

# **MAKING SENSE OF THE CITY**

## **Developing evidence through action research and learning**

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Urban Research Initiative and report led by Joyati Das, Senior Director, Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming

Published by the Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming (Urban CoE) on behalf of World Vision International.

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Managed on behalf of Urban CoE by Jacqueline Trieu. Senior Editor: Heather Elliott. Production Editor: Katie Fike. Copyediting: Joan Laflamme. Proofreading: Audrey Dorsch. Cover Design and Interior Layout Design: Blue Apple Projects.

Cover photo: Ilana Rose/World Vision

Caption: The high density and sprawling city of La Paz, Bolivia.

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## Foreword

Human migration is an irreversible phenomenon of this urban century. As a result of the high rate of mobility to cities, contributing to sustainable urban development is a priority for many aid agencies whose knowledge and experience have predominantly remained rural.

When I launched the Urban Research Initiative in World Vision in 2008, the hardest task was to convince our own staff and leaders about the impending challenge facing us with half of the world's population already living in urban settings. Seven years after its launch, the urban programmes team has learned and unlearned much about the relevance of established development theories and practice through its action research and learning agenda. During this journey, we have brought along a range of internal and external stakeholders who became champions of change within World Vision and within their institutions. They have been committed to bringing solutions for the most vulnerable children and marginalised groups living in fragile pockets of the city.

The United Nations estimates that approximately 860 million people are living in slums today, without basic services required for a dignified living. Hence it is no surprise that Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals aspires to make cities inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable. World Vision's investment in learning about this megatrend and related complexities is therefore quite timely. With several projects driving innovation across diverse regional contexts to address the physical divide and exclusion in the city, World Vision is a recognised partner to provide evidence to inform and influence *The New Urban Agenda* – a set of guidelines on sustainable urban development to be launched at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in October 2016.

The demographic challenge is inevitable in the city and makes it difficult to collect and analyse big complex data – this challenge needs technological solutions. The challenge of an urban sprawl with ever-increasing informal settlements of new migrants needs pro-poor policy, and the city needs visionaries to create equitable and inclusive societies based on the principle of shared value. The humanitarian aid and development sector must acknowledge the value of multiple experiences and expertise and bring together social, economic and technological transformation to bridge the socio-economic divide in the city.

At World Vision our new global strategy is acknowledging that we have to enhance our capability to adapt to the changing landscape of poverty and ensure children's well-being in the city. Our journey of learning continues with several learning sites testing city-wide programmes to contribute to just *cities for children*.

Joyati Das

Senior Director, Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming



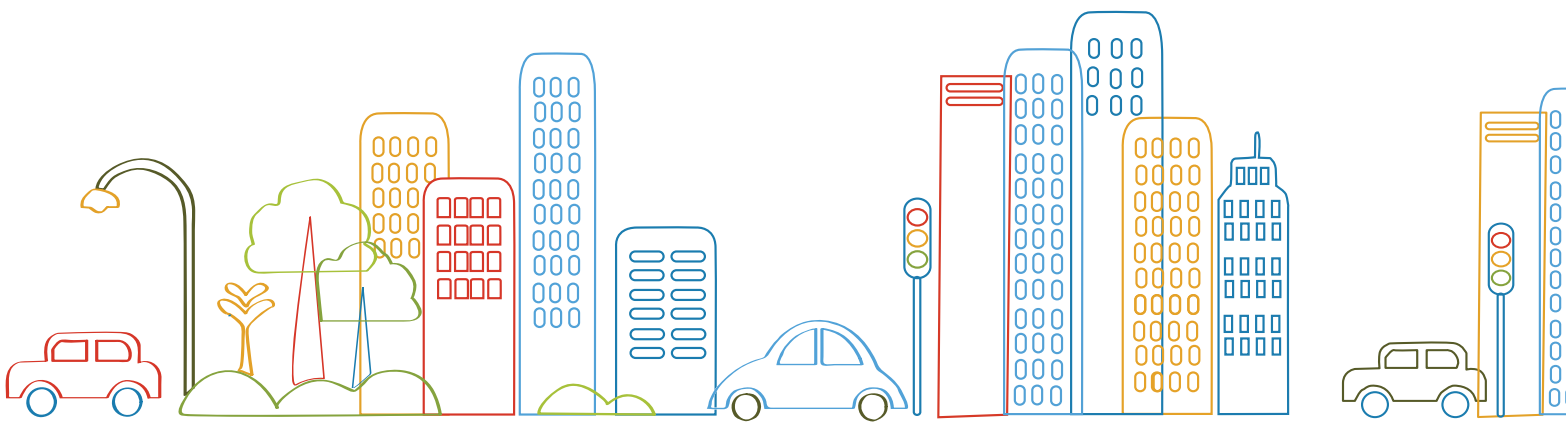
## Acknowledgements

Several staff contributed to the urban journey with their insights, expertise and experience. Special thanks to Lucia Boxelaar for setting the action research agenda and to Teresa Lee and John van Kooy, the first members of the urban team to make sense of the meta-review approach.

To our field staff, Aline Rahbany (Lebanon), Dara Sim (Cambodia), Anjana Purkayastha (India) Nunus Subandi (Indonesia), Jean Carla (Bolivia) and Tirhani Manganyi (South Africa) – we are grateful for their partnership and hard work.

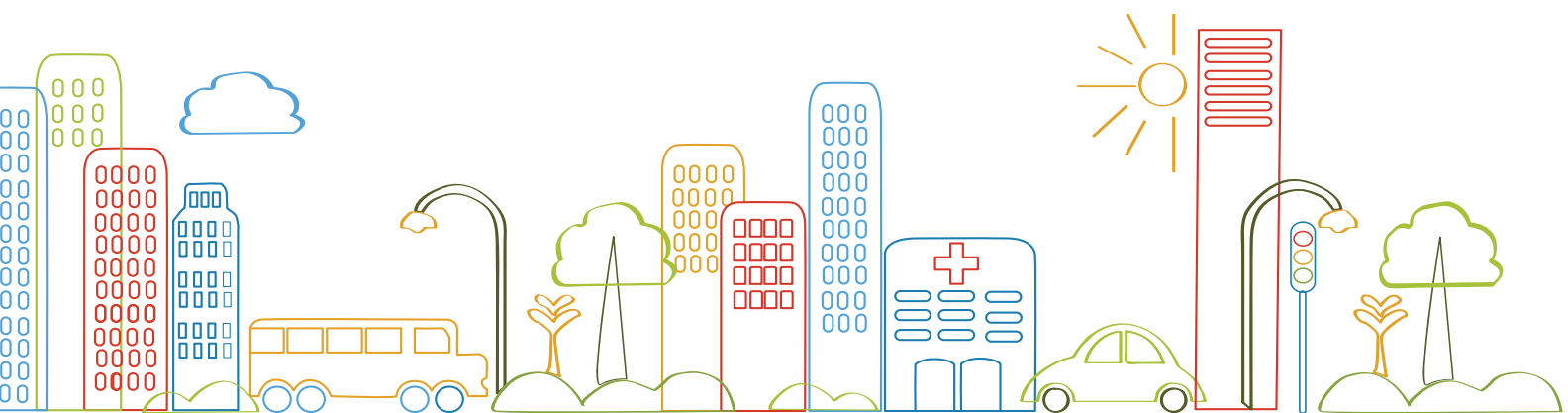
We thank Stephen Court, Annabel Hart, Remy Herbert, David Sweeting, Margy Dowling, Julie Smith, Naomi Toole, Teagan Westendorf and Michael Poustie for contributions, guidance and feedback. Academic validation of the meta-review framework was provided by Liam Magee. Katie Chalk has coordinated the collation of this report from several papers, evaluations and meta-reviews produced during the past five years.

Our gratitude to World Vision leaders Tim Costello, Conny Lenneberg and Mark Lorey for their leadership in launching and progressing this initiative.

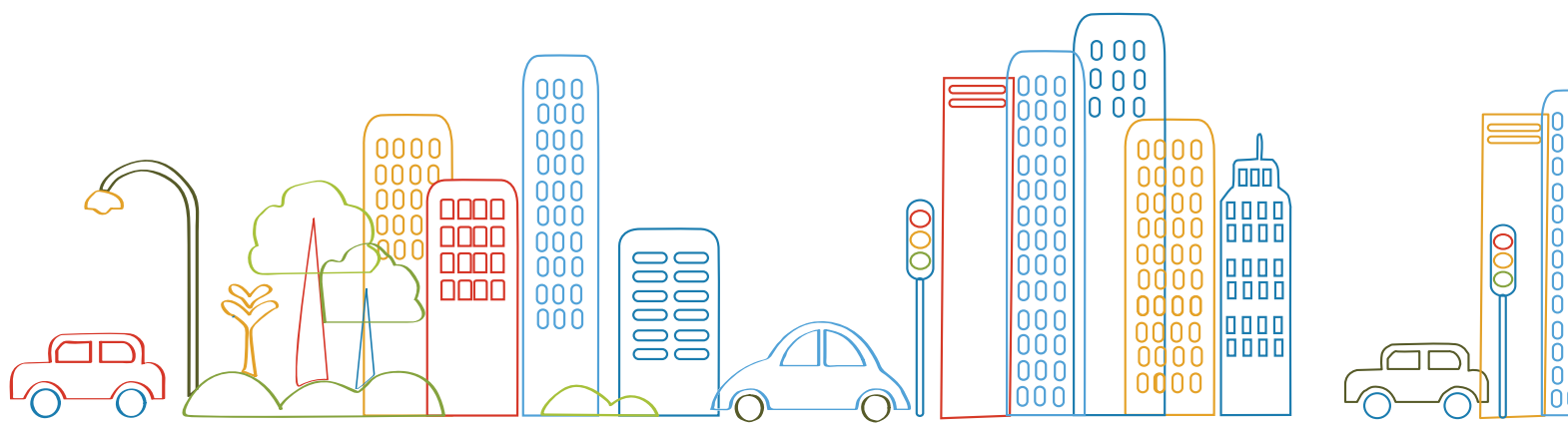


## Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
About World Vision’s Urban Research Initiative.....	6
<b>Part 1: Urbanisation: Issues, Lessons and Development Impact</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Diverse Urban Communities.....	10
Measuring Urban Poverty and Vulnerability .....	12
Slums and Informal Communities .....	13
Mobility and Fluidity in the Urban Environment.....	14
Lack of Accurate Data to Inform Programme Interventions .....	14
Urban Governance.....	15
Diversity of Actors .....	15
Children in the Urban Context .....	16
<b>Part 2: The Urban Programmes Initiative</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Background.....	18
Action Research Framework and Methodology .....	18
<i>Research Approach</i> .....	19
About the Seven Urban Pilot Initiatives.....	23
<i>La Paz, Bolivia: Youth Engagement</i> .....	25
<i>Orlando East: Local Economic Development</i> .....	26
<i>Beirut: Youth Peacebuilding</i> .....	28
<i>Kanpur: Child Labour, and Siliguri: Child Trafficking</i> .....	29
<i>Phnom Penh: Land Tenure</i> .....	31
<i>Surabaya: Child Friendly Cities</i> .....	32
<b>Part 3: Meta-Review Themes</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Approach to Meta-Review .....	35
Summary of Results .....	35



<i>The Inner Circle</i> .....	38
<i>The Middle Circle</i> .....	40
<i>The Outer Circle</i> .....	41
<b>Part 4: Discussion of Lessons Learnt by Research Themes .....</b>	<b>44</b>
The Urban Context .....	44
<i>Lessons on Socio-Cultural Diversity</i> .....	45
<i>Lessons on Mobility and Dynamism</i> .....	46
<i>Lessons on Levels and Causes of Urban Poverty</i> .....	48
The Enabling Environment .....	49
<i>Lessons on Partnering, Networks and Connections</i> .....	51
<i>Lessons on Governments, Power Structures and Accountability</i> .....	53
Organisational Context and Capacity: Key Observations .....	55
<i>Organisational Adaptations</i> .....	55
<b>Part 5: Recommendations from Urban Research Initiative .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Cities for Children Framework</i> .....	57
Why Do We Need This Framework? .....	59
City-wide Programming Approach.....	59
<i>The Neighbourhood Level</i> .....	60
<i>The Municipality Level</i> .....	61
<i>The City Level</i> .....	61
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Annex: International Urban Actors.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Development – International .....	63
Development – Grassroots .....	64
Humanitarian Aid Organisations .....	64
UN/Multilateral.....	65
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>67</b>



## Executive Summary

More than one billion children reside in cities today; however, millions of these children live in slum conditions (UNICEF 2012). Trapped in fragile pockets of cities across the world, children suffer terrible violations of their basic human rights. They live in overcrowded spaces, often on streets contaminated with garbage and dangerous waste, where they lack safe public spaces to play and are vulnerable to crime, engaged in hazardous child labour and, at times, trafficked to the city.

Cities and towns are engines of power and growth – they are seen as positive signs of development and opportunity. The twenty-first century is the first urban century with over half of the global population living in cities and towns. Although this has provided opportunity and success for many, it is also leaving a vast population behind. It is conservatively estimated that almost one billion people live in slums today, and the United Nations has projected that the slum population could increase to one-third of humanity within 30 years.

World Vision is one of the largest international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) focused on child well-being, with a reach to more than 4.3 million children across 90 countries. World Vision is already present in the world's most rapidly urbanising countries and regions. However, the urbanisation of poverty has presented NGOs like World Vision with largely unexplored territory. To date, the organisation has focused predominately on rural communities, with only an estimated 20–25 per cent of programming in urban or peri-urban communities, even though the world is already more than 50 per cent urban.

In 2008, recognising an organisational need to respond and adapt to the growing trend of urbanisation and its negative impact on the most vulnerable groups, especially children, World Vision applied an action research and learning approach to investigate the relevance of its current development models and frameworks in urban settings.

The Urban Research Initiative was launched in collaboration with six field offices, involving all stakeholders, including communities, in a reflective process to learn about the unique characteristics and complexities in mega-, medium, secondary and small cities. Indonesia, India, Cambodia, South Africa, Lebanon and Bolivia addressed context-specific issues including land rights, economic development, governance and policy reform, protection (child labour and trafficking) and child participation in city planning. The lessons from this initiative are informing effective and innovative ways to tell the complex story regarding World Vision's impact in dense and diverse informal settlements and slums.

World Vision's first (five-year) phase of urban research confirms that children are the first casualties of urban poverty. We are learning that proximity to services in urban settings does not mean access and that the urban poor continue to be excluded from the benefits of urbanisation due to political, social and economic factors. The research initiative explored adaptations to World Vision's current portfolio of development theories and frameworks and application of these across dynamic urban contexts. City strategies are recommended to ensure that World Vision's investment in programming and policy leads to sustainable change for marginalised urban poor communities.



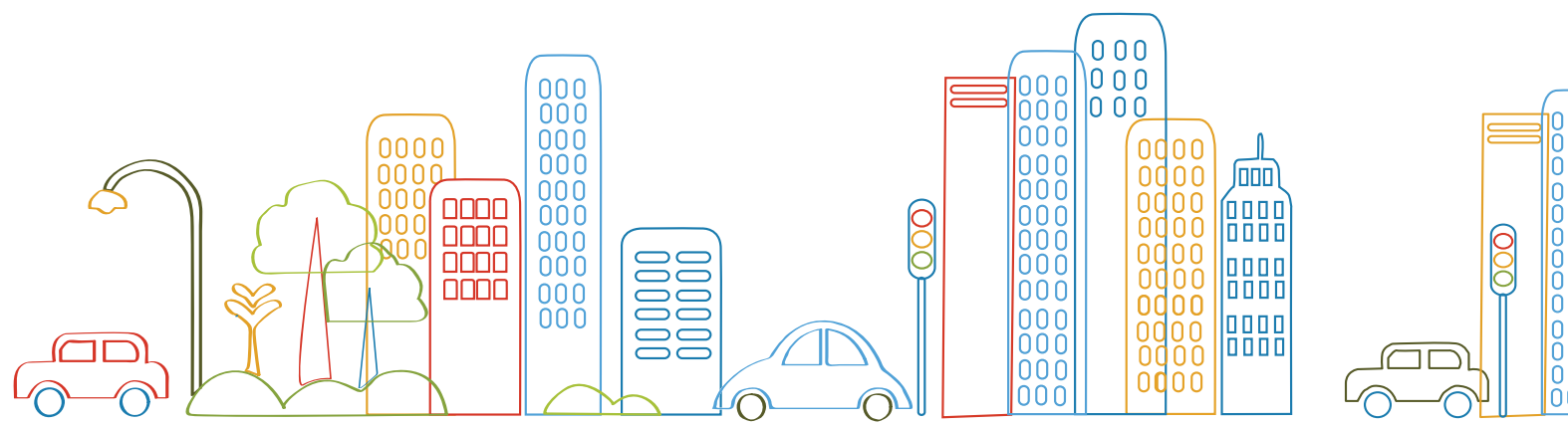
As a child-focused agency, World Vision engaged children and youth through its six pilot offices to co-design context-specific interventions at the neighbourhood level, simultaneously connecting marginalised groups to engage in a positive dialogue with city authorities. The pilot approaches are outlined below:

- The **Cambodia Urban Pilot Project** promoted community awareness about land-tenure security and Cambodian housing rights, and engaged city authorities in a dialogue with marginalised communities to advocate for inclusion and pro-poor policies.
- The **India pilots**:
  - **Siliguri Urban Pilot Project** promoted sustained civic engagement by establishing a city-wide network model to address and reduce the incidence of child labour and child trafficking.
  - **Kanpur Urban Pilot Project** aimed to reduce the incidence of child labour through supporting rehabilitation, non-formal education, provision of vocational training opportunities, capacity building and advocacy.
- The **Lebanon Urban Pilot Project** provided opportunities for children and youth to engage in building positive relationships among historically divided groups, using art and sport and allowing youth to claim public space to contribute to safe and peaceful communities.
- The **Bolivia Urban Pilot Project** promoted the active participation of children and youth in local governance processes in La Paz; they engaged in city-planning processes and enabled youth to review the city constitution and propose changes.
- The **South Africa Urban Pilot Project** aimed to create opportunities for local economic development through networking, advocacy and community partnership mechanisms.
- The **Indonesia Urban Pilot Project** contributed towards the development of pro-child policies within city government processes through the promotion of child friendly cities.

A meta-review of pilot projects, built on monitoring and evaluation activities within individual urban case studies, examined common urban programming themes across all contexts, as well as unique issues pertinent to each of the pilot cities. The framework was designed to prompt the researchers to explore and analyse the intersection of the urban context, the enabling environment and World Vision's organisational capacity to respond to urban issues and dynamism.

Through this research initiative, World Vision's experience indicates that the following need to be considered when operating in urban settings:

- Children are the first group to be affected by urban vulnerabilities and poverty. Community voice and action, especially children's voices and participation, are fundamental to ensure locally driven solutions.
- While traditionally NGOs have focused their attention on rural areas, mainly based on the assumption that services are easily accessible to urban residents, evidence shows that for many poor urban residents proximity to services does not mean access.



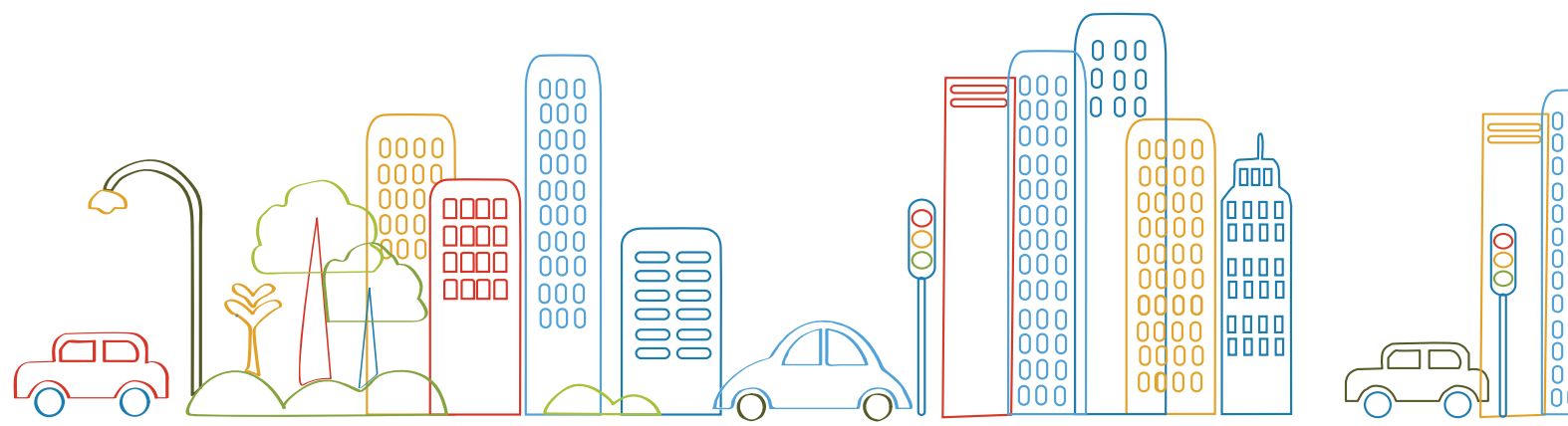


- Unlike rural areas, urban housing conditions are insecure and expensive, with many families sleeping in rotation in overcrowded housing; residents are vulnerable to disease.
- Urban poverty is often underestimated or misunderstood by governments and aid agencies as NGOs tend to rely on income-based poverty lines. If poverty lines were based on real costs of avoiding poverty in urban areas, the proportion of urban dwellers with below-poverty-line lifestyles would increase dramatically due to their dependence on informal cash-based economies.
- Often urban advantage is a myth; many urban dwellers, who live 50 metres away from a hospital, cannot access the services due to their informal status. It is widely acknowledged that the urban poor continue to be excluded due to political, social or economic factors.
- The poor and the vulnerable groups are marginalised and invisible in the city. The need is to advocate for inclusion of these groups in city planning and policy for long-term sustainable urban development.
- There remains a shortage of credible data to support programme assessment and design.
- The notion of community does not exist. People belong to several communities – of interest, practice and culture, not just a community of place. Urban neighbourhoods are fragmented and diverse. Building and strengthening communities is critical to stronger neighbourhoods and socially cohesive societies in cities.
- Urban environments are volatile and ever changing. This dynamism needs to be considered when designing long-term programme interventions. Frequent assessments should be an on-going requirement within the project lifecycle. Monitoring and evaluation need to consider both quantitative and qualitative methods of gathering data.
- Large-scale programmes with multi-sectoral interventions become problematic in a densely populated, volatile environment. Issue-based interventions were more appropriate entry points in city programmes.
- The political context of many urban centres is complex and challenging; there are multi-actors in the city. World Vision needs to be visible and to articulate a clear value proposition to be effective in the city.
- World Vision needs to form strategic partnerships in the city to be effective in dealing with complex issues and advocate for sustained change through policy reform involving government and multiple stakeholders. Partnerships are critical to scaling up strategies in order to respond to dense slums and informal settlements in the city. Combining knowledge and resources with partners promotes greater city-wide programme impact with much less investment.
- Adaptive programme management and flexible processes are required to respond to dynamic environments and to remain relevant.
- The skills required for urban programming of adaptability, problem solving, partnership development, networking and policy influence reflect different skill sets from those traditionally needed by community development practitioners.



World Vision's *Cities for Children* framework and the *City-wide Approach* emerged from the knowledge and experience of practitioners and thought leaders of the organisation involved in this urban research initiative.

**Figure 1. World Vision's *Cities for Children* Framework**



## Introduction

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*We are used to thinking of urban children as being better off than rural children in every way – better fed, better educated, with better access to health care and a better chance of succeeding in life. For many children, this is true. But for growing numbers, the so called ‘urban advantage’ is a myth.*  
– Bartlett 2011

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The characteristics of vulnerable urban communities in developing countries demand the adaptation of existing development theory, frameworks and methodologies to suit diverse urban contexts. The implementation of programmes and policy designed to respond to the needs of rural communities, which historically have been the focus of NGOs’ development interventions, requires adaptation to be effective because the urban poor face different livelihood challenges.<sup>1</sup> This report suggests that adaptation to urban contexts can be achieved successfully by applying an action-research and learning-based methodology; this ensures that development theories and processes are responsive to specific urban needs, allowing contextual adaptations.

The ‘urbanisation of poverty’ has presented NGOs with a largely unexplored territory. Traditionally, NGOs have focused their attention on rural areas, mainly because of the assumption that services are easily accessible to urban residents. However, many poor urban communities and millions of residents in informal settlements are being left behind. Proximity to services does not mean access. The urban poor continue to be excluded due to political, social or economic factors. NGOs require methodological innovation as they face unique challenges and complexities in urban environments. This will include seeking knowledge in action, rather than acting purely on predefined solutions, in order to achieve the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders (from local children through to government bodies) and sustainable impact. Recognising the need to respond and adapt to the changing face of poverty, NGOs are now starting to develop locally derived solutions that address vulnerabilities in urban contexts.

