ERL and Shelter Cluster in terms of cash activities – agencies were duplicative in terms of geographic coverage and intended use of cash and cash values were also not well established and coordinated
- Particularly there should have been more coordination between the FSAC and Shelter on the distribution of unconditional cash on the early stage of a relief phase so that both food and shelter needs are met – this is particularly relevant for strategic planning in urban areas
- OCHA did not provide ad-hoc cash coordination at sub-national levels
- There was some confusion on the use of work-based recovery activities as a targeting mechanism due the establishment of a minimum wage by ILO and the Government – many urban poor were not able to fall under that requirement – there was no Clusters discussion/coordination on this

Tools and Indicators: *Which tools and indicators did you use while working in an urban area? Anything specific to urban settings?*

- Difficult to conduct proper assessments and targeting in urban areas following a cluster sampling: people living in apartment blocks or other types of accommodation differ a lot from the “traditional” house to house cluster sampling methodology
- Use of smallest administrative boundaries (barangay level) was essential in terms of mapping out needs and coverage
- There still an assumption that urban households are less vulnerable the rural ones - visible poverty/damage to fishing livelihoods was prioritised over cities’ totally damaged houses - NGOs most likely to engage in fisheries livelihood recovery rather than farming and urban households

- Community Committees have been set up in Tacloban by some partners to identify needs and targeting and type of assistance – this will help in designing specific programmes for urban areas
- Among urban programmes/assistance vocational trainings have been conducted based on the needs of affected populations – i.e. carpenters
- The types of support to fishing livelihoods is more tangible and more attractive for donors compared to urban ones
- Livelihoods analysis is needed to address these issues
- Lack of food gap and livelihoods information in the MIRA/absence of EFSA
- Secondary data gathering and analysis seemed to be conducted in a non-coherent way among agencies
- Some NGOs have started to conduct urban assessments after the emergency phase mainly in assets and shelter needs including vulnerability and livelihoods – results of these assessments have not been shared yet

Stakeholders Involved: *Which actors did you come across in urban settings different from other rural areas? Any particular urban stakeholder that should have been consulted in Cluster activities?*

- Most of the partners consulted with the Mayor’s office to identify needs and design urban programmes and cash interventions
- Mayor’s office was a key stakeholder for the urban response - they often sent a representative to FSAC meetings
- The coordination of the FSAC with non-traditional partners in urban areas has worked out well
- The City Council plays an eminent role in the coordination of response in urban areas and this aspect should be taken into account when responding to an urban emergency
- Need to balance between the involvement of civil society organization and government sub-national actors
- Local NGOs should be more included in all cluster meetings –especially at sub-national level – they had a strong impact on the affected population in different programmes – i.e. Tzu chi Foundation in Tacloban
- The private sector can also be a significant player in urban areas – i.e. Diskwento Caravans in Tacloban
- The market plays a major role in urban settings and the retail supply chain needs to be considered in preparedness planning both from a programme perspective (private sector market support) and a logistics perspective (maintain overall supply chain efficiency)
- Policies that favoured the transportation (sea freight) of humanitarian goods over commercial goods slowed private sector recovery in Tacloban and the re-establishment of stable supply chains

Other Comments: *Please provide any other comment and suggestion you might have on the your Philippines experience and how the gFSC Urban WG could assist in strengthening the humanitarian urban response*

- The lack of security played a disrupting role in the retail sector – access to stores in urban areas were significantly tied up to security issues

- A global reconciliation of the FSAC and ERL is needed – sectors are cross-cutting and can't be separate – also the CWG relations need to be less structured and more straightforward to ensure productive collaboration
- Response analysis, though maybe not in the first moments, should be more context-specific in recovery phases, with urban population having access to services (shops, ATMs, etc.) that rural population does not have
- Another issue related to shelter/infrastructure: the high level of infrastructure in place
- before Yolanda made the cost of certain urban infrastructure rehabilitation out of reach for NGOs – i.e. Palo Market
- Through cash for work programmes the affected cities have been rapidly cleaned up and this had a good psychological impact on the population and improved access to urban areas
- Some agencies stressed that urban risk reduction must include early warnings and evacuation - both of which require locally-tailored public communication – in Tacloban messages were not communicated clearly enough
- The gFSC Urban WG was helpful in both linking up members/partners in the field and stimulating discussions at the global level
- The gFSC Urban WG specific “Philippines Response” webpage was useful in looking at tools available and partners involved
- The Urban Joint Proposal gFSC/WFP could be crucial in shaping more coordinated and efficient urban responses/interventions