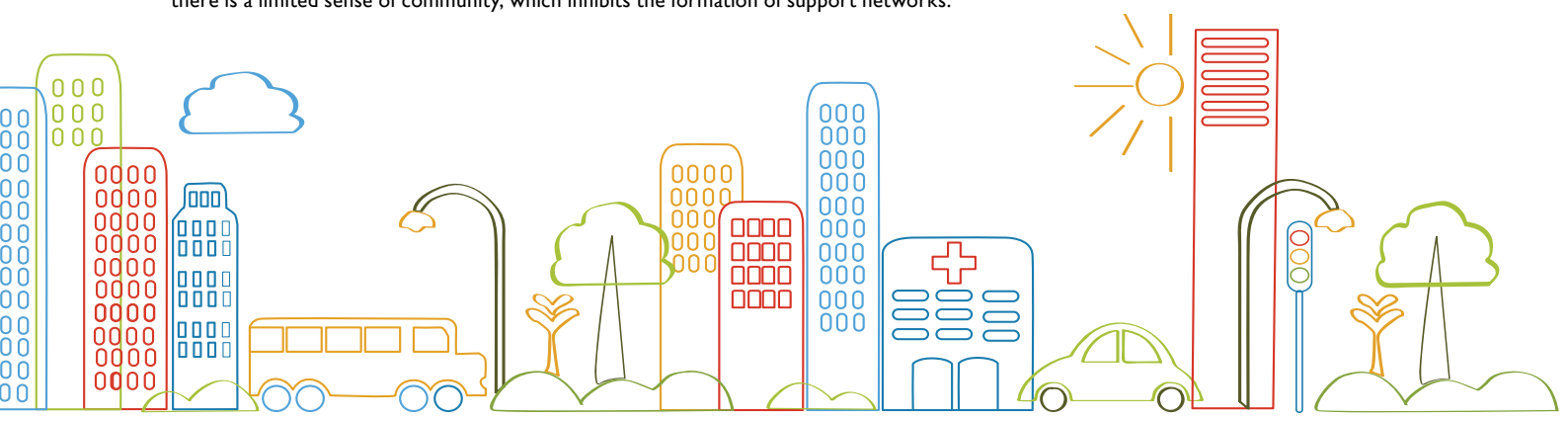
This report contends that successful responses to urban poverty depend on the enabling of community voices, especially children’s voices and participation in the case of World Vision’s urban programmes, as they can be effective agents of change in locally driven solutions.

Development and aid organisations operate in many challenging environments. Based on experience over many decades, these organisations have shared expertise on what works in bringing sustainable, community-led change to people affected by poverty, inequity and violence. Within this operating sphere World Vision and other organisations work for the well-being of children as the future leaders of their community – and potentially society.

Now, with the emergence of the global urban mega-trend, we need to adapt and apply these poverty reduction principles in to our rapidly urbanising world. The world is racing towards predominately urban living at an

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<sup>1</sup> For example, competing for limited space, food and basic services in dense, diverse, informal settlements (slums). Due to increased mobility there is a limited sense of community, which inhibits the formation of support networks.



unprecedented rate (see Table 1). More than 60 per cent of the population will be urban citizens by the year 2030, corresponding to an increase of more than one billion urban residents in the next 15 years (UN-DESA 2014, 7).

**Table 1: Pace of global urban population growth**

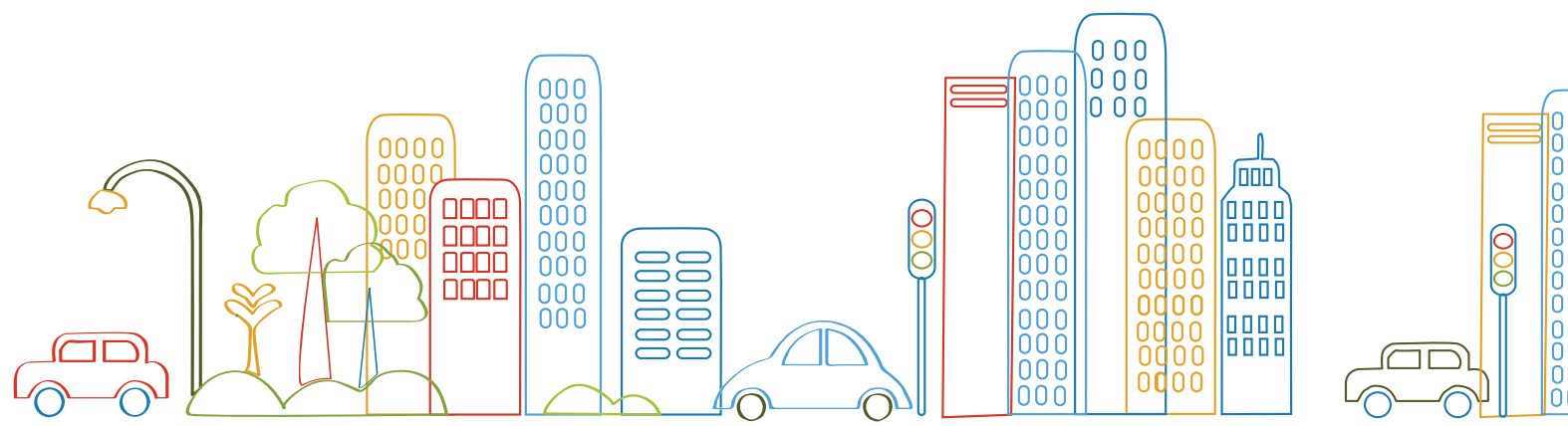
World's total urban population	Time taken
0–1 billion	10,000 years (c.8000 BCE–1960)
1– 2 billion	25 years (1960–1985)
2–3 billion	18 years (1985–2003)
3–4 billion	13 years (2003–2016)

As populations shift, so do patterns of poverty. The volatility of change is heavily biased towards highly populated developing nations where obstacles to planning and resourcing dynamic urban communities are already significant (UN-DESA 2014, 12). Urban poverty has resulted in the establishment of long-term and extensive slum communities throughout the developing world. UN-Habitat estimated that in the year 2000, 39 per cent of the urban dwellers in developing regions were living in urban slum conditions. While the percentage of populations living in urban slums is slowly decreasing, the global slum population is continuing to increase, now nearly one billion people, with the addition of 61 new million urban slum dwellers in the past eight years.

As articulated in the UNICEF report *Children in an Urban World*, one result of this global urban mega-trend is that the ‘growing up’ experience of children is increasingly urban. Childhood in the city sees many children benefitting from the positives of urban life: access to education, health care and recreation. However, for many children, especially those living in informal communities, childhood in urban contexts is characterised by a lack of access to essential services – water, electricity, education and health care. Proximity to services does not mean access for many migrant families and their children. For these vulnerable children ‘home’ equates to an overcrowded dwelling, with constant threat of eviction, and often rather than schooling, they are forced into dangerous and exploitative labour.

### About World Vision’s Urban Research Initiative

The urbanisation of poverty requires alternative development models that respond to the unique challenges present in cities and other urban areas. After having spent over 60 years developing technical capacity in rural poverty response, transitioning towards a suitable urban response has represented a significant organisational challenge. To respond adequately, World Vision began by investing in urban research and development, beginning in the 1980s with the launch of the Urban Advance programme. More recently, the 2007 research draft report ‘Keys to the City’ provided a renewed focus on urban issues, calling for a launch of a test and pilot phase to explore innovation and develop institutional capacity to respond to urbanisation. World Vision then launched



its Urban Programmes Initiative in 2008 and established a dedicated urban unit (Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming [Urban CoE])<sup>2</sup> to advance the urban agenda within World Vision global and field offices.

The first five years – the research phase of the Urban Programmes Initiative (2008–13) – were devoted to developing an understanding of the specifics and complexities of multiple urban contexts. This phase helped the Urban CoE to gain a sense of how World Vision’s approaches, systems, structures, policies and procedures are facilitating or impeding effective and sustainable urban programming. Subsequently, the learning from the seven urban pilots, along with the cross-fertilisation of findings, was later translated into an evidence base for guiding the direction and decisions of future urban-programming approaches.

With the reviews of the first phase of the Urban Programmes Initiative completed in 2014, this report presents a consolidation of the knowledge gained through implementation of diverse programming approaches in these widely differing urban environments.

**Figure 2. The Urban Programmes Initiative Pilot Sites**



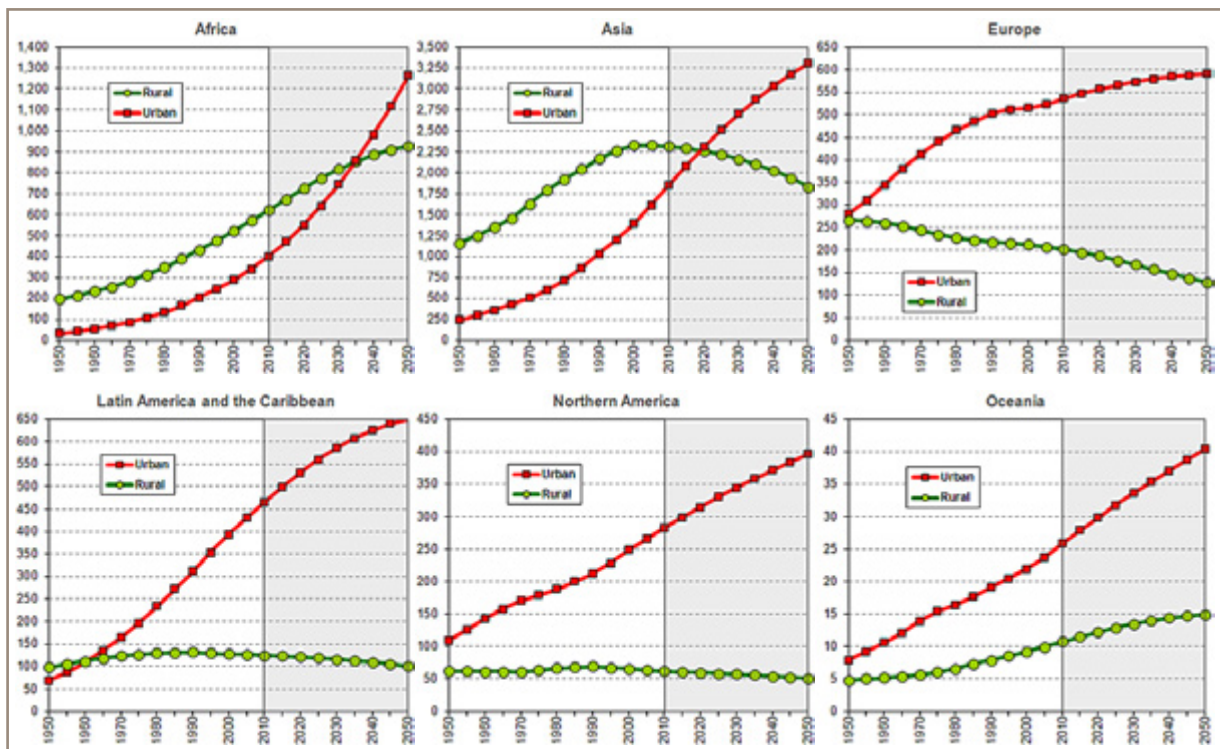
<sup>2</sup> The Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming (Urban CoE) is a think tank that seeks to develop improved, robust models to drive sustained change in urban contexts, acknowledging the dynamics, diversity and density that characterise urban communities. It is centred around three functional areas: research and development, facilitating learning, and supporting organisational adaptation. The Urban CoE is a knowledge asset; it develops resource materials and urban-specific approaches, and it provides advice and technical support to national offices that are eager to strengthen their urban portfolios.



## Part I: Urbanisation: Issues, Lessons and Development Impact

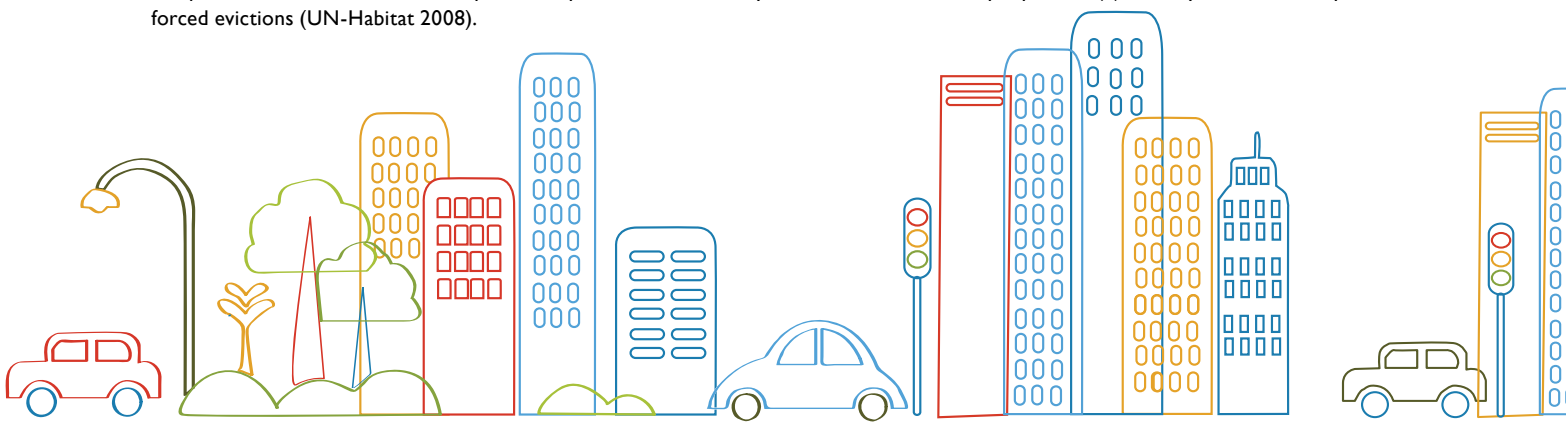
Urbanisation denotes the rapid and exponential population growth of cities. It has been, and continues to be, accompanied by a correlating increase in urban poverty. The percentage of the global population living in urban environments increased from 27 per cent to 43 per cent from 1955 to 2005, is currently growing at a rate of 60 million people per year and is projected to reach 6.3 billion by 2050 (UN-Habitat 2010). Most of this growth is taking place not in mega-cities but rather in smaller cities and towns (UN-Habitat 2010, 29). These ‘secondary cities’ (150,000 to five million inhabitants) are growing at the fastest rate globally, yet due to their smaller size and limited resources have ‘fewer capacities to plan and manage urban development and promote employment and economic growth’ (Cities Alliance 2014, 2), which makes them hugely conducive to urban slum development. The pattern of the urbanisation mega-trend along with the growth of informal communities is likely to continue, with the United Nations predicting the global slum<sup>3</sup> population to increase from one-sixth (in 2012) to one-third of humanity within 30 years (UN-Habitat 2010). These predictions constitute global societal, economic and environmental transitions that are changing and shifting the way people live and experience poverty.

**Figure 3: Urban and rural population (millions) by major region, 1950–2050**



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision* (2011), [http://esa.un.org/unup/Analytical-Figures/Fig\\_6.htm](http://esa.un.org/unup/Analytical-Figures/Fig_6.htm).

3 UN-Habitat defines a slum household as a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area that lacks one or more of the following: (1) durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions, (2) sufficient living space, which means not more than three people sharing the same room, (3) easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price, (4) access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people, and (5) security of tenure that prevents forced evictions (UN-Habitat 2008).



Unfortunately, data on children’s well-being and the extreme poverty that is experienced in urban slum communities can be obscured by the relative affluence of their neighbouring communities (UNICEF 2012). However, it is known that children are the first casualties of urban poverty. They are the most vulnerable to the health and safety risks present in urban slums, such as crime, violence, poor infrastructure, inadequate services, and social, economic and physical exclusion (World Vision 2014c). Yet, urbanisation is not necessarily incompatible with child friendly cities and space. The effect of exponentially increasing urban populations and poverty intensifies the inaccessibility, despite proximity, of resources essential in the consolidation of cities as child friendly cities. The vulnerability of children, the growth of urban slums and the differences between urban and rural poverty are substantially changing the aid and development landscape, and it is imperative that child-focused organisations formulate and implement urban-specific development processes that ensure sustainable impacts and improved child well-being in diverse urban environments.

This section presents some of the lessons from global best practice and literature of particular relevance as well as World Vision’s field-based research experience to create foundational definitions around which a framework of urban programming can be built.

Urban programming begins with defining an area as urban, which in itself can be problematic. Do we define an urban area on the basis of size of population? On the nature of administrative and governance structures? On the presence of infrastructure? On the nature of industries present? Or on influence at national or international levels? There are problems associated with any narrow view of urban. Therefore, World Vision has found it useful to incorporate social as well as geographically based and population-based characteristics – for instance, those in Table 2 – to help understand and define the urban context. Each of the characteristics presented in Table 2 differs from the lifestyle, politics, economy and physical form common to traditional rural communities. While these characteristics can exist in rural areas as communities, as any community increasingly displays these characteristics it can be thought to be becoming increasingly urban.



Jakarta slum, Indonesia. Children’s vulnerabilities are heightened living in informal settlements.



**Table 2: Characteristics for identifying increasingly ‘urban’ contexts**

Physical	Economic	Human	Political	Environmental
Ongoing construction of buildings or major development of infrastructure or industry	Primarily non-agricultural labour and industry	Population size, density and overcrowding	Close proximity to political leaders and authorities	Majority of land occupied or in-use; limited open spaces
Changing land use from agricultural to commercial and residential	Presence of informal, cash-based trades and services	Mix of cultures, ethnicities, languages, religions and identities	Territory governed through municipalities or similar entities	Pollution and traffic congestion issues
Presence of slums, shantytowns, shacks or other poorly constructed and informal housing	The poor are subject to price fluctuations and having limited coping strategies	Presence of unregistered migrants and/or displaced persons	A high need for integrated land use and strategic planning to meet the needs of local residents	Volume of waste and limited waste management, creating environmental hazards

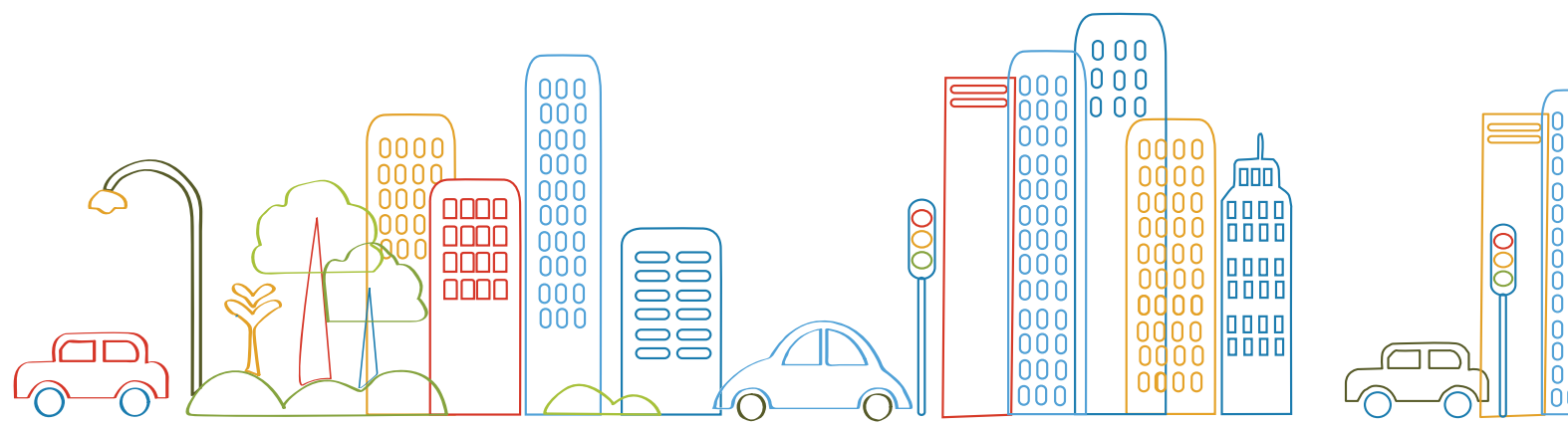
The sections below seek to provide a brief introduction to the very complex, much studied and much written-about topics relating to (1) diverse urban communities; (2) measuring urban poverty and vulnerability; (3) slums and informal communities; (4) mobility and fluidity in the urban environment; (5) lack of accurate data to inform programme interventions; (6) urban governance; (7) diversity of actors; and (8) children in the urban context. It does not seek to be comprehensive but to provide an introductory overview and highlight the complexities often common to urban context.

### Diverse Urban Communities

Urban areas tend to be more heterogeneous than rural areas. New urban neighbourhoods can often consist of residents from different cultures, belief systems and languages who have been motivated by economic opportunities to move to the city. The trust and solidarity that usually exists among community members in rural settings is missing at times in urban contexts. Often separated from their own kinship ties, cultural groups and land, people lack the relationships that are fundamental for maintaining strongly networked communities.

Building a sense of community is essential for effective urban programming. The urban poor, often migrants, need to develop social capital and networks in the city to compensate for the loss of intergenerational links and support that hold rural communities together.

The concept of ‘social poverty’ is prevalent in many cities where dissent and marginalisation rather than cultural cohesion have normalised. Acknowledging and mitigating the risk of fragile or broken community ties is under-





represented in programming (Sapirstein 2006). World Vision urban practitioners report that urban residents do not necessarily feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, which results in less willingness to participate in initiatives benefitting the collective good. The influence of diversity in urban settings provokes questions about programming approaches and community mobilisation techniques that are based upon notions of a cohesive geographical community. Understanding various types of communities that exist within and across geographically defined areas may result in a different starting point for community mobilisation, including interventions to strengthen ‘a sense of community’ for urban dwellers.

In *Small Change: About the Art of Practice and the Limits of Planning in Cities*, Hamdi (2004) suggests a more appropriate definition of community comprising five forms of urban communities:

1. Communities of Interest
2. Communities of Culture
3. Communities of Practice
4. Communities of Resistance
5. Communities of Place

Understanding these urban-specific aspects of community – namely, the way that communities develop, identify, share issues and interests, bond and develop social cohesion – are critical for designing relevant urban poverty reduction responses. These considerations assist in providing a more nuanced and reflective understanding of community and place. World Vision’s usual programme design brings improvements to a contained geographical area. This continues to be relevant in urban environments, but it needs to be acknowledged that many of the goals, interactions and achievements take place outside the area. Neighbours do not necessarily face the same issues within a neighbourhood. Communities may form or strengthen as people bond on a shared issue or goal.



Children and youth from diverse backgrounds participating in an annual planning session in Surabaya, Indonesia.



## Measuring Urban Poverty and Vulnerability

Material poverty, social vulnerability and environmental vulnerability are intrinsically intertwined, and all contribute to the hardships and risks facing disadvantaged urban communities. While material poverty may be the most visually obvious, and therefore be inferred as of greater significance, social and environmental vulnerabilities equally need to be addressed.

The international poverty line attempts to establish a financial level below which a household can no longer afford basic needs, defined as extreme poverty or 'living on the edge of subsistence'.<sup>4</sup> However, applying either the international poverty line (US\$1.25/person/day) or national poverty lines to communities living in urban contexts is rarely helpful. As the costs of living in an urban context are often far higher than costs in rural living, and there are fewer opportunities to supplement cash income with subsistence agriculture, there is a greater need for a larger cash income in urban areas.<sup>5</sup> New arrivals, sometimes displaced by war or natural disaster, and often isolated from family members and normal networks of support, are some of the most vulnerable.

Urban residents are constantly affected by the labour market, which influences the standard and security of what they have: shelter, food, clothing and children's needs. Thus, urban poverty is tied to household resilience – the ability of the family to withstand both short-term shocks, such as unexpected costs or sudden unemployment, and long-term stressors, such as rising costs, increasing debts and increasing food requirements as children grow.

Individuals and families experiencing material poverty are vulnerable to:

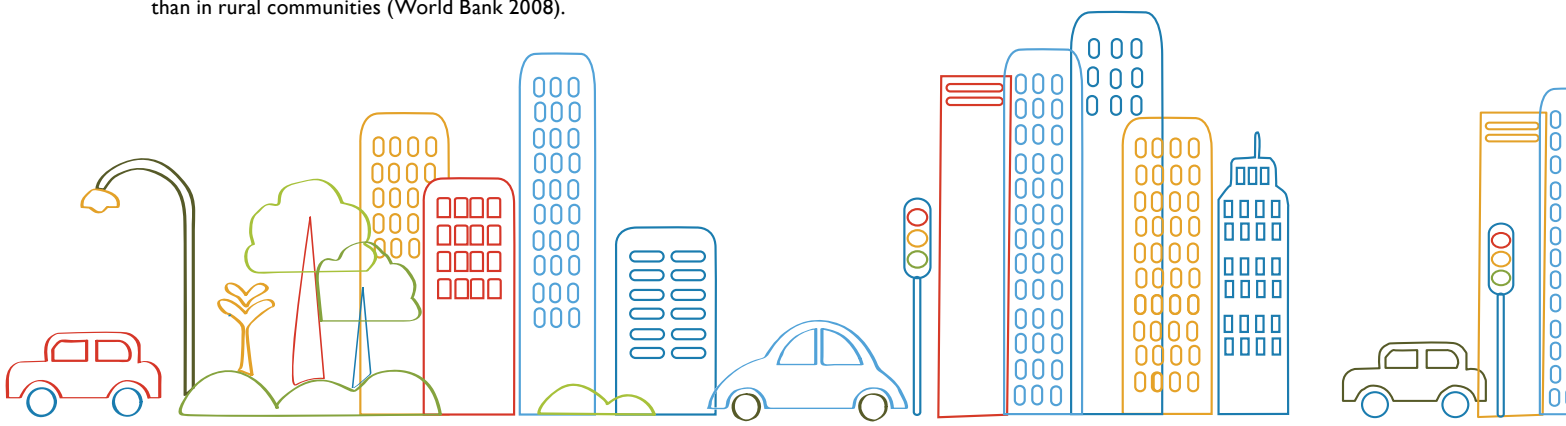
- an inadequate income or 'safety net', leading to shortages of necessities including nutritious food, education needs and medical care
- reliance on informal economy, leading to labour exploitation, income insecurity and at times child labour
- low housing stability and quality, often being forced into areas that are poorly serviced, violent or dangerous.



In addition to tenure insecurity, slum dwellers lack formal supply and access to basic infrastructure and services, public space and green areas.

<sup>4</sup> In 2010 this was set at a daily rate of US\$1.25 per person. However, it has been suggested that a generic value which fails to allow for the changing costs of living between different countries, contexts and cultures, while useful for demonstrating trends across multiple years, is less helpful for comparisons across countries or in assessing real-time poverty. See <http://data.worldbank.org/news/extreme-poverty-rates-continue-to-fall>.

<sup>5</sup> This fact is recognised by the World Bank following research which found living expenses in India were nearly 50 per cent more in urban areas than in rural communities (World Bank 2008).



In addition to material poverty, urban communities are also at risk of social poverty, more commonly referred to as social vulnerability. Social vulnerability can be manifested in a plethora of ways, but it often includes reduced perception of value, voice or validity.

For example, where governments do not acknowledge the validity and needs of new or increasingly dense settlements, their residents will be institutionally disadvantaged. Undoubtedly, there are cases where municipal governments deliberately discriminate against the poor by focusing on gentrification and services in middle-class neighbourhoods rather than city-wide inclusion (e.g. Baker and McClain 2009). Similarly, some vulnerable families and children in urban environments can be almost 'invisible', making it difficult to identify and address the challenges and risks that they are facing. Street children, children without birth registration and children of unregistered migrants have severely restricted access to food, drinking water, education and medical care. They have limited access to child protection and welfare programmes, increasing the risk of abuse and exploitation. Their invisibility results in high levels of social vulnerability. They are also the hardest to reach, because they have no fixed address, are not registered at school or medical centres and often are deliberately trying to stay out of sight of police or welfare agencies.

Migrants, families without ongoing employment and families without stable housing are also environmentally vulnerable, often forced into the marginal urban areas – riverbanks, drainage channels, along train lines, surrounded by industrial estates or near waste dumps – the areas of the city where those with less vulnerability choose not to live. Being forced to live in these locations places disadvantaged urban communities at higher risks of disasters associated with natural climatic events and at higher risks of public health impacts due to pollution from surrounding industry and maintains the risk of short-notice eviction – high levels of environmental vulnerability.

## Slums and Informal Communities

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*The concentration of poverty is gradually shifting towards urban centres. Because of this, poverty reduction and social sustainability of development cannot be achieved without addressing the basic needs of poor urban dwellers.*  
– Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-Habitat

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Slums represent the worst of urban poverty and inequality. Creating urban places without adequate urban infrastructure is a recipe for slum communities. Given the variation of slum communities identified by the pilots, the research project explored the definition of a slum in order to respond to urban issues that emerge from living in a slum. In the analysis of slum areas, UN-Habitat defines any specific place, whether a whole city or a neighbourhood, as a slum area if half or more of all households lack improved water, improved sanitation, insufficient living area, durable housing, secure tenure or combinations thereof (UN-Habitat, 2008). Given the growth in urban population, slums are often home to significantly large proportions of the urban population, ranging from comfortable to living on the periphery. Arguably, *slum* is a word that divides and creates negative connotations rather unfairly, because in fact there exists no accepted definition for what a slum actually is. Hence, UN-Habitat is now referring to a three-part typology because slums in many cities are no longer just marginalised



neighbourhoods housing a relatively small number of struggling urban population. They often are home to a range of diverse socio-economic groups. Defining the urban poor in this diverse concentration of people presents a challenge to any programming methodology and needs to be given careful consideration.

In both population and economic terms, growth is a core characteristic of urban areas. Urban areas are gateways to larger national, regional and international markets. The benefits of growth, however, are often not applied with equity city wide. Municipal authorities tend to focus their attention on areas of the city that are succeeding at the expense of those that are failing. Dense and fragmented neighbourhoods can be left to fend for themselves in the face of poor infrastructure, inadequate services, economic and geographic exclusion (no roads or transport), crime, violence and micro-politics. Health, protection and safety risks for residents are both physical and social, and children are especially affected.

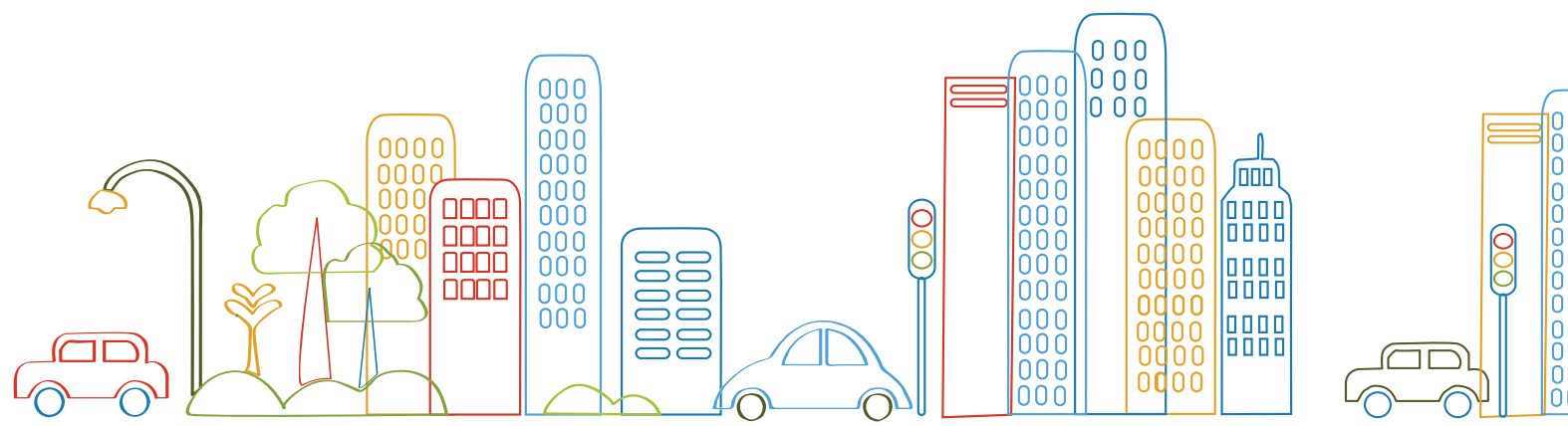
### Mobility and Fluidity in the Urban Environment

One of the most significant features of the urban setting is the mobility of the population. Slums, or neighbourhoods housing the urban poor, are often perceived by residents as temporary dwelling situations. The lack of investment or entitlement to property and land, the possibility of forced evictions, vulnerability to increases in rent and the seeking of better employment opportunities generally result in higher levels of mobility compared to rural populations. This may make it difficult to track and measure impacts on participants over a specific period of time. Vulnerable children in urban areas, such as street children, are also particularly mobile. Hence, the design of urban programmes may need to include indicators which measure impact at a collective or higher level rather than the individual level; for instance, attempts to measure a programme's impact through its influence on a more equitable and 'pro-poor' government policy, success in including children and youth in municipal planning processes, the strengthening of coalitions and partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs).

Urban communities are more susceptible to change and may require that project time frames be shorter than the usual 10 to 15 years. Intentional and regular reflection processes become even more important in a continually changing urban environment in order to tailor effectively project interventions to changing and emerging needs of the poor. Programming tools such as log frames need to be reframed to enable adaptive management and allow for periodic reviews.

### Lack of Accurate Data to Inform Programme Interventions

The accuracy and quality of data about the urban poor are often unreliable. The government bodies responsible for data collection (census every 10 years) are often poorly resourced, with inconsistent data-collection approaches. The issues of urban mobility and unregistered migrants result in those at most risk of poverty and vulnerability often not being included in formal reports and figures, making it difficult to identify through secondary data those who are most in need of support. Evidence shows that it is these unregistered migrants who become 'slum casualties.' NGOs need to consider strategies which would often require some additional primary data collection during the assessment phase to inform urban programme design.



## Urban Governance

One of the greatest complexities facing INGOs which are addressing the societal challenges of urban poverty is the governance environment in which they must operate. The governance arena incorporates the formal governance processes of government, civil society and private-sector activities, and the informal governance dynamics of power, decision-making, networks and relationships. Both formal and informal governance components can either increase the ease with which NGOs function in an urban context or can add resistance and challenges to NGOs implementing their programmes.

Local government, municipal authorities and national departments all have responsibilities and interests in making a city function effectively. Policy 'territory' is unclear among these different layers of government. This calls for institutional change through better town planning, targeted services and pro-poor investment, much of which lies in the hands of government to implement more effectively. Of the three levels of government, the most likely to be under-resourced and under-skilled is local government, yet it is here in urban environments that the most direct difference can be made (USAID 2013; World Bank 2011). Different types of policies are called for, requiring locally led analysis and problem solving, on waste disposal, air and water pollution, sanitation, road use and upkeep, and provision of inclusive affordable services.

Government is not the only power structure in play in urban environments. Micro-politics are extremely important in the lives of slum residents, notoriously involving gangs, standover tactics and extortion, but at times also offering services and genuine protection for affiliated community groups (Jorgensen and Dasgupta 2011, 24).

One key advantage to urban development is the number and scale of local actors who are able to collaborate and develop shared visions and joint goals, act with one another as a catalyst for change, and mobilise communities for development. Informal networks of local NGO and community-based organisations hold significant potential to influence urban development pathways. One example demonstrating the potential for collaboration is the informal networks present in Nairobi's Kibera slum, which has more than 500 NGOs and CSOs working on different challenges within its boundaries.

This complexity of actors, power, multiple and often conflicting priorities, regular ambiguity over roles and responsibilities and a chronic shortage of resources leads urban governance in developing contexts to pose a long-term, complex and 'wicked' challenge to urban poverty reduction (Glouberman and Zimmerman 2002). Overcoming the wicked challenges associated with urban programming will require long-term collaboration and partnerships which strive to identify mutually agreeable objectives and develop persisting trust and meaningful participation.

## Diversity of Actors

From governments to impact investors, multinational corporations to small local enterprises, UN agencies to community organisations and NGOs, there is phenomenal diversity of actors involved in urban poverty reduction activities. Each of these actors brings with it a unique skill set, resource set, agenda and motivation – and all of these are needed for effective and sustainable urban development.



As mentioned in the governance discussion above, the role of the national, regional and local governments in providing improved urban services, increased community participation and awareness of children's needs will be critical. Government-based actors should continue to be encouraged, consulted and considered to be central players in urban development activities.

Other actors, such as for-profit social enterprises, private businesses or impact investors, can all help to improve the financial viability and the economic development components of urban development. Because of the reciprocal relationship between the wealth of corporations and the wealth of the city, the role of businesses as 'corporate citizens' is heightened. In rapidly growing urban cities the relationship between growth and wealth can lead to corrupt activities which work to the detriment of the poor (Baker and McClain 2009), or it can lead to the development of positive models for corporate engagement and investment in pro-poor or pro-child city initiatives (for instance, Steinberg 2011). Public-private partnerships bring not only resources for collaborative projects with communities but also direct solutions in areas such as workplace safety, wages and conditions, environmental restoration and disaster risk reduction, and adherence to laws and protocols on child labour.

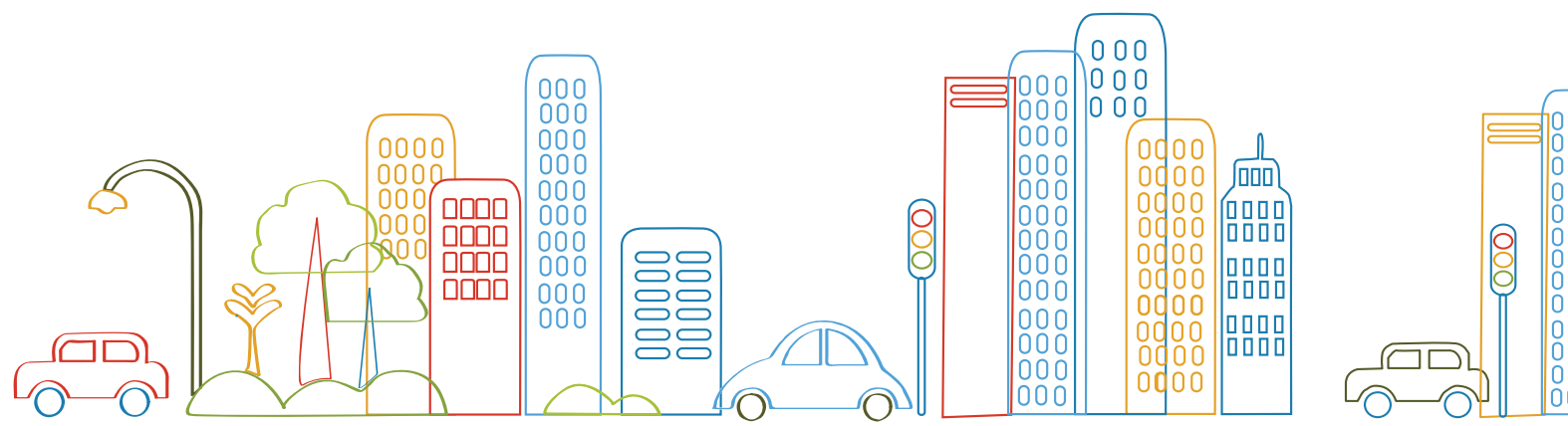
### Children in the Urban Context

Enabling children's participation as active, discerning agents is necessary for effective, rights-based development processes according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UNICEF 1989). The CRC stipulates the child's right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and well-being. UNICEF's child friendly cities (CFC) framework (UNICEF 2004) focuses on the implementation of the CRC and identifies the processes through which children's rights and needs are realised by local government.

Child-focused development organisations are now investing their efforts in mobilising government bodies to engage with children as active stakeholders in their communities and to enable children's voices to respond to the issues that directly affect them. These organisations recognise local children's potential to play a strategic role in facilitating community attitudinal and behavioural change, and as monitors of development indicators and effective planning in municipal/government bodies. It is suggested that where children's voices are encouraged and enabled, dynamic development responses are as well.

Academic discourse and empirical evidence suggest that participatory action research approaches in which affected local stakeholders define the city they envision and identify both indicators of inequality/poverty and priorities for action are the most capable of responding to the fluctuating needs of urban communities. (Majale 2008, Bháird 2013). Furthermore, the divergence in perceptions of liveability and urban issues between adults and children demonstrates the value, indeed the necessity, of engaging children as stakeholders.

UNICEF's child friendly cities (UNICEF CFC) framework (2012) provides a definition and guide for implementing a child friendly city based on the CRC, (UNICEF 1989). It identifies the steps to build a local system of governance committed to fulfilling children's rights and translates the 'process needed to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by national governments into a local government process' (UNICEF 2004, 3). It identifies a city as child friendly if it demonstrates full commitment to this implementation.



World Vision recognises that children, adolescents and youth have different development priorities at different stages of their lives and will require projects that engage their attention, build their life skills, improve their living conditions and encourage optimism for the future. A well-functioning city offers development advantages for its child citizens, for instance:

- a safe and healthy environment in which to grow up
- opportunities for positive play and interaction across multiple communities
- visibility of child rights and access to child services
- proximity and quality of education and health care
- connections with information, including (safely) online
- opportunities for safe, dignified and viable employment as adolescents and young adults.

But these advantages are reliant on effective urban planning by an appropriately resourced and capable municipal authority.



## Part 2: The Urban Programmes Initiative

### Background

World Vision launched its Urban Programmes Initiative to develop an understanding of how NGOs can respond to the diversity of issues within urban settings in order to deliver child well-being outcomes in cities and peri-urban areas. The increase in urban poverty has proven a challenge to the established models that much of World Vision's programming is based upon, because they were designed as a response to rural poverty and development needs. The Urban Programmes Initiative intended to look beyond the established programme approaches to an emergent city-wide approach; that is, to respond holistically to the specific challenges presented in dense, diverse and dynamic urban environments, to deepen its understanding of rural-urban linkages, to achieve large-scale city-wide policy impact and to ensure children's well-being in urban contexts.

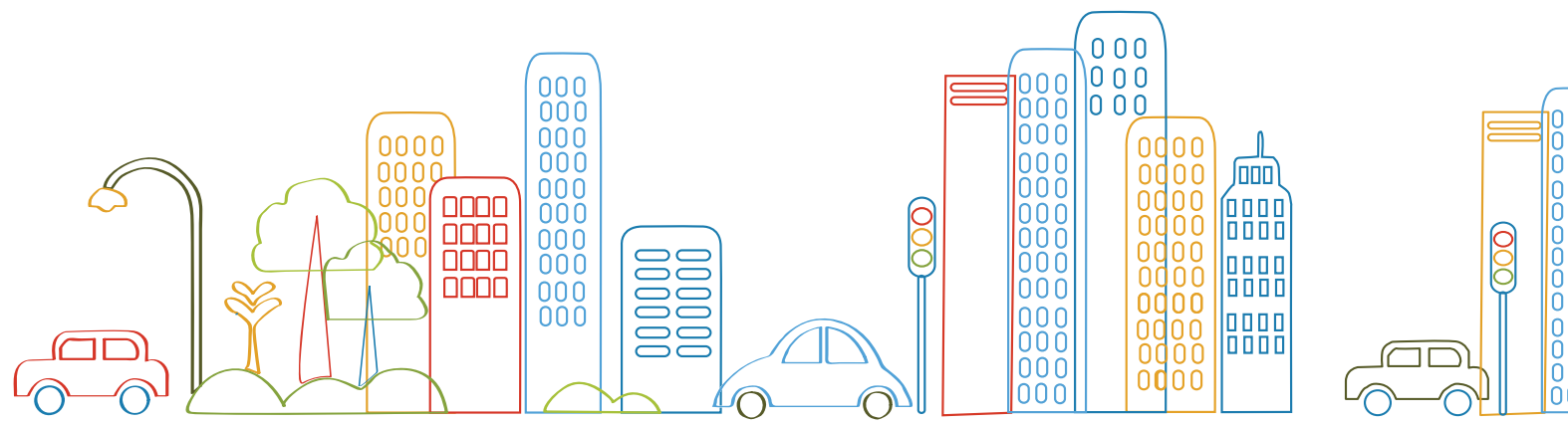
World Vision implemented six urban development pilot country projects designed to learn and respond to the density, diversity and dynamics specific to the urban context,<sup>6</sup> which informed World Vision's *Cities for Children* framework aimed to address children's well-being in urban contexts. This framework is anchored in World Vision's aspirational goals for child well-being and informed by already-established UN frameworks, which will be described in detail later in this report.

### Action Research Framework and Methodology

World Vision applied an action research methodology to define unique criteria specific to a dynamic and complex environment of towns and cities. Action research approaches are based on the idea that social phenomena do not have fixed and stable meanings but instead are continually being negotiated and constructed through interaction among people (Bryman 2004, 538). According to this perspective it is difficult to develop a comprehensive understanding of a situation prior to acting on it. Managing change becomes an ongoing 'reflective' process that involves all stakeholders in a system to learn their way forward. It is based on a notion of knowing *in action*, rather than knowledge as *prior* to action (Schön 1991). A focus on learning and reflection in order to redefine goals and objectives continuously in relation to specific contexts, therefore, is central to action research. Within this approach the development process is conceived of as an exploration of a problem, rather than as the implementation of a predefined solution.

Research at the post-implementation evaluation stage constitutes the defining principle of the action research methodology. This differs from a static 'theory informs practice' approach in that the cyclical structure of information transfer-in-action research (practice informs theory; theory then informs establishment of learning networks; networks then facilitate effective and efficient implementation of practice) is designed to ensure that theory of development processes is not informed only by the specific contexts in which it is applied and the reception/success of individual applications. The constant evaluation of practice to inform theory – knowledge *in action* rather than *prior* to action – is more relevant to dynamic contexts such as urban areas, where adaptive

<sup>6</sup> Urban contexts are characterised by its density, diversity and dynamics. Density: urban areas are characterised by high population and dense housing in a relatively small area, and there are a greater number of development actors in the same area. Diversity: social, ethnic, political, religious and economically diverse groups are now living in close proximity. Dynamics: urban environments are fluid and changing, characterised by high mobility and shifting interactions within sometimes rapidly shifting power relationships.





management is more appropriate to respond and remain relevant to the context. This ensures that development theory is receptive/responsive to the dynamic and perpetually in-flux nature of urban communities and is capable of the perpetual malleability needed to ensure appropriate and effective implementation in ever-changing environments.

World Vision's research specifically focused on learning about the urban context and its implications for programming. This approach aims to learn from the strengths of internal and external research and existing urban models to define and develop urban approaches and tools for World Vision practitioners and the broader NGO and development sector.

## Research Approach

Applying an action research and learning approach, the Urban CoE's research initiative specifically focused on exploring the uniqueness of the city from social, cultural, environmental, political and economic dimensions and the development issues pertinent within the specific context of a city. This approach aimed to learn from the strengths of internal and external research, and adaptations of various urban models, to define and develop urban approaches and tools for practitioners. It was also designed to draw on learning from past and existing World Vision urban projects and previous evidence from experienced agencies and academic institutions engaged in urban issues.

This action research approach was applied within an overarching case study methodology (Yin 2009). What binds the six country research case studies together are certain unique aspects of urban vulnerabilities, innovative approaches to addressing these vulnerabilities (which are distinct from World Vision's approach in rural contexts) and how these affect the lives of children in urban areas.

Six country offices were identified to launch urban pilot projects as part of this global initiative. Indonesia, India (two projects), Cambodia, South Africa, Lebanon and Bolivia are working on context-specific issues, including land rights, economic development, governance and policy reform, protection (child labour and trafficking) and child participation, to name a few.

The meta-analysis and research activities were not based on the conventional two-staged approach that focuses initially on model development and subsequent testing within a small number of pilots with the aim of scaling up once a comprehensive understanding of urban programming has been developed. In fact, this linear approach to development is recognised as problematic in dealing with complex issues. Complex issues tend to cut across multiple stakeholders, multiple perspectives and multiple goals.

Urban environments are dynamic; relationships with people constantly shift and change. Urban environments are fluid, characterised by high mobility and shifting interactions, and this creates a complex web of relationships, including rapidly shifting power relationships. The complexity of urban issues makes it difficult to develop a comprehensive understanding of a situation prior to acting on it. The knowledge generated by action is likely to be of limited value outside the particular time and context in which it was developed. Complex issues are best managed by means of action research that involves learning through reflection and that allows questions to emerge from action (World Vision 2008). This action research approach has strengthened the links between research and practice, bringing grassroots players and implementing staff closer to thought leaders and policymakers.



By setting out deliberately to look for problems, this ‘learning by doing’ approach invited innovation on scope and practice as well as transparency on limitations and challenges. Reflection on project efforts also aimed to understand underlying and parallel factors within and outside the organisation that were having an impact on the effectiveness of the project in some way. Linking this to the meta-framework of inquiry across seven different city contexts provided the opportunity to generate overarching conclusions regarding guiding principles and approaches that might work best for World Vision in diverse urban settings.

The dynamic nature of the political, social and economic urban environment results in data becoming irrelevant very quickly. This then has an impact on the design and implementation of the programme; the inclusion of certain target groups can become a challenge. The dynamic environment also makes it challenging to demonstrate impact according to the original target group and scope of the project. The pilot programmes were encouraged to consider strategies that often would require some additional primary data collection during the assessment phase to inform urban programme design.



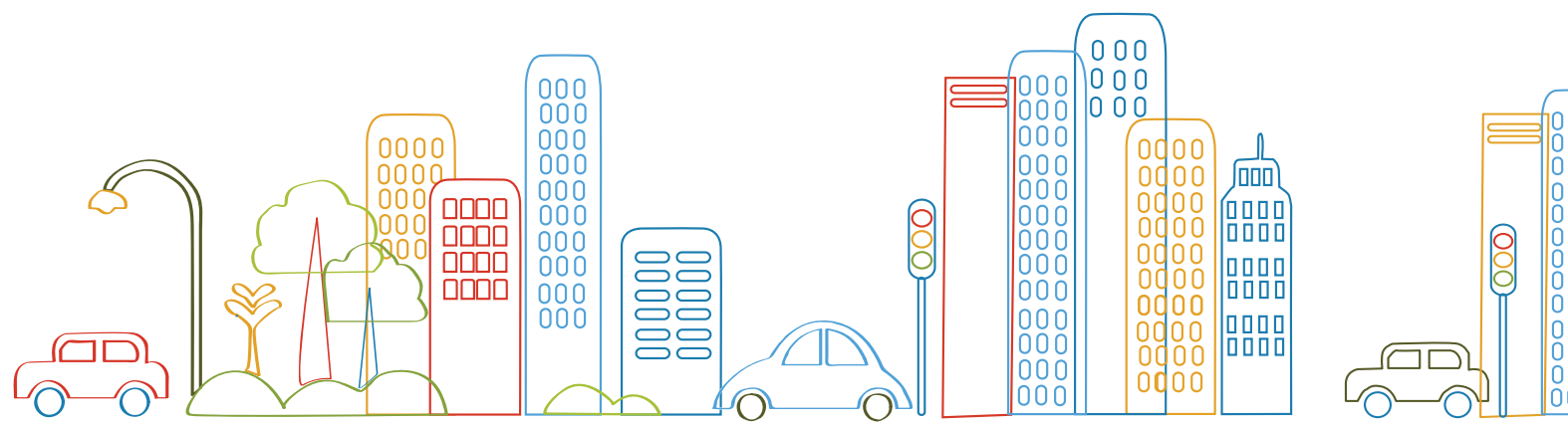
Dense and dynamic urban environments pose challenges to primary data collection and mapping.

The advantage of the Urban Programmes

Initiative was that taking a global view of seven cities enabled the development of a meta-framework as a tool for comparative analysis and systematic review of projects based on the specific contexts, objectives, methods, monitoring and impacts.

Each of the ongoing projects was encouraged to continue to explore approaches that worked locally to benefit and empower specific communities or neighbourhoods, while at the same time ensuring a broader framework of policy and issue resolution through engagement with actors at municipal level. The Urban Research Initiative and each specific pilot project presented a mechanism through which, at an organisational level, World Vision was able to invest significant time in understanding the distinctives and vulnerabilities of urban poverty, the implications on urban programming, and the dominant issues facing children and youth in urban environments. Each pilot project was given the ‘space’ – time, human resources and financial resources – to come up with and creatively test possible approaches to address their contextually relevant urban challenges. Seeking partners to strengthen data and including policy reform at the city level were suggested as key components for urban programming to address the issue of dynamic and volatile settings.

From the beginning, projects were closely monitored, and a process of learning together with practitioners was put in place. This allowed improved understanding of urban programme effectiveness and the progress, challenges and lessons faced by each of the pilot projects. The research initiative was launched with desk review of emerging urban trends and external promising practices. Workshops were organised to share this initial knowledge and



information with participating field offices. Field staff were invited to learn from, observe and document the ongoing locally relevant, culturally appropriate and often original urban vulnerability reduction and livelihood promotion activities.

### Research Objectives

- Develop a deeper understanding of diverse urban contexts, city processes and actors.
- Apply World Vision’s signature area development model in an urban context and observe closely how it operated in dense, diverse, dynamic urban environments in order to recommend adaptations.
- Allow flexibility to design context-specific issue-based interventions rather than large multi-sectoral programmes as entry into city programmes.
- Explore strategies to link neighbourhood-based interventions to municipal planning for city-wide policy change and impact.
- Explore partnerships to develop organisational capacity and scale up strategies.

All of the selected pilots had already begun – and some had completed – the initial urban context assessment and project design process when the Urban Programmes Initiative was launched. The pilots had selected a diverse range of objectives, such as security of land tenure, peacebuilding to promote socially cohesive communities, strengthening municipal policy implementation and creating livelihood opportunities, targeting specific slum and marginalised groups, and reflecting the diversity of issues that were being faced by these seven different urban communities. (More detail on each project is available in the next section.)

The selection of pilot projects that were invited to become part of the Urban Programmes Initiative was carefully considered, including small cities (under one million) and mega-cities, capital cities and secondary hubs, violent neighbourhoods and post-conflict cultures. It was hoped that this diversity of contexts would broaden the lessons from the urban pilots still further, providing insight not only into World Vision’s role and ability to affect the vulnerable urban communities in different sizes and types of cities but also into how the role of World Vision as an INGO might need to be adaptable and flexible according to needs and opportunities of diverse external contributors to urban programmes.

Another deliberate choice was made to structure and support the urban pilot projects to allow adaptations to World Vision’s programming framework, LEAP (Learning through Evaluation, with Accountability and Planning), and its standards as well as the sponsorship model (World Vision 2007).

The urban research initiative was launched acknowledging LEAP as a standard programming framework providing sound development principles and guidelines for community development approaches. However, due to contextual differences, LEAP required adaptations and additions to its standardised approach to ensure contextual relevance. The urban research initiative was proposed as ‘LEAP Plus’ to include additional questions to programme cycle processes, ensuring that contextual analysis and relevance are considered and applied to project

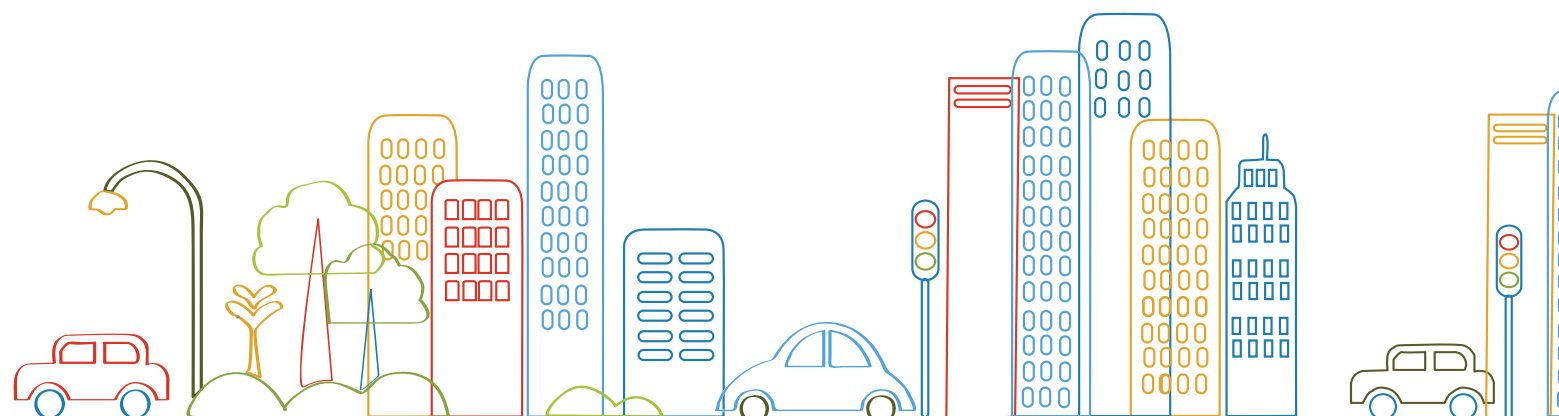
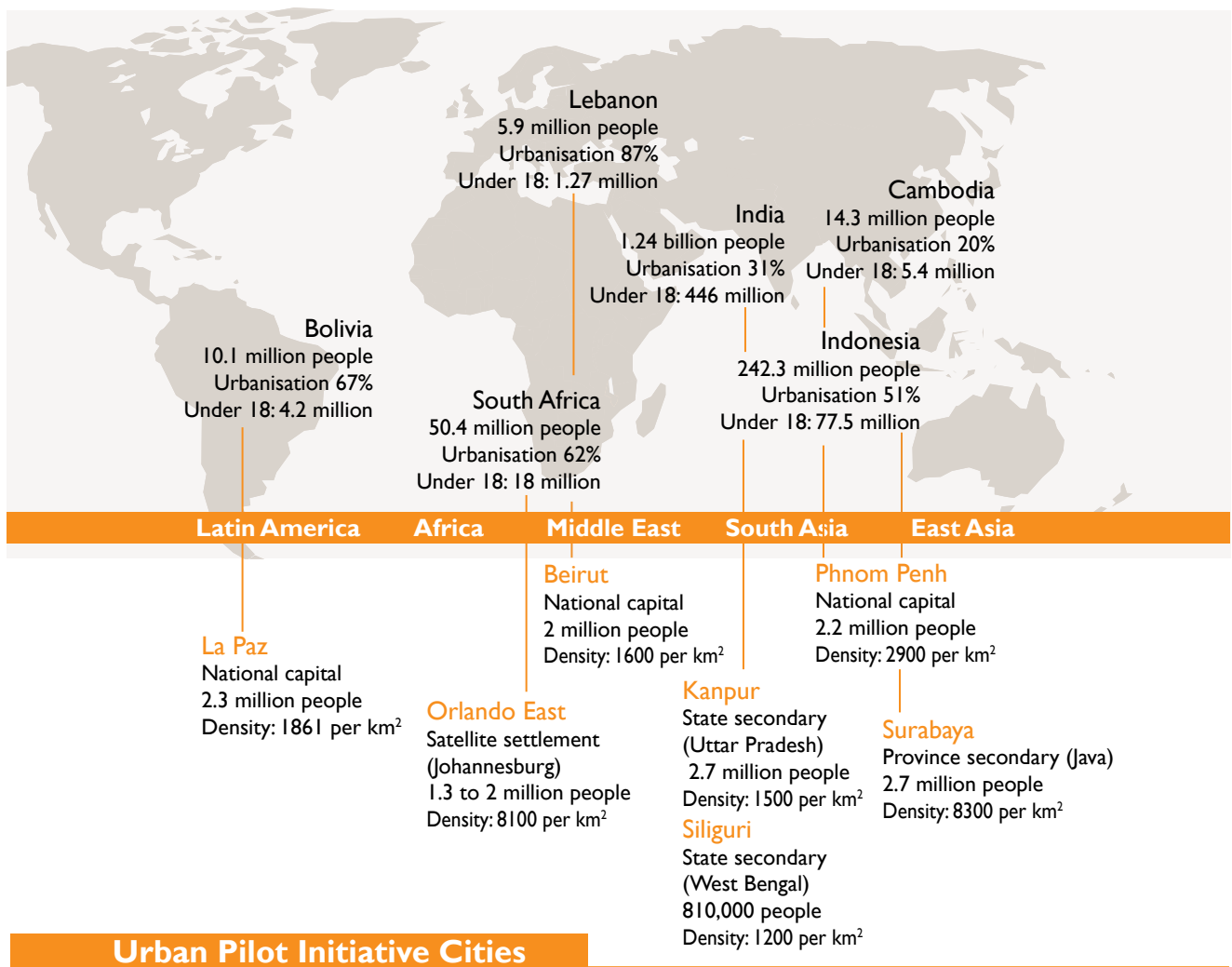


preparation. The lessons learned from this process have contributed substantially to adaptations of the third edition of LEAP, launched in 2014.

The operational research continued to share and contribute its learnings to new initiatives such as World Vision’s Integrated Programming Model, later renamed Development Programming Approach (World Vision 2011a).

Early research had already identified that what had worked so well in the past – a one-to-one relationship between a child in poverty and an international sponsor, raising funds to be used to benefit that child’s community – could cause significant problems and delays for World Vision programmes in urban areas. Two of the urban pilots (that were sponsorship funded) provided an opportunity to examine and document exactly what these problems were, using evidence collected along the way to help inform a new operating model for effective and efficient long-term urban programming.

**Figure 4: Basic characteristics of each urban pilot country**



## About the Seven Urban Pilot Initiatives

The seven cities, and the corresponding countries, selected to be part of the Urban Programmes Initiative differ in size, demographics, density, gross domestic product, economic growth rates and national levels of urbanisation (see Figure 4). All of the cities also have unique histories, population movements and patterns of vulnerability. Further details regarding the specific urban issues that each city addressed are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Issues identified in each pilot project city**

Pilot city	Thematic area
Beirut, Lebanon	youth peace building
Siliguri, India	child trafficking
Kanpur, India	child labour
La Paz, Bolivia	youth engagement and social risk reduction
Orlando East, South Africa	local economic development
Phnom Penh, Cambodia	land tenure
Surabaya, Indonesia	child friendly cities

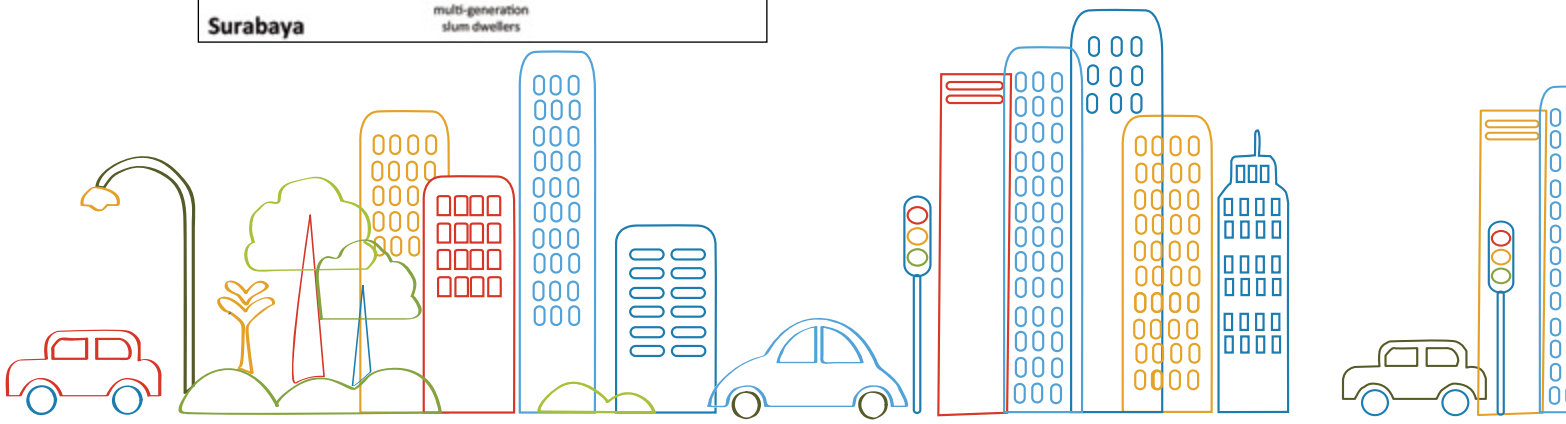
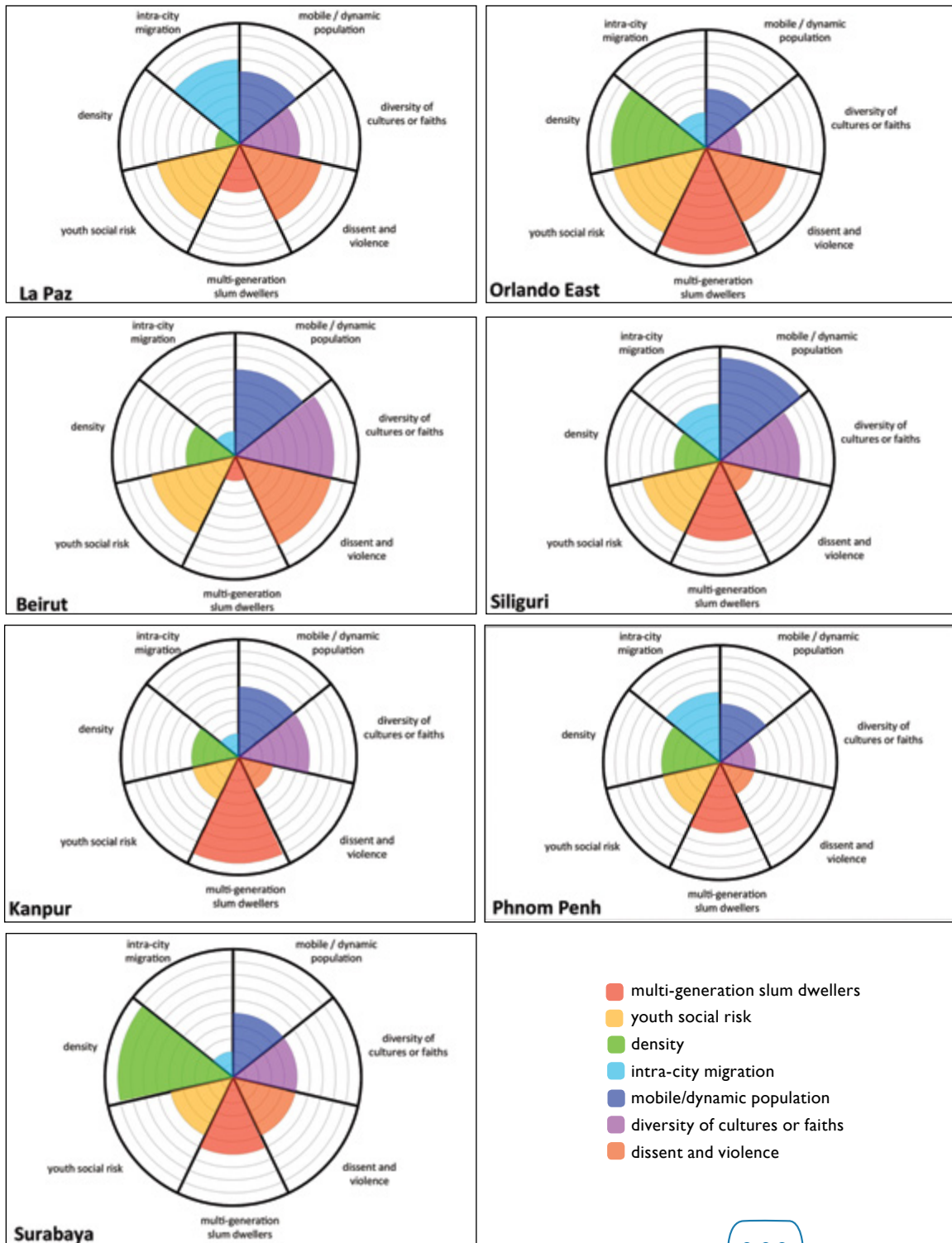
In developing the framework for the Urban Programmes Initiative, the pilot reviewed seven characteristics that were identified which contribute to the patterns of urban poverty and vulnerability and help clarify the differences among contexts of the pilot projects. These characteristics were:

1. mobile/dynamic population
2. diversity of cultures or faiths
3. dissent and violence
4. multi-generation slum dwellers
5. youth social risk
6. density
7. intra-city migration.

In Figure 5 each city has been mapped to illustrate which of these characteristics are most dominant. The further the colour progresses from the centre, the more significant that factor is in the city. Comparing the radar graphs that make up Figure 5 helps determine the differences among the cities.



**Figure 5: Dominant characteristics causing urban poverty and vulnerability (seven characteristics) and their differing degrees of severity and impact for each pilot city.**



All of the pilot projects had completed their first phase as of the end of 2013. An individual evaluation of each pilot project is summarised below.

## La Paz, Bolivia: Youth Engagement

### Context

Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. The city of La Paz has experienced substantial migration of rural indigenous communities into the city. The two areas in La Paz selected for the Urban Programmes Initiative were San Antonio and Ciudadela. In each area the community had low levels of representation and participation in urban governance and decision-making processes; as a result it experienced a lack of access to critical resources and services compared to the other areas of the city. An estimated 30–50 per cent of children living in these areas are child labourers. Many children are unsupervised during the day, in neighbourhoods with crisis levels of domestic and street violence. This represents significant social risk for children in their early teens, including early pregnancy.

In general, La Paz is a city that sees high intra-city migration, particularly in search of work. San Antonio, the more stable of the two areas, houses many marginalised Aymara (a Bolivian ethnic minority) families. Poverty and discrimination have held back the children of these families from accessing services available to others living there. Ciudadela is a more recent settlement, on the outskirts of La Paz, a fragile setting for children in terms of violence and insecurity. These negative elements are of major concern to residents, who usually want to move from the area as soon as an opportunity presents itself.

### Approach

This pilot applied the World Vision area development model to both areas, with a focus on the empowerment and protection of children, particularly youth aged 12 to 18, through multi-sector awareness and advocacy campaigning. The projects created space for constructive dialogue among peers, and also between children and decision-makers through connection of youth groups with local governance systems. Using World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA)<sup>7</sup> approach, the projects gradually increased the participation and voice of affected urban groups to hold their government accountable. A highlight of the project was the enhanced profile of children and young people as a result of their participation in CVA and other initiatives.



Youth leaders discussing constitutional changes for La Paz, Bolivia.

<sup>7</sup> More information on CVA is available at <http://www.wvi.org/local-advocacy/publication/citizen-voice-and-action-project-model>.



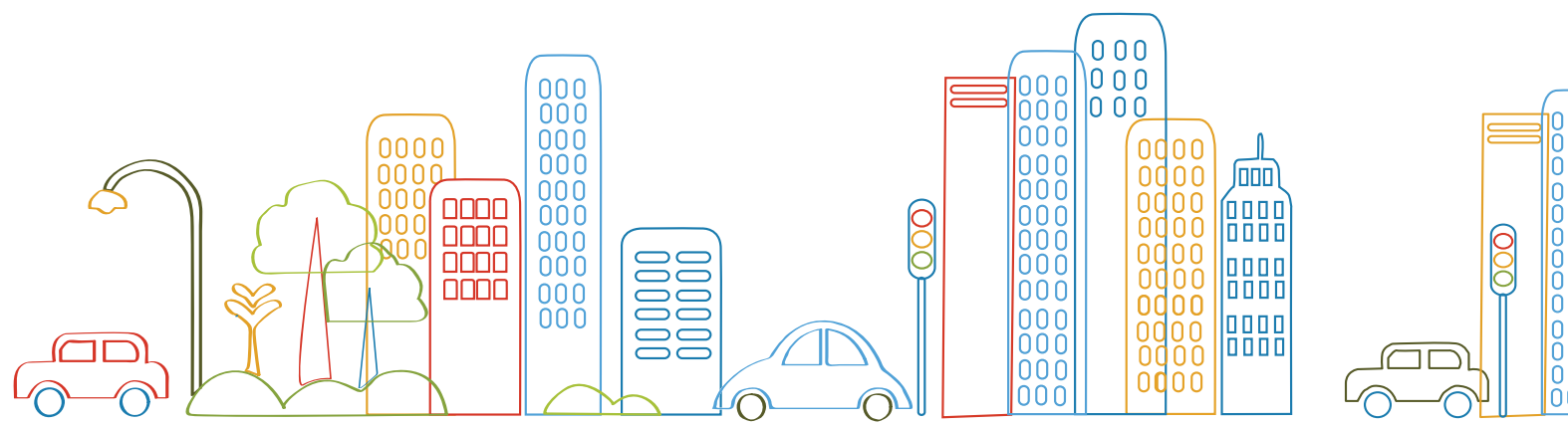
## Successes and Lessons Learned

- An agreement between the Organic Charter project, World Vision Bolivia, and the president of the La Paz Municipal Council has been forged to create a municipal law which focuses on the holistic development of children and adolescents. This is the first law of its kind in the country and is intended for replication in other municipalities.
- For the first time, children, adolescents and youth have been directly integrated in the process of community planning and development of programme activities, with and beyond World Vision. Children and youth have been permanently appointed as councillors to the local government consultation process and advisors to government.
- A Police Patrol Unit has been created to ensure public safety (previously these civic services were not extended to the area) – a result of municipal policy advocacy work by the youth network and World Vision.
- Activities are coordinated with the municipal government of La Paz, the university and other organisations based on ‘a neighbourhood sustainability agreement of real communities’, thus uniting efforts to promote development and participative projects from within community spaces.
- The projects have played a complementary role in the implementation of community activities in newly built government infrastructure, and this political capital will help to sustain the programme beyond its lifecycle.
- Currently, the programme is part of a macro-district network across four city districts for the prevention and response to violence. The network runs this with representatives from all of the partner organisations – with each one of the partner organisations providing a leader for this network in rotation (for sustainability). The project is connecting the youth in communities with a La Paz municipal programme that provides training to teenagers around entrepreneurship.
- Workshops delivered by World Vision have increased confidence in women to get involved in decision-making with local neighbourhood councils and municipal authorities.

## Orlando East: Local Economic Development

### Context

A satellite township of South Africa’s capital mega-city, Johannesburg, Orlando East lies within the disadvantaged urban area of Soweto (South West Township). Soweto was built as a ‘shantytown’ to house labour to serve the wealthy white residents of Johannesburg. During apartheid years the settlement was notorious for oppression and police brutality; student riots there in 1976 paved the way for a free South Africa. The area is densely packed and continues to grow exponentially, as much from birth rate as from migration. Soweto accounts for around 40 per cent of the urban population of Johannesburg’s Region D, but its unemployment rate is much higher than the rest of the region, and its economic contribution less than 5 per cent. A chronic shortage of housing, jobs and cash savings fuels dissent and violence. Social risk issues for young people are rife, including drug and alcohol abuse, crime, gang activity, sexual violence, and the prevalence and stigma of HIV and AIDS. Recently arrived residents,





especially economic migrants from neighbouring countries, are most disadvantaged and often blamed by existing residents for claiming limited resources. The fragmentation of social structures makes it difficult for residents to engage collaboratively with one another, and a deep-seated distrust of authorities and of government processes further complicates community-led change.

## Approach

The project took a local economic development approach that encourages a collaborative process involving community members, the public and private sectors, and World Vision as a facilitator. The project adapted the Participatory Appraisal for Competitive Advantage<sup>8</sup> methodology to initiate this process. Developing the income-earning capacity of community members and improving the business environment for small and medium-size enterprises, the project looked in particular to improve opportunities for young people. The project also aimed to build trust and collaborative communication among residents of Orlando East, partner groups, public and private sectors and government decision-makers to promote ongoing joint problem solving on well-being for adolescent children.

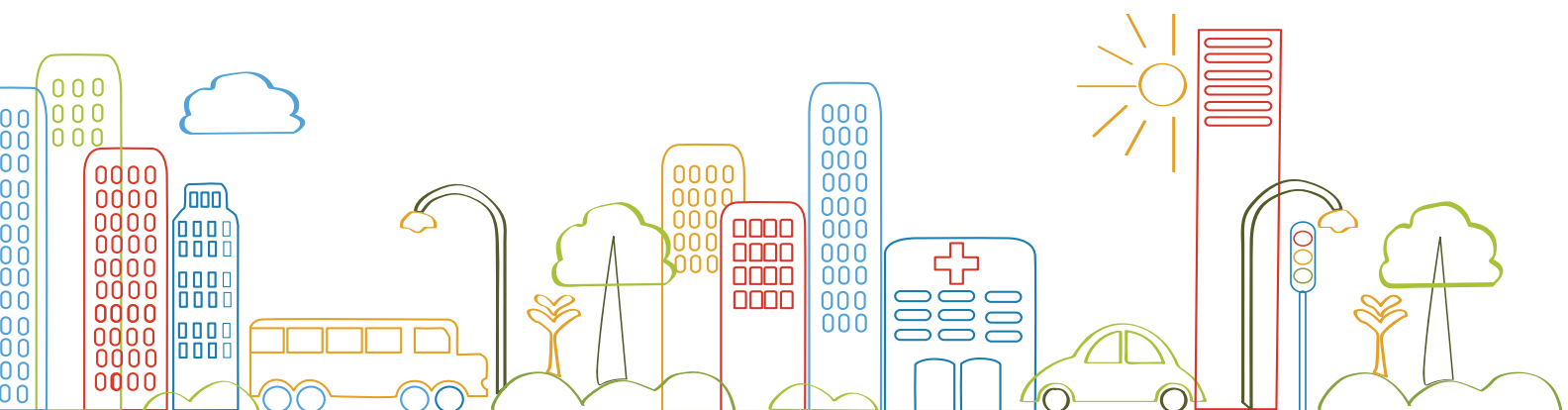
## Successes and Lessons Learned

- In partnership with the NGO PlanAct, the project is supporting an existing local governance approach, the Community Development Committee. This work has been recognised by community members as a significant contribution to building social cohesion and is helping people overcome political intolerance and other forms of social fragmentation.
- Partnering relationships and joint initiatives with local organisations, PlanAct and the City of Johannesburg are supporting the continued growth of community action groups and local economic-development initiatives.
- Two of the ‘task teams’ in Orlando East have been able to secure funding from the government. The growing success of the task teams now needs to be supplemented with greater financial management capacity within the groups to ensure that funding is not wasted or mismanaged.
- World Vision commissioned a spending-patterns study that emphasised the need for gender considerations; that is, to foster an environment which allows women to make more financial decisions within the household.



Forming strategic partnerships and joint planning were critical to the success of the Orlando East Pilot Project.

8 An overview of the methodology is available at <http://paca.mesopartner.com/>.



- The World Vision project has built high levels of trust within the community. However, most of the existing local partnerships are reliant upon World Vision as a facilitator and could not be sustained without its involvement. The project is now focusing on capacity building of partners to sustain their activities over the long term.
- Economic issues should not be addressed in isolation but in parallel with issues of social well-being, governance and identity. Various obstacles to the realisation of local business or employment objectives include drugs and alcohol, crime ('lawlessness'), and the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Government-related issues are emphasised by stakeholders in Orlando East as one of the primary themes affecting the economic outlook of the area.
- One of the most practical ways to effect transformation in Orlando East is to invest in 'soft' infrastructure, including facilitation, partnering, networking and advocacy. A key lesson has been that 'development is partnership', or partnering is the primary way of working in urban contexts.

## Beirut: Youth Peacebuilding

### Context

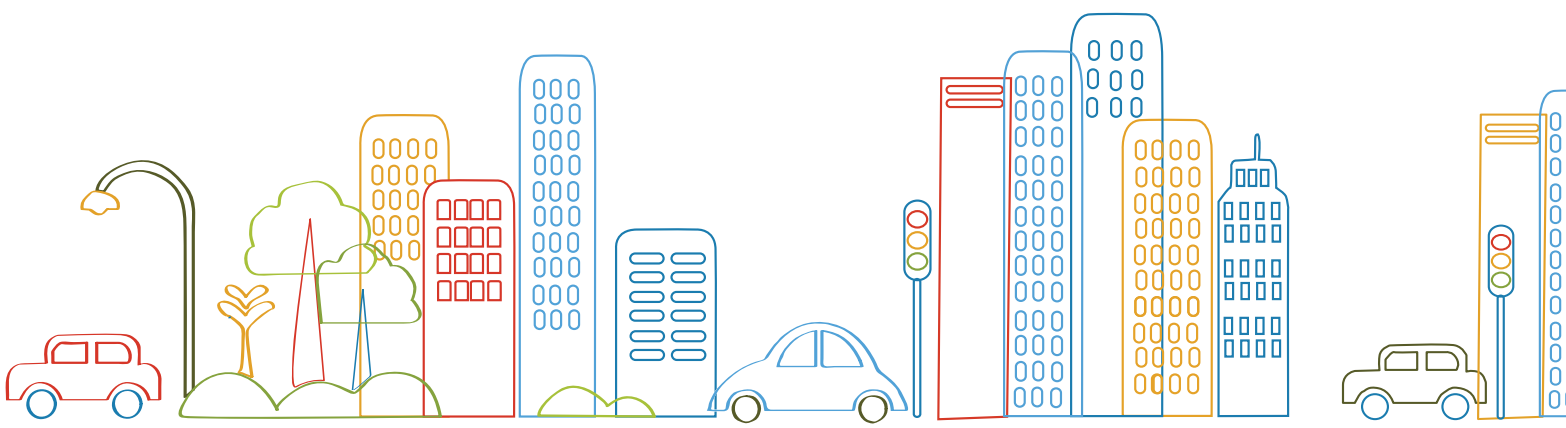
Beirut is an extraordinarily complex city. Its diversity has been fuelled by several decades of civil and international unrest, including waves of refugees from neighbouring nations (Palestine in the 1980s, Syria today). The predominant culture and religion determine a neighbourhood's characteristics. World Vision's target area of Remaneh (AER) is a neighbourhood well known as the 'green line' division during the civil war. It is still subject to many localised political struggles among five main factions (three Muslim, two Christian). More recently, all groups are responding, sometimes with good grace and sometimes violently, to the relocation of Syrian refugees within their area. Common to many post-conflict cities, AER has crumbling infrastructure – roads, water pipes, hospitals and school buildings – with limited resources or accountability to maintain or repair them. Thus, though some households are better off than others, a type of institutional poverty affects everyone living here. Manifestations of this poverty include substandard, but affordable, public housing; high unemployment of young people from this disadvantaged area; and tensions over fair shares of limited resources among rival groups.

### Approach

The urban project focused on peacebuilding, particularly for children and youth, in order to build resilience to historical tensions and move the next generation closer to



Lebanese youth transforming public space into peaceful environments.



community cohesion. Child participation activities through youth groups and schools brought peers from different backgrounds together to explore the challenges their society faces. At the same time, these young people were offered life-skills and project-management training to inspire and motivate them to remain active in driving positive social change.

### **Successes and Lessons Learned**

- Overall, the project’s effort to promote Muslim-Christian reconciliation makes it unique – peace and reconciliation remain prerequisites for progress in any development work in Lebanon.
- A youth group has been established, and youth group members were provided capacity building to enhance their personal and professional development – several former youth volunteers formed their own local NGO dedicated to helping other youth; that NGO is now a partner organisation with World Vision.
- AER and Palestinian refugee-camp youth have gathered through a number of activities and joint trips (planning activities, peace camp, video making) with the theme of conflict transformation. These activities promote understanding, tolerance and acceptance among youth from diverse ethnic, political and religious groups, despite the mistrust of some parents; students have little chance to leave their communities, and World Vision trips and activities allow children of one faith to visit and meet with people of other faiths.
- All youth-group activities were executed in coordination with local authorities and CSOs that had never worked together before.
- A Disaster Mitigation and Peace Initiative Committee was formed, joining local municipalities, social development centres and different CSOs involved in disaster risk reduction. It conducted a Community Owned Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, based on which a community-based disaster-preparedness plan was developed.

## **Kanpur: Child Labour, and Siliguri: Child Trafficking**

### **Context**

Together these secondary urban hubs demonstrate that there is really no such thing as a ‘typical’ Indian city. Their population density is less than cities like San Francisco or Sydney. There is diversity of language between and within the two cities. Historically, they serve different purposes: Kanpur is an important industrial city, and Siliguri is a transit corridor connecting India with its northeast regions and internationally with Bangladesh and Nepal. Yet, though neither city is large or dense by Indian standards, both contain significant areas of slum settlements where the urban poor are driven through a crisis of affordability. People living in this way are largely uneducated, which limits job opportunities. If they are working, they are likely to be on extremely low wages. A chronic inequity for children exists in the quality of schooling between slums and wealthier areas. Parents are aware of this, and many justify full-time work for children as a viable alternative to poor education. Compared to some other cities in the study, neither Kanpur nor Siliguri demonstrates high levels of social dissent. However, at the household level, alarming gender inequity and low household income bring danger to the home, including gender violence, child abuse and labour exploitation.



## Approaches

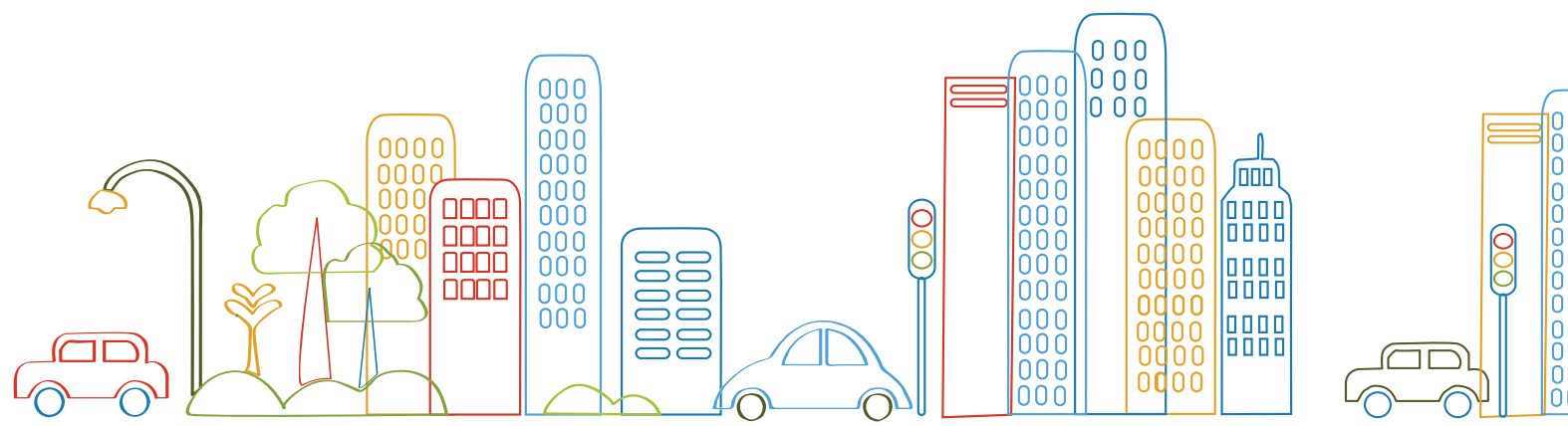
Both Kanpur and Siliguri projects addressed the broad issue of child protection in the urban context. The Kanpur project focused on the specific issue of child labour, while the Siliguri project addressed child trafficking as a contextually relevant form of child labour. Attitudinal change in households formed part of the strategy in both cases, along with awareness of rights and existing laws. Addressing quality of education for slum children has been a core output goal for the projects. For broader city-wide impact, the Siliguri child trafficking project set a key objective to establish stronger mechanisms for addressing both domestic and cross-border trafficking.



World Vision established informal education centres to address child labour and child trafficking in Kanpur and Siliguri.

## Successes and Lessons Learned

- The Anti-Trafficking Network in Siliguri is functional and stable. It has already helped in the repatriation and reunion of many trafficked children with their families. Several network members have invested in shelter houses to complement government services.
- In the three years since the non-formal education centres in Kanpur opened, around 500 children have re-enrolled in the formal school system.
- A new innovation to deal with the special needs of the child rag-picker community has been established and is now operating within the Bengali Muslim community.
- The project has coordinated training on child rights and anti-trafficking laws for appropriate authorities. Police officers are often not aware of the legal mechanisms designed to prevent human trafficking and child labour or what to look for in illegal activity on the border.
- Broad and effective networking among CSOs in both settings has increased the social-protection network for vulnerable children, which now covers a much broader and better-coordinated spectrum of anti-trafficking and child-protection work.



- The Anti-Trafficking Network has improved government accountability, with officials more likely to respond to a request from the network, due to its size and influence, than from any single NGO.
- An excellent relationship with Department of Education in Kanpur has resulted in the project working within 15 government schools to strengthen the quality of their education for children.
- World Vision will remain an active member of the District Level Task Force on Child Labour, headed by the District Authority in Kanpur. This will enable the project to extend its influence and reach beyond the project target area and start to have a city-wide impact.
- A core component of the Kanpur child labour project was to challenge the belief of parents (which was passed on to their children) that they had no alternatives to child labour for their children. World Vision needed to act as a connector among local parents' representatives, school authorities and government, advocating for better implementation of schooling policy in slum areas. At the same time, World Vision needed to convince parents that the government was accountable and willing to educate their children. Sensitisation on child rights and child-labour legislation for children and their parents needed to be approached carefully in case it actually reduced the sense of contribution and value that children were expressing.

## Phnom Penh: Land Tenure

### Context

Reduced to a ghost town during the Pol Pot regime from 1975 to 1979, Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, is now in a phase of massive growth. The rate of poverty and connected indicators such as child mortality and malnutrition are significantly lower in urban Cambodia than rural, and this knowledge continues to drive rural-to-urban migration of individuals and families in search of work. The most vulnerable are unskilled workers with no existing resources who set up camp in illegal settlements on the outskirts of the city. Rapid increases in land value over the past decade have seen large-scale forced evictions of established slum communities with inadequate resettlement support, meaning that they, too, are taking up residency in areas with no infrastructure or recognition of civic rights. The consequences for children, living in squalid conditions without health care or schooling, are dire. Without the stability of housing and community networks, and often moved away from existing livelihoods, families struggle to break the cycle of poverty that prevents them from living in better-served areas.

### Approaches

The focus of the project was to protect land rights and housing tenure for 16 communities in Phnom Penh. Given the restrictive Cambodian context, the project aimed to develop the capacity and confidence of communities to articulate the issues in a clear and non-confrontational manner, seeking collaborative solutions. This called for 'soft' advocacy approaches and inputs at multiple levels: locally, to empower the communities at risk to make their own case for security of tenure; municipal government, to advocate for pro-poor policy inclusions; and a broad range of government representatives, partners and corporations to strengthen the knowledge, partnerships and decisions taken on land tenure in Phnom Penh.





World Vision acted as a strategic facilitator between local community groups and a broad range of partners addressing land tenure in Phnom Penh.

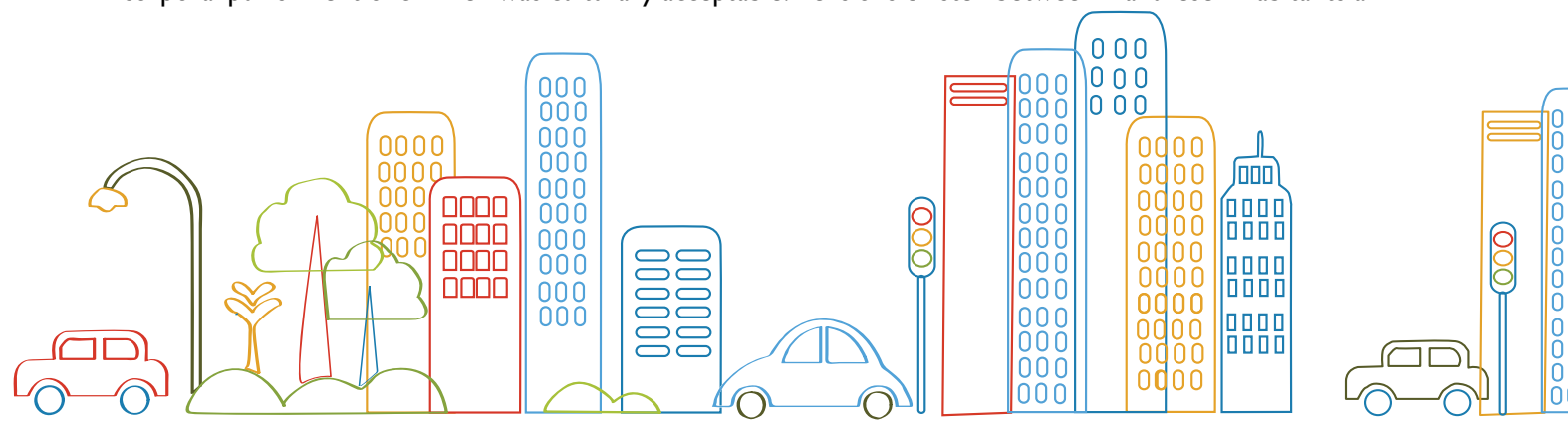
### **Successes and Lessons Learned**

- A strong community-driven network now includes representatives from 15 of the 16 target communities. The network has successfully negotiated road and drainage improvements, state water and electricity connections, land title registration applications, all in consultation with local authorities.
- Three communities have received a contribution of 90 per cent towards the costs of infrastructure improvements for their community from the Phnom Penh Government.
- Ten communities have improved recognition of their land status whilst also achieving upgrades through community projects.
- Other communities that have not received formal recognition of land claims have still been able to prevent eviction while improving their case for just compensation or resettlement terms should evictions proceed. In January 2012, an entire community was served with an eviction notice by the Municipality of Phnom Penh. A combination of protests at the community level, NGO advocacy facilitated by World Vision, and top-down pressure from in-country donor agencies forced the government to overturn the eviction decision.

## **Surabaya: Child Friendly Cities**

### **Context**

Near the ports of Surabaya, a high-density city on the island of Java, lies the ‘village’ of Pegirian. It houses a labour force of Javanese locals and labour immigrants from nearby Madura Island (East Java province). Most people in Pegirian are long-term residents; however, cultural and ethnic diversity strongly influences community interactions, and Pegirian has a reputation as one of Surabaya’s more dangerous areas. In general, children in Pegirian have been under-prioritised, with little voice or representation, and child rights are not well understood. According to the assessment, children were witnessing and experiencing high levels of domestic violence, and corporal punishment of children was culturally acceptable. Tensions existed between Madurese inhabitants and



their Javanese neighbours, who sometimes blamed them for employment shortages. The Madurese were less likely to engage in community activities or services or to engage with government departments and policies intended to benefit them. Their children were among the most isolated and vulnerable in Surabaya.

## Approaches

The Urban Surabaya Transformation Advocacy Research project, or U-STAR, aimed to make a difference in the lives of slum children through the promotion of child friendly villages, working with decision-makers to promote children's rights in four neighbourhoods. It did this through targeted advocacy and awareness raising on the importance of child participation and voice, including with government, local NGOs, parents and children. The project used the principles of the UNICEF Child Friendly City movement to set scalable goals, first for Pegirian, then for Surabaya city wide.

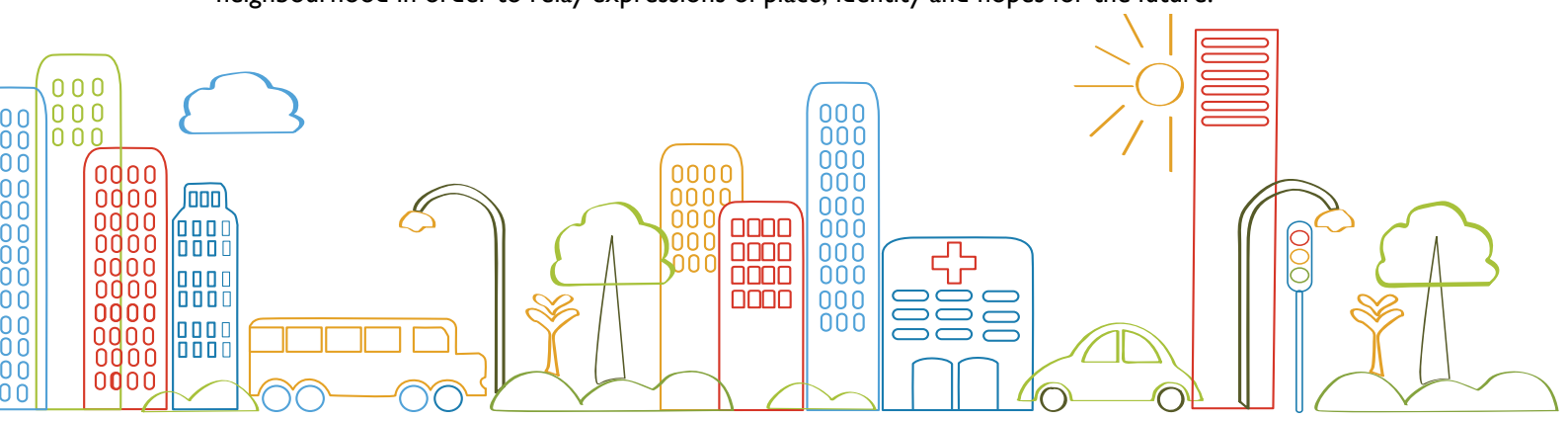


Children's group members using photography to express challenges faced by their community.

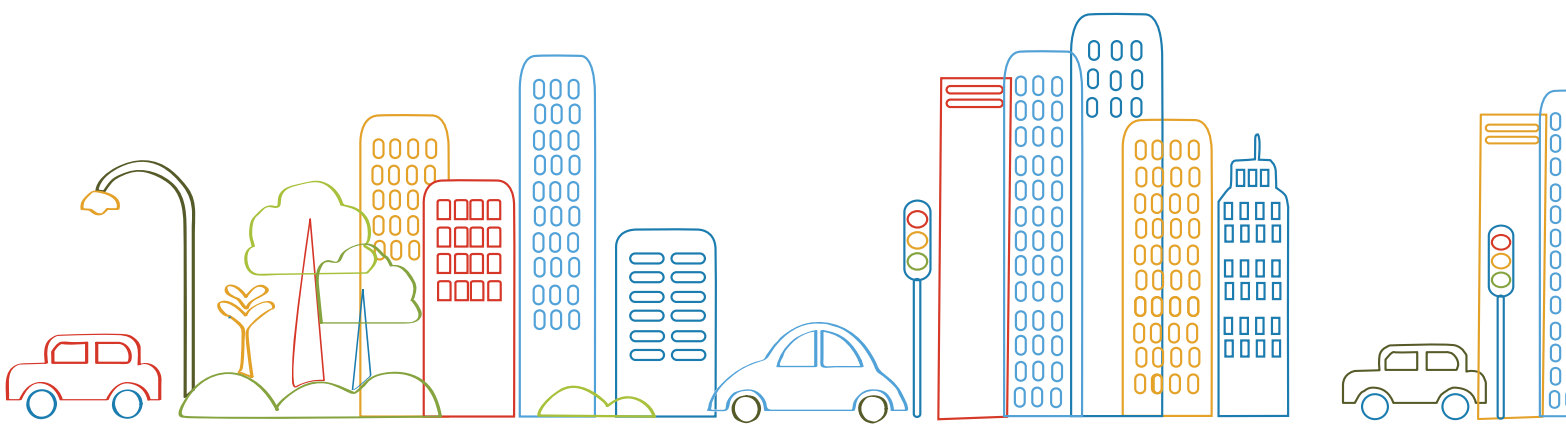
In this project children were trained in using digital cameras to take pictures of the issues affecting good development in their local neighbourhoods; the goal was to capture their understanding of vulnerability. The outcome was a message that differed significantly from the adults' perceptions. The children identified a more comprehensive, nuanced and urgent set of issues affecting their well-being, health and safety. Environmental pollution, child labour, forced early marriage, verbal and physical abuse, domestic violence and exposure to drug and tobacco use were among their chief concerns; these do legitimately present greater barriers to education than a lack of school materials. This indicates that children have an undeniably deep sense of their own liveability and are both eager and adept in communicating their concern when given the opportunity. Both the empowering nature of enabling stakeholders' (children's) collective agency and the invaluable resource of this collective voice on the ecology of the child in urban poverty and slums are fundamental to the efficacy of urban-development processes and a huge asset to development organisations (Wit and Berner 2009, 927).

## Successes and Lessons Learned

- The project enabled children to have a voice in their own development, and children's groups have provided a space where education and life skills are developed. Similarly, the use of urban farming (agriculture and fish) has allowed communities to add more green space to their streetscapes as well as provide a basis for improving livelihoods.
- The project created opportunities for children to present their thoughts and ideas to local leaders whilst remaining sensitive to the subtle cultural and ethnic differences of Madurese and Javanese Muslim communities. For example, children were trained in using digital cameras to take pictures of their local neighbourhood in order to relay expressions of place, identity and hopes for the future.



- The project was successful in influencing the municipality to sign a declaration for Surabaya to become a child friendly city in November 2011. World Vision's involvement was part of a larger movement consisting of other organisations and local city government in pursuit of local legislation – Tentang Penyelenggaraan Perlindungan Anak (Child Protection Bill).
- World Vision gained a voice in the Healthy City Forum to advocate on behalf of children and the urban poor. The prevailing challenge is reframing discussion among key actors to consider not only the more affluent and formalised parts of the city but also to include surrounding neighbourhoods areas as part of their broader agenda.
- Other World Vision urban programmes in Surabaya, Jakarta, and Sulawesi have adopted the child friendly city concept into planning with government agencies.





## Part 3: Meta-Review Themes

### Approach to Meta-Review

Evaluation of the projects applied a comparative analysis of the diverse approaches and results from widely differing project models and goals. Both quantitative and qualitative tools were applied during evaluations. The review took into consideration the unique context of each city and the target area or community within it; the political and social environment for change; and World Vision's own capacity, expertise and limitations working in the chosen space and sector. World Vision's Urban CoE developed the Urban Meta-Framework (UMF) to inform design of projects. The framework consists of key urban themes, questions and indicators that were to be explored across the six country contexts. Projects used this to shape their baseline studies and to identify an appropriate working space for World Vision among existing urban partners, policies and initiatives. The UMF provides data for comparison of different city contexts across the pilot projects. Used again as a focus for interviews with project stakeholders in 2013, it provided an evaluative framework for meta-analysis of results to understand which achievements and limitations had been common across projects – and alternatively, which were localised unique lessons or points of difference among projects.

The meta-review is structured around the themes of context, enabling environment and organisational capacity:

- *Context:* What impact do the density, diversity and dynamic nature of urban contexts have on programmes? How do the differing levels of poverty and urban vulnerabilities affect programme outcomes?
- *Enabling environment:* How do partnering, networks and connections increase the potential for programme effectiveness and scale up plans? How are programmes affected by the nature of governance, power dynamics, formal structures and accountability? How did World Vision create an enabling environment for sustainable development in the city?
- *Organisational adaptation and capacity:* Do World Vision organisational systems and structures enable urban programming efficiency and effectiveness? Is internal staff capacity suitable for urban contexts? Are changes required in funding or supporter engagement to mobilise urban programmes better?

### Summary of Results

All pilots completed the first phase of programme implementation and concluded evaluations by 2014. These evaluations highlight the specific issues, needs and opportunities of the city, as well as the current capabilities of World Vision to address these specific urban vulnerabilities. They also measure the effectiveness and impact of project and programme activities designed to address these emerging issues.

The meta-analysis of pilot projects built on monitoring-and-evaluation activities within individual urban case studies and examined common urban programming themes across all contexts, as well as unique issues pertinent to each of the pilot countries.

The meta-review confirms that there are some common features of urban poverty across the six contexts that World Vision needs to consider while designing urban programmes. The causes of poverty are complex and



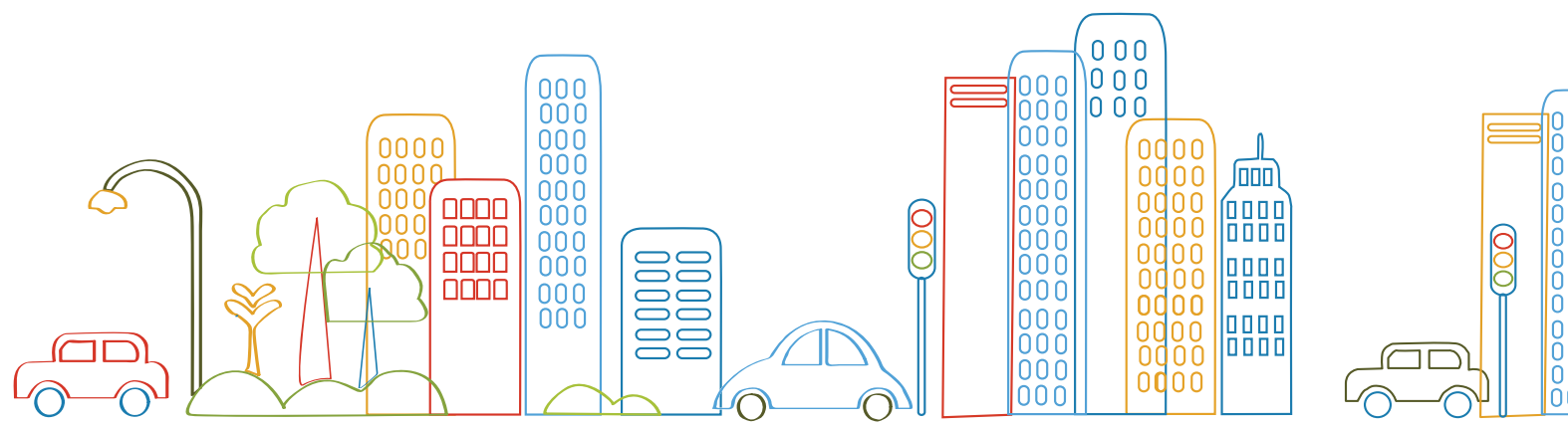
driven by country-specific and city-specific issues that are social, economic, political and environmental, but the impacts in urban contexts are clear:

- Children are the first group to be affected by urban vulnerabilities and poverty.
- Urban neighbourhoods are fragmented and diverse. Building and strengthening communities is critical to stronger neighbourhoods and socially cohesive societies in cities.
- Poor urban communities often experience greater food insecurity than their rural counterparts because of a cash-based economy and fluctuations due to markets.
- Unlike rural areas, urban housing conditions are insecure and expensive, with many families sleeping in rotation in overcrowded housing; these conditions make them vulnerable to disease.
- Although greater services are available in an urban context, access for the most vulnerable is often denied; this is exacerbated by the informal, unregistered status of many urban slum inhabitants.
- There remains a shortage of credible data to support programme assessment and design.
- The political context of many urban centres is complex and challenging; there are multi-actors in the city. World Vision needs to be visible and to articulate a clear value proposition to be effective in the city.
- Governance and coordination problems within a city result in policy failures, leaving the urban poor worse off in a city.
- As an organisation, World Vision needs to be agile and adaptive to respond to ever-changing contexts in the city.
- The skills required for urban programming – adaptability, problem solving, partnership development, networking and policy influence – reflect different skill sets from those traditionally needed by community development practitioners.

The meta-review also demonstrates that while there are common issues such as security of tenure and housing in informal settlements, the political, economic, cultural and historical background of a city needs to shape context-specific interventions rather than a *standardised approach* for all urban contexts. A good example in Cambodia is the issue of security of tenure, which is further complicated by the historical background of the country in relation to this issue and the problems of operating in an extremely difficult current political environment.

Key themes from the Urban Programmes Initiative research are mapped in Figure 6; they are common to all contexts, common to most, or unique to one or two contexts. Following Figure 6 is an explanation of these high-level findings, giving background to the conclusions and their implications for urban programming. The factors, considered within the three meta-review groupings, are discussed in Part 4 of this report.

Clearly the cities have commonalities. At the same time, urban study literature (for example, Satterthwaite 2002) repeatedly warns against generalising or presuming in the urban context because of the ever-changing nature, not only of cities but also of the suburbs and neighbourhoods within them. Evidence from the pilots aligns compellingly with this advice. Every project witnessed a city in flux, communities struggling with dynamic change



and local governments desperately in need of data, models and ideas to reach the most vulnerable sites and citizens of the city through inclusive policies and programmes.

**Figure 6: Key Characteristics Identified through the Urban Programmes Initiative as Essential Considerations in Urban Programming**

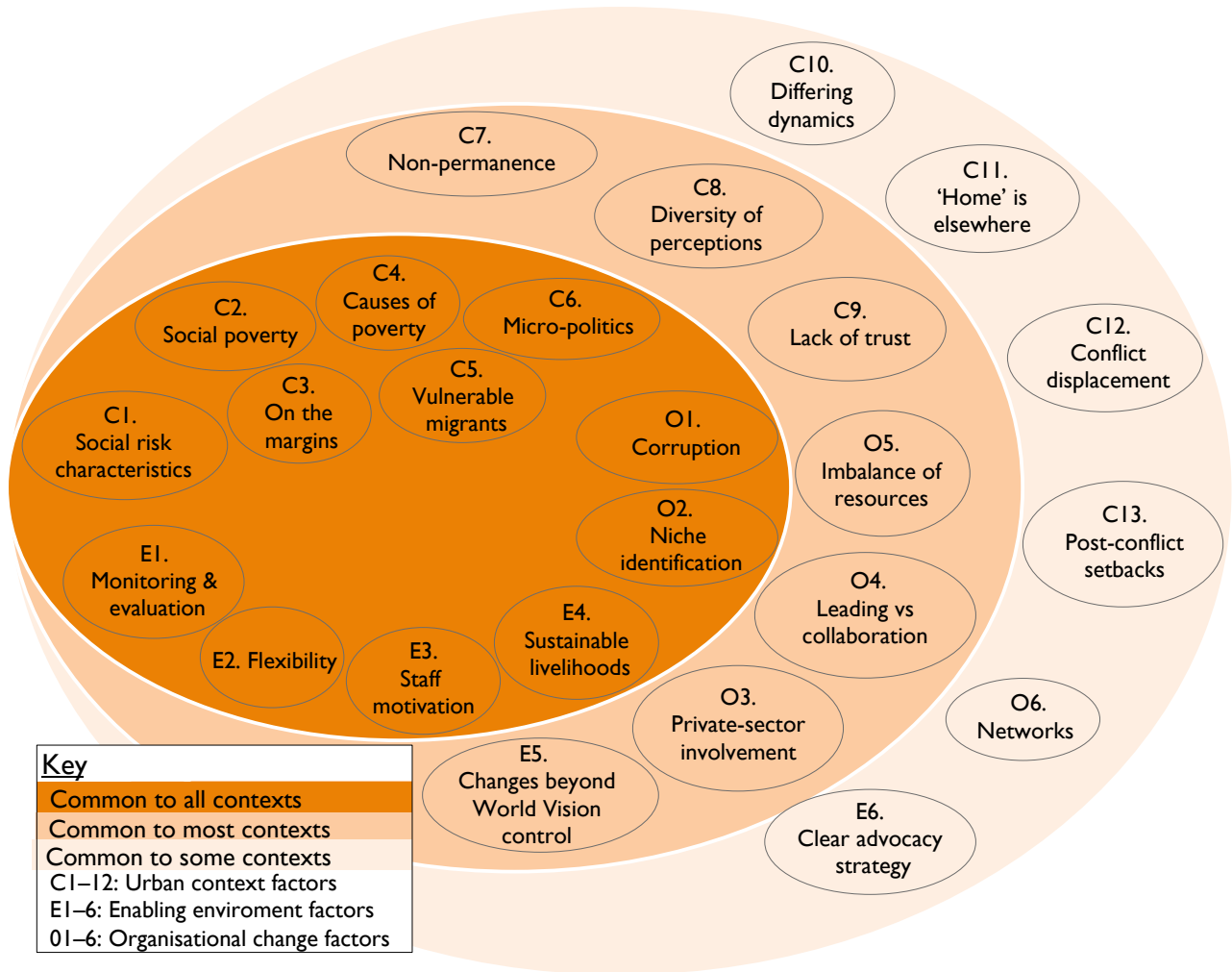


Figure 6 presents the 25 characteristics that were identified through the individual pilot reviews and grouped according to the three meta-analysis themes of (1) urban contexts, (2) enabling environment and (3) organisational change. More details for each of the 25 characteristics are presented in Table 4, including quotations from the pilot review reports to provide evidence for the characteristics selection and the list of pilot cities where that issue was identified. Following this, narrative descriptions for each characteristic are presented.



## The Inner Circle

**E1. Monitoring and evaluation.** Faster, more adaptable and broader approaches to monitoring and evaluation are required to respond to dynamic in the urban context. Data needs to be collected using quantitative and qualitative tools. Story telling was promoted as a method to document change.

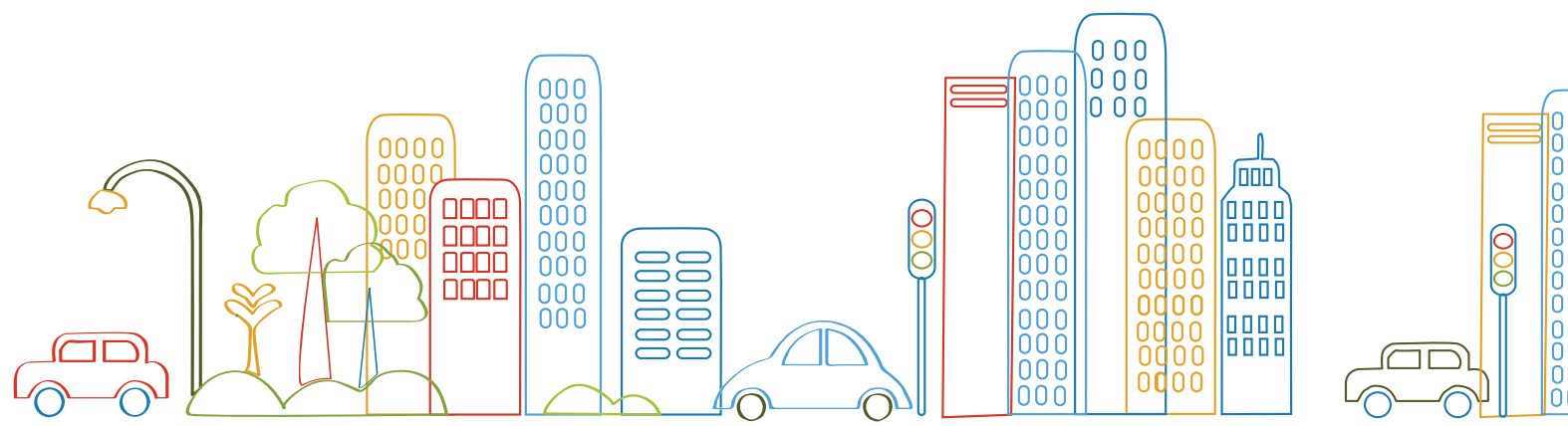
Measuring social change is very difficult in cities. This is especially so when social change is achieved through urban advocacy or CVA. Empowerment for advocacy and participation was also a proven motivator for sustained improvements in the issue selected. Child club and youth group activities encouraged children to build peaceful and cohesive relationships around them by questioning and better understanding their city across traditional social, political and physical barriers. Projects found that these activities were often difficult to measure, particularly in terms of external outcomes and child well-being. Staff invested a lot of time in meetings, public gatherings, stakeholder engagement, coalition building and individual referrals to service providers. Much of this was not drawn out when using standard monitoring and evaluation tools, which tend to measure more tangible inputs and outputs.

**E2. Flexibility.** Urban programmes need to have shorter time frames and more flexible allocation of resources than has been usual for World Vision. All projects found a need for flexibility, as a changing context often dictates a need to adapt rapidly new models that differ from those used in a long-term (15 years) area programme. Responsive adaptation revealed itself to be key to successful programming. This is not always understood by other internal stakeholders who are used to doing something in a certain way. Local partners, on the other hand, noted World Vision's limited ability for collaboration and planning compared to what was needed. Systems of compliance are set up to deliver logframes where activities are set up for a longer period of time.

**E3. Staff motivation.** The presence of 'wicked' and complex challenges in urban contexts confused and drained staff motivation. Progress can appear slow. Historically, World Vision systems have been geared towards rural activities, and staff were sometimes frustrated by a lack of urban programming guidance from their local offices. Ensuring that World Vision reflects an open and learning organisation is critical for overcoming the challenge of staff motivation. Furthermore, training staff in urban-specific approaches increases their capacity to respond to complexity, and sharing lessons and challenges contributes to an improved sense of progress and satisfaction. Staff knowledge of the city's political, historical and economic dimensions was also limited if they were not from the area themselves (usually the case). To be successful, the teams needed to frame a succinct value proposition for World Vision's interventions to communities, civil society and government. Inclusive mapping is also essential, given the multiple communities present in any geographic area, because diverse groups see their immediate surroundings, resources and needs differently – in the case of AER, Beirut, right down to the boundaries of their neighbourhood.

**E4. Sustainable livelihoods.** Livelihoods programming which generates employment is non-negotiable, deemed crucial by World Vision, partners and community members in all cases.

**CI. Social risk characteristics.** Particular sections of urban societies are often more at risk on the basis of long-term tension, cultural or religious differences, or other forms of formal or informal discrimination.



For example, the Madurese face a higher social risk than the majority Javanese in Surabaya. Understanding and addressing the underlying causes of differing social risk characteristics will require longer-term investments and partnerships.

**C2. Social poverty.** In each study area, researchers were able to identify some of the causes of these problems, which almost invariably included poor urban residents not having equal voice; limited access to local private or public services, which themselves were often inadequate; insufficient infrastructure; and fragile institutions. In particular, those who are deemed to ‘illegally occupy’ the city, those whose history had been one of exclusion or oppression, lacked voice and visibility.

**C3. On the margins.** All pilot cities were driven to some degree by economic growth, driving increased urbanisation; the poor were drawn to the areas they could afford, often a distance from the city or on land others chose not to build on like riverbanks, swamp lands, drainage channels or along train tracks.

**C4. Causes of poverty.** Globally, urban poverty continues to be caused by a limitation of power, a lack of a voice, and decreased access to ‘universal’ services and rights; it is manifested through limited employment opportunities or exploitative employment conditions.

**C5. Vulnerable migrants.** Throughout the pilot projects the newest migrants were typically found to dwell in the most vulnerable communities. They face a multifaceted vulnerability with regard to housing, food insecurity, limited economic participation and decreased educational opportunities. Where they do have access to employment or resources, they are often perceived as taking resources that were meant for existing residents. The city experiencing most rapid growth was Beirut. The Syrian conflict has resulted in rapid city population growth there in the space of a few short years. The study found a range of issues facing the urban residents as a direct result of their poverty: unemployment, child labour and child trafficking, community instability and conflict, and insecurity of tenure and of access to local government.

**C6. Micro-politics.** Informal micro-politics, sometimes as simple as the willingness to align or not with community leaders, can increase the disparity of resilience and vulnerability among households, communities and neighbourhoods. Formalised politics also disadvantage the poor, with investments continuing to support those with significant voice in the community while the voiceless remain underserved.

**O1. Corruption.** Corruption was found and faced at all levels of government. Development in a city is political, and it is difficult to remain neutral when choosing partnerships and advocacy targets. World Vision needs to be extremely sensitive to the political climate and invest in diverse relationships not only to reduce accusations of bias but also to build some resilience to changes in power and personnel that can happen at any time.

**O2. Niche identification.** Trying to tackle several social challenges in a complex, dense and dynamic environment overwhelmed staff during the early stages of the projects. As expected, the Urban Programmes Initiative provided evidence that an issue-based approach has strong advantages over a large programme with several sectoral interventions. The four issue-based programmes progressed fairly quickly in comparison to the two that attempted a more traditional ADP programme. Regular learning and reflection workshops across projects ensured and encouraged response to the changing context, and, as a result of this approach, two pilot projects decided to redesign in order to narrow their focus on the most pertinent issue they had uncovered.



## The Middle Circle

*Note: Though not all of the following themes were highlighted in the meta-reviews in each case, this does not preclude them from being present in more (or even all) urban pilots.*

**E5. Changes beyond World Vision's control.** Often the issues that were being addressed in the pilot projects were long-term, 'wicked' problems and, as such, required interventions larger than those within World Vision's control. Additionally, other external factors can fundamentally affect urban programme effectiveness. Activities such as government changes can cause significant setbacks. In Phnom Penh, a change of political leadership set back the project by several months while staff rebuilt relationships and influence with a new government.

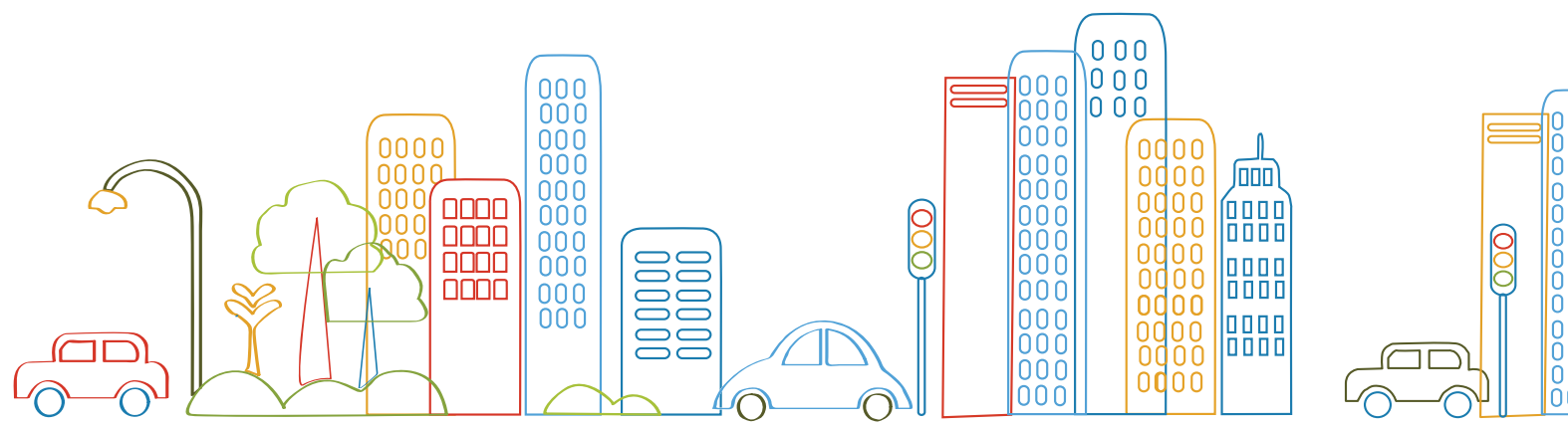
**C7. Non-permanence.** Social cohesion and engagement suffer when those living within a community have little or no commitment to the community or sense of connection to the community. This is often the case with economic migrants, who are regularly seeking to move to better communities.

**C8. Diversity of perceptions.** A result of the diversity of urban populations is that communities perceive events, opportunities, challenges, potential collaboration and partnerships, and accessible resources from very different worldviews or perspectives.

**C9. Lack of trust.** Best stability and transition came when working with government department representatives rather than partisan politicians. In La Paz and Surabaya it emerged that the mayor was a driver of change and therefore an important stakeholder to connect with and influence in order to be effective in that context. In many of the projects, staff struggled to engage local community groups and individuals who were essential from the planning process onwards. There were many reasons for this. The target population was in many cases geographically scattered, dispersed and mobile, which made World Vision's 'product' of localised improvements less appealing than it might have been in a more sedentary setting. In some cases vulnerable populations were distrustful of participation, particularly when they were taking care to stay 'under the radar' of government authorities.

**O3. Private-sector involvement.** Partnering with corporations seems logical in an urban context. World Vision's voice is not the only one calling for greater 'corporate citizenship'. Several pilots found that there were natural synergies among issues, goals and corporate partners. However, in general, the partnerships had started later in the project than ideal, due to teams' low confidence in their ability to win and manage partnerships of this nature.

**O4. Leading vs collaboration.** The pilot projects' experiences around partnerships, including those with other local organisations and with governance authorities, showed that World Vision is valued and welcome as an urban actor. Its ideal role in the eyes of most partners is as a facilitator of ideas and resources, helping to create networks that can face issues with clarity and consistency over the long term. However, partners were not always ready to let go of World Vision as a leader, and some were surprised to learn that World Vision was not planning to continue its presence in the networks, particularly in those projects conducting city-wide advocacy.



**O5. Imbalance of resources.** Opportunities to partner with smaller, local grassroots NGOs or local governments can be difficult when there is an imbalance in accessible resources or visibility and community awareness. This can naturally lead to an imbalance of power. Power, resource or visibility imbalances make it difficult for World Vision to have smooth exit strategies and effective transitions to local governance.

## The Outer Circle

**E6. Clear advocacy strategy.** No models, plans or partnerships were the same across the seven city projects. The approaches to advocacy will change and need to be set out clearly for each project. The most revealing difference occurred in the two Indian pilots. One, needing policy action, was well suited to forming a working group coalition with defined goals. In this context the success was in the stability of this group. The other, with a greater need for behaviour change, enforcement and political accountability on existing policy, found best success in less formal partnerships. As these are harder to track and report on, results do not fully capture the achievements of the 'soft' advocacy taking place. A strategy both for advocacy activities and its monitoring and evaluation is required.

**C10. Differing dynamics.** There is no normal length of stay in slum communities. There are slum communities which have had stable populations for 15 years, and there are other populations which are changing every few months. Balancing the needs and programming approaches in contexts with such differing dynamics is challenging.

**C11. 'Home' is elsewhere.** Similar to the feeling on non-permanence, many residents in informal settlements continued to associate home with a traditional rural home or village. While some thought of their current location as 'home', others saw it as a transient inconvenience. In Phnom Penh and Surabaya, even long-term residents maintained close ties with family in rural areas and might not describe themselves as urban. This can manifest in many forms: committing to send scarce financial resources back to the extended family at 'home' despite it being at the expense of children's education or a lack of willingness to participate in social cohesion activities because they view themselves as moving on as soon as possible.

**C12. Conflict displacement.** Rapid influxes of populations as a result of post-conflict displacement can cause severe social cohesion stressors in the host communities. Even essential service provision (water, electricity) can be jeopardised by rapid population growth following conflict-related displacement.

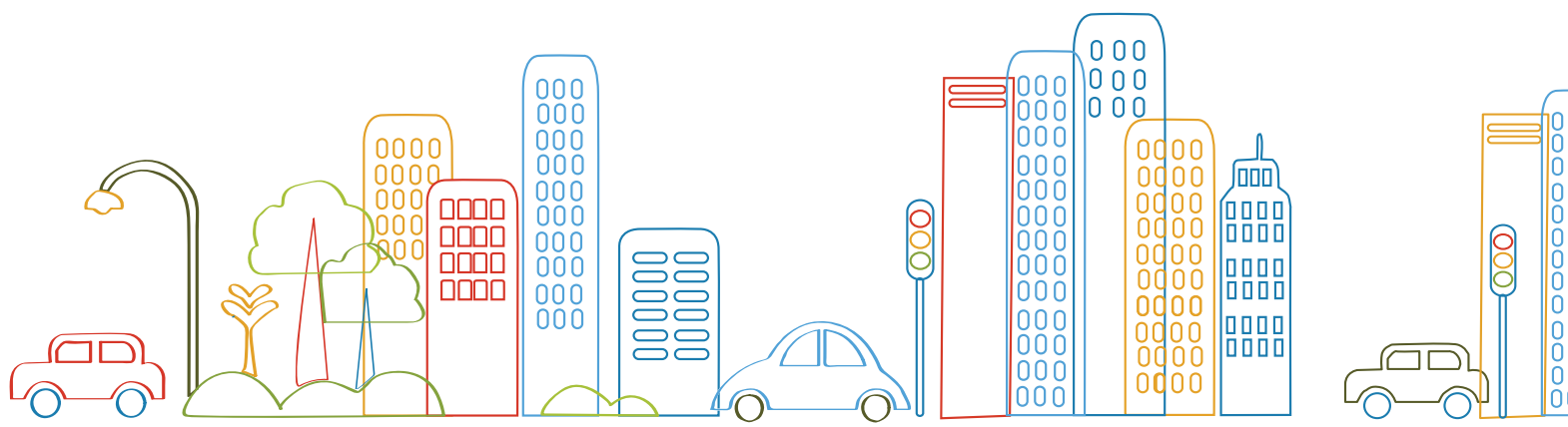
**C13. Post-conflict setbacks.** World Vision worked in Beirut, one of the world's most complex cities, at a time when cross-border migration doubled its population. The lessons learnt under the action research approach may not be applicable in three to five years' time. The need for real-time mapping, data and reporting is starkly obvious if programmes are to be relevant and successful for beneficiaries. Post-conflict settings change quickly, with potential for both progress and rapid setbacks.

**O6. Networks.** Effective communication with partner institutions and the formation of effective formal and informal networks are critical for urban programming. Partners and communities sometimes expected to see the usual World Vision operating model. It was not clear to them why particular activities were taking place through World Vision. This is easily rectified with more consistent communication of goals, approaches and intentions, but it also serves as a reminder of the brand challenges of working in a city, where heightened communication among citizens takes place.



**Table 4: Details and evidence for 25 characteristics identified through the Urban Programmes Initiative as critical for consideration in urban programming**

	Issues identified	Evidence of urban issues influencing programming approaches (quotations from pilot review reports)	Frequency
Urban Context	C1. Social risk characteristics	High diversity does not automatically equal social risk. Social risk is more likely to be linked to long-term tensions among groups or to competition for resources.	All Cities
	C2. Social poverty	Social poverty is a symptom of urban community fragmentation, affecting participation and self-esteem of marginalised families over generations.	All Cities
	C3. On the margins	The urban poor are pushed to the ‘fringes’ or ‘pockets’ of urban areas. As populations rise, these areas see the most rapid increases in density.	All Cities
	C4. Causes of poverty	Though poverty symptoms form unique patterns, their cause is consistently linked to low empowerment, lack of voice and unequal representation in a city’s power dynamics.	All Cities
	C5. Vulnerable migrants	New arrivals are the most vulnerable in any city and are often perceived as taking resources that were meant for existing residents (see Characteristic C-1, social risk)	All Cities
	C6. Micro-politics	Micro-politics can drive disparity of household and neighbourhood opportunity.	All Cities
	C7. Non-permanence	People migrating for work may not see themselves as permanent residents and are unlikely to engage with local development initiatives.	La Paz, Surabaya
	C8. Diversity of perceptions	Groups in highly diverse communities see their resources differently.	Beirut, Siliguri, Kanpur
	C9. Lack of trust	People migrating for work or involved in informal labour are less likely to trust or work with governments on social solutions.	Orlando East, La Paz, Siliguri, Surabaya
	C10. Differing dynamics	The volatility of slum communities differs in each context – some generational, others with constantly changing residents.	
	C11. ‘Home’ is elsewhere	Some urban migrants still consider their rural community ‘home’. They may be sending money back to support family members.	Phnom Penh, Surabaya
	C12. Conflict displacement	Cities bear the burden of conflict displacement. Existing residents often fear the cultural and economic implications of an influx of refugees or internally displaced persons.	
	C13. Post-conflict setbacks	Post-conflict cities are highly volatile and may suffer regular setbacks to community cohesion and resource development.	Beirut





**Table 4 (continued)**

	Issues identified	Evidence of urban issues influencing programming approaches (quotations from pilot review reports)	Frequency
Enabling Environment	E1. Monitoring and evaluation	Measuring social change, especially through advocacy, is different from mainstream monitoring and evaluation.	All Cities
	E2. Flexibility	Flexibility or a 'moving target' needs to be a part of the programme design and process.	All Cities
	E3. Staff motivation	Staff motivation and morale can be challenged by urban working conditions, slow progress and the mismatch between compliance structures and the realities of field work.	All Cities
	E4. Sustainable livelihoods	Sustainable livelihoods programming, particularly for the 'youth bulge' of cities, is a priority urban solution.	All Cities
	E5. Changes beyond World Vision's control	Issues chosen call for massive, long-term shifts of culture and responsibility which happen outside World Vision.	Beirut, Kanpur, Siliguri
	E6. Clear advocacy strategy	When focus was on city-wide advocacy, it was difficult for outsiders to see the strategy behind the activities.	Phnom Penh, Surabaya
Organisational Capacity	O1. Corruption	Corruption is a major issue at all levels of government. Highlighting and reporting this is a barrier to success and requires great sensitivity.	All Cities
	O2. Niche identification	With so many actors in place, World Vision must find its 'niche' through quality landscape analysis.	All Cities
	O3. Private-sector involvement	Great opportunities exist for corporations to become involved in the development of their cities.	Orlando East, Surabaya, Phnom Penh, Kanpur, Siliguri
	O4. Leading vs collaboration	Despite good intentions, World Vision is often leading rather than enabling collaborative efforts.	Orlando East, La Paz, Phnom Penh, Kanpur, Siliguri
	O5. Imbalance of resources	Partner organisations may not be as visible or well resourced as World Vision. This affects the transition of responsibilities.	Phnom Penh, Orlando East, Siliguri
	O6. Networks	While formal networks are suited to formal advocacy platforms, for 'soft' advocacy, partners may prefer not to formalise.	Siliguri, Kanpur



## Part 4: Discussion of Lessons Learnt by Research Themes

### The Urban Context

The fascinating mix of people, cultures, religions, historical events, industries, investments and politics that make up a city means that there is no room in this report to do justice to an in-depth comparison of the six different pilot-country contexts. The narrative that follows focuses on the commonalities that can guide improved and targeted programming for the urban poor. The study found a range of issues facing urban residents as a direct result of their poverty and an equal range of contributing factors that had made them vulnerable to urban poverty in the first place. While it is necessary to understand the context-specific causes and effects of poverty, there are common lessons that can be learnt from the meta-review.

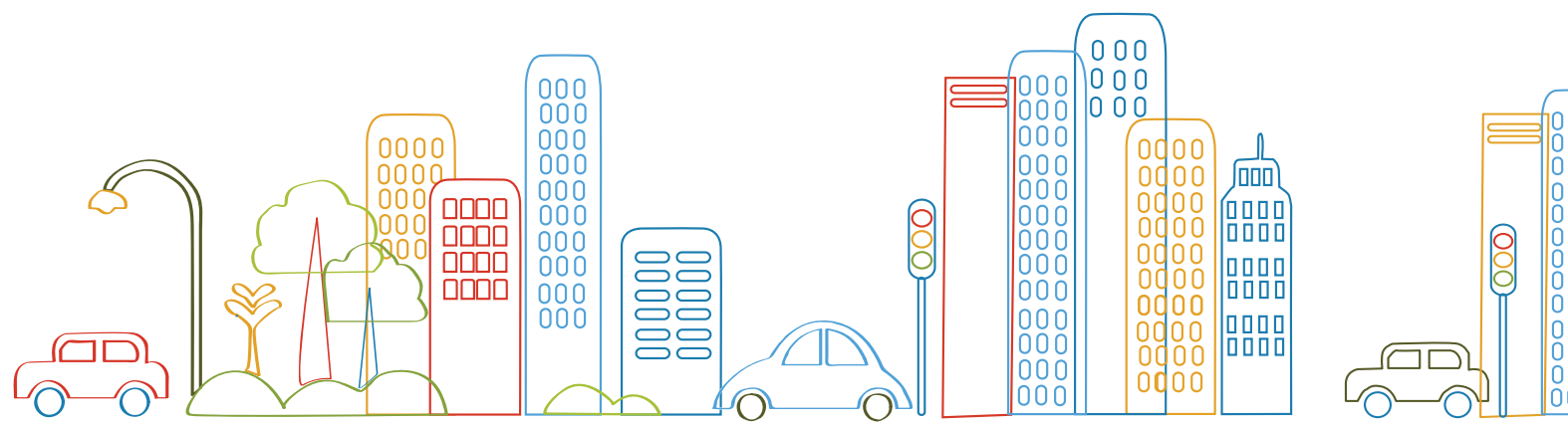


Slums are the most deprived and excluded form of informal settlements, characterised by lack of proper housing.

The urban context is triggering constantly emerging social challenges as new patterns of density, diversity and dynamism appear and settle. For urban programmers, remaining relevant and targeted in the face of this change is fundamental to sustainable urban programming. Programmers are required to make all efforts possible to understand a city context as part of initial gap analysis and risk mapping. Then, shorter cycles of assessment, reflection and application are required in order to be confident that projects are continuing to meet the needs of poor urban communities.

Some challenges to urban programming emerge from the 'DNA' of cities and urban contexts, the history, culture and deep story of the city. Some specific examples of deeply engrained challenges that emerged from the pilot projects included the following:

- fractured city planning in La Paz: a highly charged and competitive political culture and hesitation of social and political figureheads to engage with one another
- dysfunctional and highly political context of Soweto: an international symbol of poverty and oppression during apartheid times and an 'imported' labour hub in an area with a significantly reduced job market
- dissent and distrust in AER, Beirut: a symptom of decades of socio-religious conflict, with social healing constantly interrupted by further upheaval
- tolerance of child labour in Kanpur: declining industrial profits have led to a socio-political culture that accepts low wages as good for the city's 'bottom line'



- Siliguri as a known transit point for human trafficking, driven by a demand for cheap child labour. Child trafficking is made easier by the fact that nearby borders are porous
- low community participation in Cambodia: recent and ongoing culture of fear resulting from political issues
- Madurese children not at school in Surabaya: because they, their families and their ancestors have been treated poorly and at times violently for over a century.

Can one change a city's DNA? Can one rewrite a city's deep story? The experience of the pilot projects indicated that not only is this possible but also that it is exactly what urban programmes need to do to break historical patterns of poverty as well as the poverty caused by myriad complex factors. The pilot projects also suggested three non-negotiable sectors to be part of any issue-based urban approach, because of their potential to reduce root causes of dissent, generational poverty and social marginalisation:

- **livelihoods:** high unemployment is a major contributor to intercultural discrimination, exploitative conditions and child labour
- **child and adolescent protection:** limited opportunities, particularly for young people, lead in almost all cities under review to violence and a breakdown of security
- **primary/secondary education:** giving children access to education and keeping children learning longer reduces the cycle of low opportunity that affects many disadvantaged families.

### Lessons on Socio-Cultural Diversity

Where there are several different communities in a single geographical area, their perspectives on the same environment or experience can differ widely. For instance, in Beirut, residents named informal neighbourhood boundaries within the municipal areas of the project but defined these areas differently depending on the prevailing influence of their own cultural group. This diversity reflected power shifts in an environment where religion and politics are tightly interwoven. Most residents exercised choice in where and how to live within these overlapping communities, including choosing services most relevant to their culture rather than those closest in proximity.

This creates complexity for social programmers from the very beginning in assessing need, power structures and the realities of social cohesion. Compared to more homogenous communities in rural settings, it is more difficult to create inclusive structures for community consultation and project planning in city programmes. In Surabaya, the division between original Javanese inhabitants and Madurese labour migrants effectively excluded the Madurese from participation, even though they were the most marginalised and vulnerable residents of the city. The urban settings for the La Paz pilot were selected because of the high numbers of Aymara. However, in this situation care needed to be taken not to plan with only Aymara in mind, but to ensure that all community members had equal opportunities and that involvement with one community didn't increase social distrust or disunity.

While it would not be accurate to say that any city was 'lacking' or 'low' in cultural diversity, Phnom Penh and Orlando East did not have significantly different cultural or religious groups to contend with. However, social



dissent and inequity were still evident. Discrimination particularly affected new arrivals – rural migrants in Phnom Penh and international labour migrants in Orlando East. They were pushed towards the most exploitative jobs and the worst accommodations, and were subject to violence and ostracism.

Projects in these cities also struggled to convince target communities to mobilise directly on the themes World Vision raised. In Phnom Penh, residents at risk of eviction were surprisingly passive about their destiny, while Orlando East registered limited community spirit and volunteerism among project participants. In both cases history must be taken into consideration; both cities witnessed atrocities in living memory, and residents are believers in ‘keeping your head down’.

The diversity of players, actors and influences must also be taken into consideration, particularly in terms of political groups, slum leaders, faith groups and CSOs/NGOs. As leaders of alternative ‘communities’, these groups are at the same time a product of context and a driver of context. Their interrelations are complex. In Beirut and Orlando East, World Vision was obliged to consider some challenging partnerships; in La Paz, World Vision acted as a much needed facilitator of partnerships among others who had not previously found a path to collaboration.

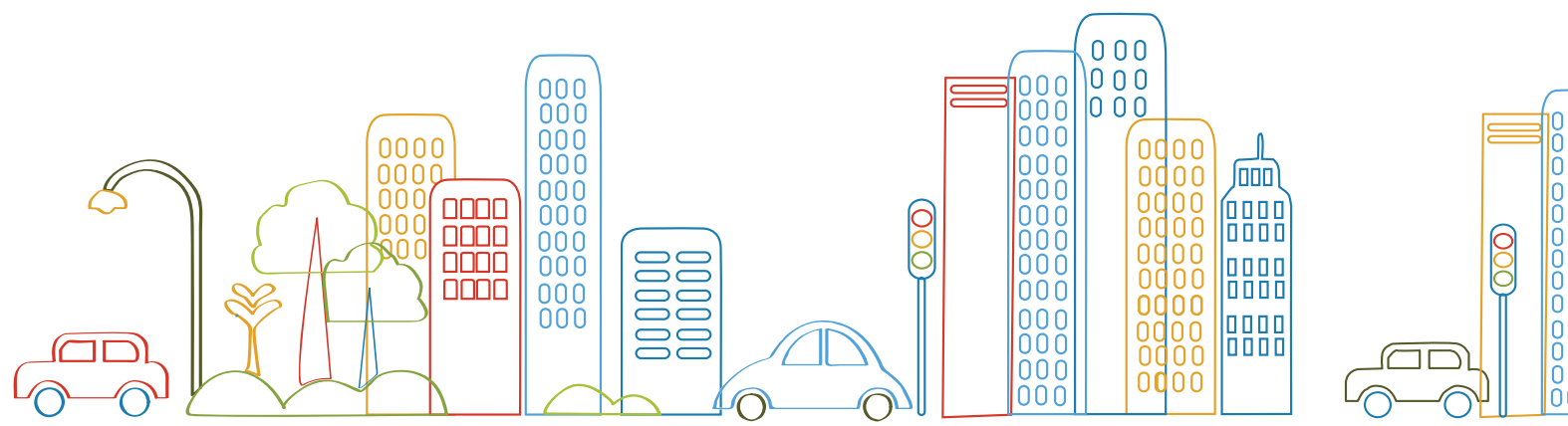
**Conclusion:** Diversity is not a driver of poverty – but marginalisation is. Where one group is poorly represented in the community, discrepancies of opportunity and service provision exist for them and their children. While cohesion and inclusion are appropriate reactive goals to protect children living in these contexts, another more active option is to focus on improving the available opportunities, in particular job creation for parents and school leavers, so that there is sufficient to go around. This can then decrease the level of comparative or competitive attitudes present within the community and thus strengthen social cohesion. Promoting collective action is key to making city systems stronger and sustainable.

### Lessons on Mobility and Dynamism

In most pilot project contexts a family having to move regularly was a norm. Frequent moving is made possible by the city itself, where household moves of a few miles can be completed easily and rapidly in a fairly spontaneous process. Most move to seek better employment opportunities or to move up from transient slum living, while some downsize to more affordable housing leases because of a lack of economic progress.

In Surabaya and Phnom Penh this mobility occurred due to a lack of connection to place because some city dwellers continued to think of themselves and their families as rural, maintaining strong ties with families at ‘home’ and perceiving their current life as an economic necessity rather than a choice. Their emotional connection to place was still to their rural home. This called for greater understanding of rural urban linkages in city programmes.

To understand the vulnerability associated with mobility and dynamics we must see that the accessible resources of a family are a key determinant in protecting their children as they settle in a new urban environment. Regardless of whether they have moved from a rural context or are making an intra-urban move, the risks of migration are directly associated with the household’s existing levels of poverty. Risks for children also increase when they are moving to a community with existing tensions, levels of crime or violence, or disputes over sharing limited community assets. This was a major cause for concern among communities facing eviction in Phnom Penh,



who would be significantly downgrading their living conditions by moving to more ‘fragile’ urban settings. Often the most vulnerable in any city are the forced arrivals (for instance, Syrian refugees in Beirut), who bring very little with them and are most likely to settle, at least short term, in informal housing or slums.

Therefore, in order to work effectively among the city’s poorest and most marginalised, a strong investment in city-wide research and data collection is needed to ensure that they are identified. The most vulnerable communities are constantly moving or being pushed to other areas of the city. Several project teams found it challenging to keep up with trends of population and vulnerability, particularly as their focus switched from highly localised (programming) to municipal (advocacy) without a clear city strategy. They needed more time, and stronger data from partners in other areas, to plan a coherent programming strategy to bring about effective change in the city.

In many Urban Programmes Initiatives with high intra-city migration, residents had limited interest in building community resources if they were unlikely to be there for the benefits. The Urban Programmes Initiative time frame of three to five years, though considerably shorter than World Vision’s usual area development programme of around 10 to 15 years, was still too long for temporary communities to experience and perceive the benefits. In response to this challenge the La Paz analysis report raised the possibility of formulating portable benefits for families or groups taking part in urban programming, rather than outcomes that were relevant only to a geographic neighbourhood.

**Conclusion:** A dynamic city, to which transient populations migrate and move about within as economic opportunity dictates, is not necessarily a negative phenomenon if the rewards outweigh the inconveniences. In practical terms for programmers, though, high-mobility cities are more difficult to understand, predict and work within, a core challenge for World Vision’s long-term sponsorship model. Local networked partnerships for data collection and regular rapid assessment can bring mutual benefit through city-wide insight. In terms of programming for dynamic (and potentially disengaging) residents, alternative models might take a short-term focus to help the most vulnerable new arrivals in town or offer ‘portable benefits’ that encourage the ongoing involvement of community members,

### Conflict Zones

Beirut stands out from other urban pilots under evaluation because of its proximity to and relationship with one of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis in recent times, the Syrian conflict. Refugees have been settling in AER legally since around 2011, often assisted by government and non-government organisations, yet local, long-established communities are not being consulted on how best to accommodate them. The neighbourhood is already struggling to cope with shortages of liveable accommodation, widespread unemployment, political coercion and faction violence. The rapid influx of new, often desperate arrivals is providing a scapegoat for existing residents. Even as the Urban Programmes Initiative project measured initial successes for internal cohesion and recognition of valid diversities, new barriers of nationalism against the Syrian population were emerging. Many social initiatives and projects in Lebanon, including World Vision’s, have needed to think and act quickly to respond to potential social risk and lessen the belief that Syrian immigrants are being favoured with services and opportunities at the expense of long-term residents.



wherever they live. Portable benefits could be knowledge and information about the city, leadership development, engagement with city decision-makers and networks, and deeper understanding of citizenship rights and the planning and budgeting processes of the city.

### Lessons on Levels and Causes of Urban Poverty

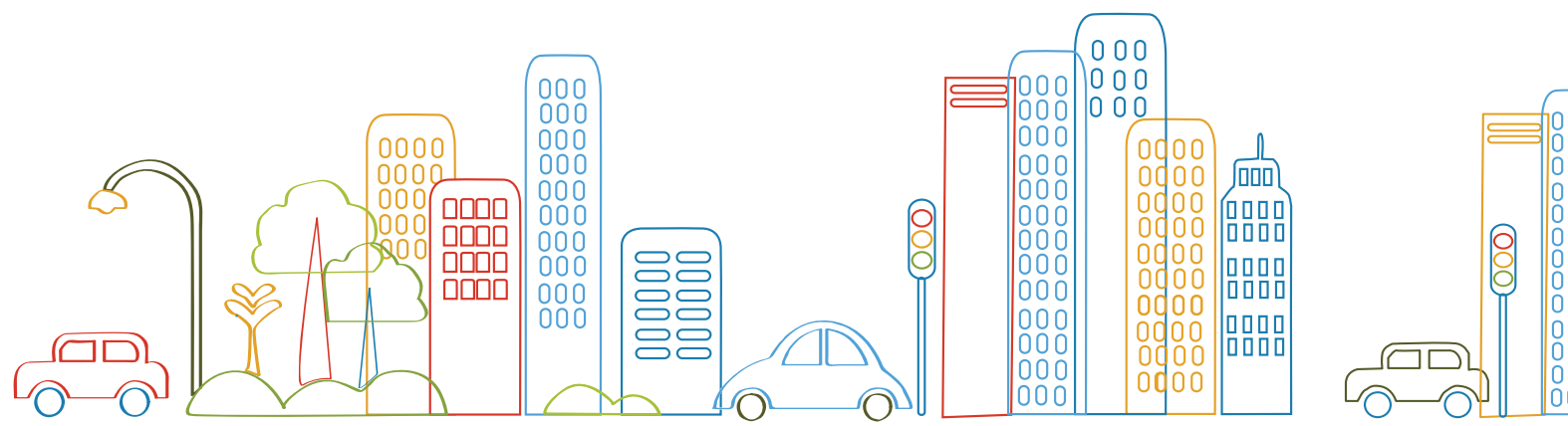
A lack of well-paid employment was the driving force for the levels of poverty witnessed in all contexts under review, and indeed probably in any urban context. Subsistence farming among the rural poor has transformed into 'subsistence working' in an urban environment, often at a rate that does not sufficiently cover a household's necessary costs of rent, food, electricity and clothing. Though the urban pilots were issue based, the root causes of these issues were usually traceable to some degree to parental earning capacity, for instance, child labour and trafficking in Kanpur and Siliguri, school dropouts in Orlando East, factionalism in Beirut, marginalisation in Surabaya or security of housing in Phnom Penh.

**Livelihoods and micro-credit:** World Vision's experience in micro-credit, self-help groups and vocational training has been helpful in the urban context for transitioning subsistence workers into legitimate small-business owners. Traditionally, World Vision has not worked closely with owners and decision-makers of existing businesses, and its partnerships with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and affiliated local workers' groups are limited. The urban pilots which contained livelihoods objectives also learned that localised barriers, such as discrimination, political corruption or low income expectations of marginalised groups, were complicating the usual model designed for rural settings.

In the case of Kanpur, the perception of child labour as a valid contribution to reduce overall household vulnerability adds complexity to the issue, particularly because it is widely believed that the schools available to these low-income or marginalised groups provide a very poor education as an alternative. If adults cannot find regular employment but children can, the economic landscape actively encourages tolerance of child labour.

Cities are reliant on their labour force in order to prosper. For instance, the ports of Surabaya or the manufacturing bases of Kanpur and Phnom Penh rely on informal labour markets. However, access to opportunities are inequitable across and between cities. Also, while it is usual to see higher rates of pay in cities, workers are often obliged to send money to family in rural areas (particularly the case in Surabaya, La Paz and Phnom Penh). Thus, a worker bringing in around US\$10 a day may be supporting two or three times the number of people visible in the worker's household. Cities are always more expensive to live in than rural areas. The reliance on a cash-based informal economy does not allow the urban poor to plan for the long term. They live in an inconsistent, fluctuating, dynamic world of rising food prices, rent increases and informal payment for services due to lack of service provision by local governments.

The meta-review showed that rules for success in small business did not apply across urban contexts. For instance, in Surabaya or Kanpur a shop or street stall proved to be more sustainable and successful if it provided more than one product or service. This made it more expensive to set up, but results seemed to indicate the investment was worthwhile. Conversely, a study of small businesses in Soweto found 'relatively high mortality rates' – just under 40 per cent of businesses survived over four years; those that pulled through had usually done so by downsizing their original plans to recoup losses (University of South Africa 2009). This was limiting potential



for growth, with negative implications for further increasing household income or providing jobs to others.

Regarding social protection, all projects recognised the need for a safer urban environment where children are protected from physical risk, fear and violence in everyday life, at home, in schools and on the streets. The risk is not confined to low-income households; domestic and street violence affects a broad sector of society in poorly functioning neighbourhoods or cities, particularly where criminal and abusive behaviour is entrenched and where policing is inadequate or feared. A municipal government incorporating social and disaster-risk planning into its services and infrastructure can do much to increase resilience to these symptoms of poverty, particularly for children.

**Conclusion:** It may sound simplistic, but appropriately paid employment seems to be the single biggest contributor to reduction of urban poverty at the household level. World Vision needs to continue to improve in its ability to work effectively with small enterprise, while medium- and large-scale employment needs to be built over time through partnerships with other urban actors, including corporations, government and labour INGOs. In the meantime, physical and psychological safety for children is an urgent social programming issue for urban settings in order to see generational change. Quality education systems can help with this, not only increasing opportunities for children but also contributing to protection, participation and empowerment.



Availability and access to safe spaces is often limited in urban contexts, placing children at high risk to physical harm.

## The Enabling Environment

The projects universally reiterated the importance of understanding World Vision's role within a larger network of urban actors and influences, which together support or hinder a context where pro-poor change becomes possible. Contributing to the development of an effective enabling environment will require advocacy, negotiation and innovation, and it is never straightforward. To work effectively may require World Vision to:

- identify and expose the niche where under-representation is restricting the enablers of change, as in Phnom Penh, or
- act as a connector to increase the reach and scope of different agencies and bodies through united action, as in La Paz, or
- step in at the right point to continue or strengthen an existing initiative, as with the child club in Surabaya, or
- establish strategic partnerships on a single issue to scale up interest with a variety of partners from local to municipal levels, as in Orlando East.



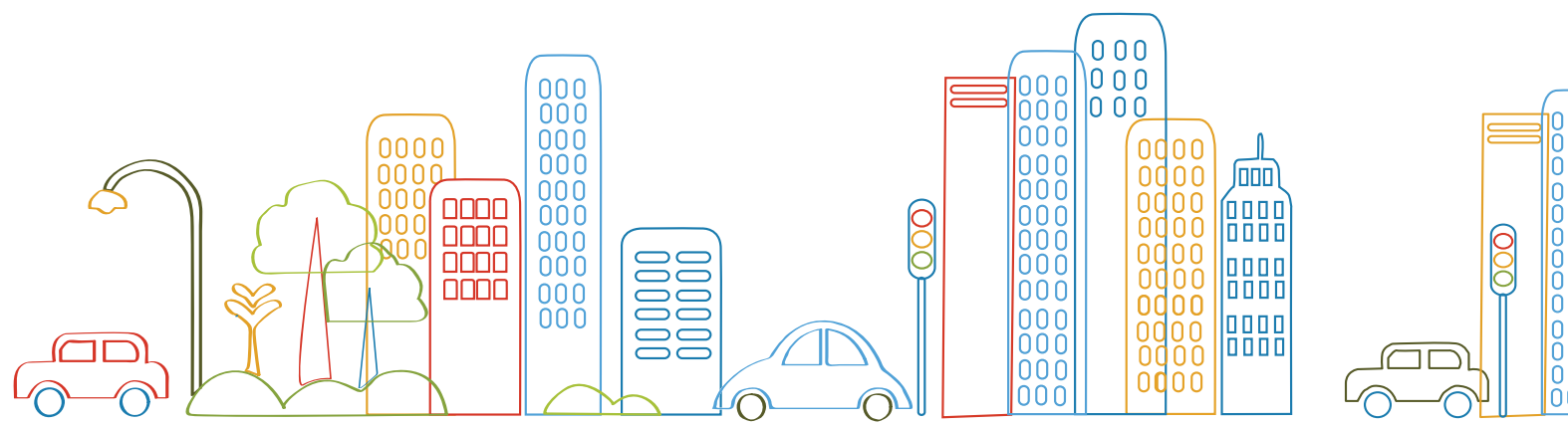
One of the key lessons from the six urban country case studies was the importance of World Vision having multiple roles, as facilitator, partnership broker, or enabler, supporting and partnering with other organisations and community groups. This raises the question once more about the changing role of NGOs in complex urban environments. One of the critical areas that emerged from the operational research was the need for World Vision to form strategic partnerships city wide, with all forms of decision-makers, and with community representation at the heart. Another was the conscious move that many projects took to integrate 'soft' advocacy into their programme design, even though it meant challenges of measurement and contribution.

The partnering approach provides the potential for significant opportunities in combining the resources, knowledge and expertise of various existing agencies. At the same time, effective coordination and time are required to navigate the web of urban actors and to forge strategic partnerships. Mobilising social capital, volunteerism, human resources, finances from local corporations and municipal governments had greater potential in urban areas and required project staff to develop the skills that can activate these resources.

Staff also need the skills of diplomacy and sensitivity, because every city is political. Multiple tiers of government as well as informal leaders are vying for support, attention and resources. Corruption is a major issue in cities, and the pilot project locations were no exception. It emerged that the mayor of the city can be driver of change, and an important stakeholder to connect and influence, in order to be effective in a city. This worked well in La Paz and Surabaya. However, changes in political leadership can have immediate negative impact and require relationships to be rebuilt, as was the case in Phnom Penh.

In the city a network can replace a formal partnership, and many organisations prefer to work this way, collaborating with others when goals happen to intersect. World Vision encouraged networks to form and supported members to increase their own capacity and knowledge in order to broaden scope and impact. Building trust among community organisations and facilitating relationships between them and local authorities was perhaps World Vision's most significant achievement in these projects. Overcoming poor data in the face of dynamism also emerged as a key benefit of partnership, for instance, the data sharing and monitoring that took place among local organisations in Phnom Penh.

Understanding and working with communities is World Vision's core experience and is often cited as its comparative advantage. In the city context this is still required and valued, but it must take into consideration the differing definitions and connections of community. The projects found that local partners often held the knowledge that World Vision needed, as well as the most appropriate access to marginalised or politically complex communities. While World Vision remained more grassroots than many other international organisations, it was heavily reliant on the understanding and engagement skills of the truly local players. Thus, a key strategy for inclusion and voice was to focus on building the capacity of these partners.





## Lessons on Partnering, Networks and Connections

The pilot reviews demonstrated the need for World Vision to establish strong partnerships in urban contexts for impact and sustained change. The research initiative challenged existing modalities of programme development and the need to understand as well as deal with multiple organisations, community groups, government agencies and private enterprises concentrated in the urban settings.

The Urban research project raised the question similar to the wider discourse and dialogue about the changing role of NGOs in complex environments.

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*The ability of NGOs to offer development solutions in the future will not only depend on material factors, but equally if not more strongly, on non-material factors, including building relationships with other actors and strong engagement with ideas, research and knowledge. Evidence and research will be key to the legitimacy of NGOs, both 'doing' evidence and using it strategically as they seek to influence the policy process.*

– Banks and Hulme 2012

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One of the critical areas that emerged from the operational research was the need for World Vision to form strategic partnerships in the city to be effective in dealing with complex issues and establish systems for sustained change involving government and multiple stakeholders.

Evaluations showed differing levels of success through partners and many important recommendations on ways to do things better next time. Planning upcoming phases in partnership with willing and well-resourced community organisations proved to be crucial. A recommendation in several evaluations was to make resources – financial and human – available to other NGOs as part of the transition phase and potentially beyond the end of the project. By doing so, responsibilities and capacities could also be transferred and local organisations could lead the next phase of advocacy and community engagement.

Partners in the Phnom Penh advocacy project saw World Vision as filling a vital gap in civil society capacity to negotiate on land tenure simply by its consistency in raising the issue. World Vision project leaders considered this only partial success, however, because it could not meet goals of sustainability. Communities were not yet mobilised to act with confidence as stakeholders, and though a network of land-rights organisations was now in place, there had not been time for any of them to develop the capacity or resources to lead with the same focus. At the time of evaluation it seemed absolutely necessary for World Vision to continue its city-level advocacy on the issue.

Similarly, in Surabaya, World Vision introduced child friendly village advocacy because it was a gap where World Vision was suited to work. As it was the only actor working towards this goal locally, there was no existing network to call upon, and interest in the initiative was low. As a result of the project, interest and capacity to develop the child friendly village/child friendly city has certainly increased, but many respondents to the evaluation saw the goal as World Vision's own mandate rather than something they wanted for themselves.



On the other hand, the major success of the La Paz project has been as a facilitator of networks; this has brought measurable cohesion and unity to dispersed urban actors within the geographic borders and within the time frame. Youth networks have been instrumental in demanding a voice directly with power structures. For sustainability of partner networks in this context, there needs to be a strategy for scaling up so that partner organisations, including broader youth networks, connect across the cities. World Vision might act as a short-term financial partner on this style of scale up rather than needing to set up a full project structure in other areas as partner networks become increasingly capable of implementing priority programmes directly.

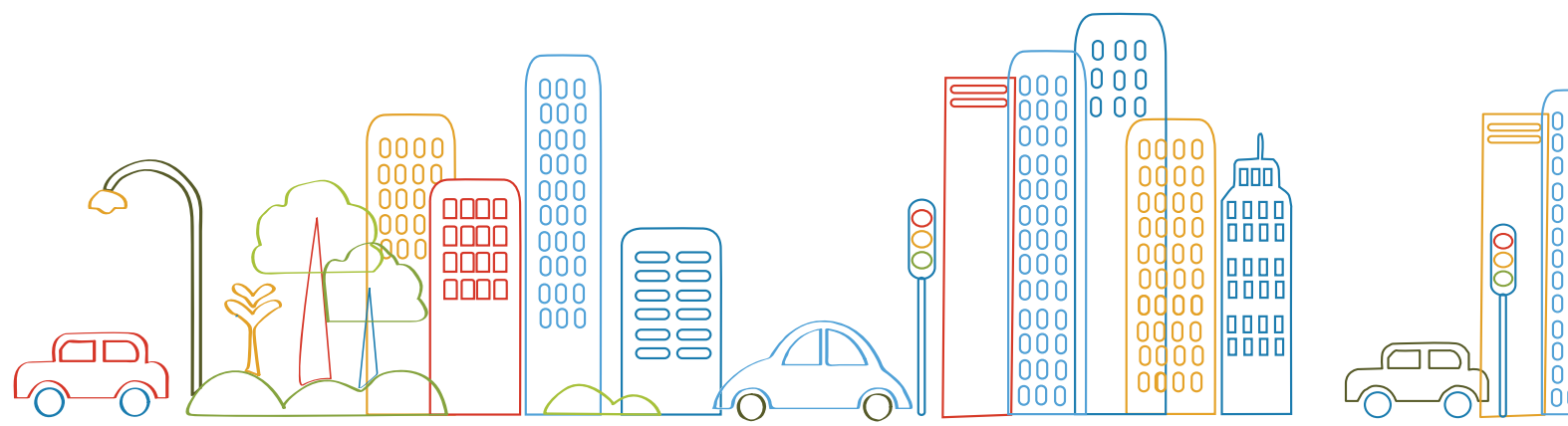
In Beirut, the unprecedented influx of refugee citizens from Syria rapidly changed the demographic of response resources and agencies. This shows in the extreme what is likely to be the case to a lesser extent in all cities: actors and partnerships changing to match the flux in population and demographics. It also shows the volatility of urban actors and the potential for missed opportunities unless the partner landscape is assessed regularly. A recommendation for several projects was to have more regular reflection and landscape analysis – potentially annually – to ensure that the project’s understanding of the city was still accurate.

### Transition Challenges in Orlando East

Partner and participant interviews in Orlando East suggested that World Vision’s approach had been well organised and targeted, creating a favourable environment to encourage mutually beneficial partnerships between community and local government. Responses reiterated a high level of trust between World Vision and participants and a strong respect for its apolitical negotiating role. This represented an important achievement in terms of overall project potential, because it was clear from responses that the relationship between community and government continued to be weak. By facilitating and guiding discussions as a broker of relationships, World Vision was gradually helping both sides to overcome barriers of communication and trust. However, this came with a challenge to sustainability, with many interviewees stating bluntly that the progress was unlikely to continue without World Vision in the mix. They saw World Vision as a permanent facilitator and felt that business relationships could not be sustained without World Vision’s ‘constant involvement’. Overreliance on World Vision’s presence, particularly in Orlando East, has placed the organisation currently at the centre of the network of relationships of the communities, committees and government authorities. The meta-analysis recommends that World Vision should focus more on empowering citizens and local businesses to build relationships with less support and interaction from World Vision. While it is easy to say this, it is harder to deliver, particularly given the time frame of these projects. A significant lesson for the project was to start earlier on strengthening capacity of civil society groups to plan, strategise, finance and lead social change.



World Vision facilitating a planning workshop for local businesses and community members to develop a common vision.



**Conclusion:** Understanding existing urban actors and institutions is vital to understanding a city. Having clear goals for building the skills and capacities of others was a better strategy than bringing reform directly. In many cases, despite good intentions, the projects have been leading rather than enabling new urban movements. This delivered results, particularly at the local level, but also created dependency at the expense of original exit planning.

## Lessons on Governments, Power Structures and Accountability

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*Local governments alone cannot turn a city around. They control a minuscule portion of the capital available for city building and often have an even smaller proportion of the available talent in urban innovation. Although important as catalysts and as representatives of the public interest ... local governments should work in partnership with private interests and civil society to change a city's developmental direction.*

– Cities Alliance 2006, 2

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For an organisation like World Vision, working with local and municipal authorities to improve opportunities for children is core to urban programming right from the point of goal setting. Ensuring equitable access to the benefits of city life is a primary function of urban development. To make it happen, it is very likely that project objectives will call for a change in the volume and balance of government services.

The urban pilots can celebrate many strong government relationships, including the full support of the mayor for Pegirian to become a child friendly city, the building of connections between citizens and local government in Orlando East and collaborative planning with public servants to advise government in Beirut, Kanpur and Siliguri. These relationships helped teams to understand how urban governance worked and to place themselves with greater strategic accuracy where they might be most helpful to government decision-makers.

All of the urban pilot evaluations had much to say about limited current technical ability to work effectively with government. Staff commented that urban governments worked differently from rural governments, so experience gained with rural collaboration was not always applicable to the more politicised goals of individuals in large cities. As well, World Vision's technical teams were not always comfortable when pushed into advocacy roles such as negotiator, analyst or political advisor. This revealed a significant capacity gap for World Vision in working with urban government stakeholders because most partner organisations were also inexperienced in this side of development.

Unfortunately, resolving the capacity shortfall is not as simple as provision of tools and training. Relationships with decision-makers need to be built over time, are often very personal (and thus vulnerable to staff turnover on either side) and can be difficult to track in terms of results. Whether using a rights-based approach or what was described in the case of Kanpur and Phnom Penh as 'enlightened self-interest', staff need to project quickly and accurately what argument is likely to win the attention and then the support of political figures so goals can be set mutually.



Surabaya's project provides an excellent case study for scaling up a good idea. Though it is noted in the previous section that civil society partners do not 'own' the child friendly village/child friendly city concepts, the municipal government does. Impressed by the model exhibited in Pegirian, they intend to roll out similar consultative improvements city wide and will take up accountability for this broader implementation.

### Phnom Penh: 'Soft' Advocacy in a 'Hard' City

Phnom Penh is probably the most challenging urban advocacy environment under review, yet the experiences of World Vision's single-issue focus here are largely positive and present a relevant case study for other high-risk contexts.

It is internationally acknowledged that corruption plays a major role in Cambodia's political system. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index lists the nation among the top 20 worldwide in terms of public-sector corruption. This places those working to protect and enhance the living conditions and choices of a city's poor at an immediate disadvantage because they are not bringing the incentives that decision-makers may be used to considering. Advocacy tactics that can work in other contexts, such as watchdog reports or negative media, bring a high level of risk.

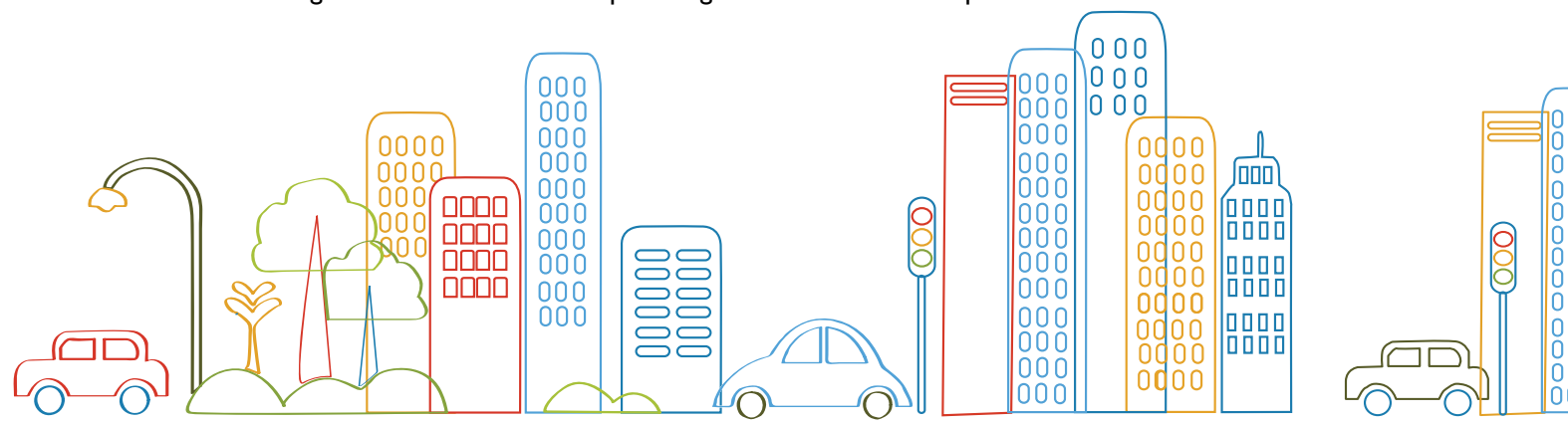
Though World Vision's visibility and value as an international development agency gives it some advantage, it is certainly not immune to the effects of displeasing government through overt criticism. Recognising all of this, government relations have been handled extremely sensitively, focused on certainty and accountability of announcements and actions. These are 'soft' advocacy achievements that at least help citizens to understand where they stand as a starting point for further negotiation.

Respondents to the Phnom Penh evaluation saw work with municipal and national government as an important contribution from World Vision. It seemed that World Vision's very presence – almost irrespective of its effectiveness – has been providing a needed counterweight to the strong commercial and political interests influencing decisions.



Communities empowered to advocate for their rights.

**Conclusion:** Traditional models of community development programming do not contain the volume or complexity of government engagement necessary to achieve child well-being goals in the city. Careful analysis and relationship building are needed at multiple levels of the governance structure. If different levels of government begin to prioritise in the same way, then change and ownership come quickly. As the primary implementer of social services, local government needs the most support, particularly from sector experts, including experts in urban planning and innovation. To make this happen, new skills are needed from the NGO development sector, including 'hard' and 'soft' advocacy skills as well as technical expertise that has been built specifically for the urban context. Tracking the results of relationships with government and other power structures is also a new skill.



## Organisational Context and Capacity: Key Observations

The Urban Programmes Initiative projects provided an opportunity to try innovations within the familiar structure of World Vision's area development programme (ADP) model. The projects had shorter time frames – 4 to 5 years instead of the traditional 10 to 15 – and few moved away from large-scale programming to work on a single urgent issue for children in the city. But, in general, systems for design, implementation and support remained standard. Important for World Vision, these systems provided a framework to research the suitability of sponsorship in urban contexts. Offices were open to learning on organisational process and provided regular transparent feedback throughout the projects.

World Vision learned, as a result, that many of the standardised elements of the ADP model sat awkwardly against the core need for speed and responsiveness in urban programming. The project time frames and monitoring requirements began to resemble chronic emergency relief more closely than community development, particularly when it came to rapidly analysing situations and data or considering the push-pull factors of areas outside the geographic focus of the project. Project feedback indicated that the single-issue focus was welcomed by staff, partners and government for its simplicity but that communities engaged less in some contexts than expected.

## Organisational Adaptations

Areas for organisational adaptation within the World Vision global partnership continue to help improve its capacity and effectiveness in urban contexts. Many of these adaptations are currently being explored or implemented. A full report on organisational considerations stemming from the Urban Programmes Initiative has been prepared as an internal learning document. (In the interests of space for this report and relevance to an external audience, it is not included here.) The four main areas for further work and research may be of interest, however, and can be summarised as follows:

### **1. Learning to Take a City-wide Approach**

Few urban actors currently base their inputs and interventions on a city-wide vision for the future. Urban Programmes Initiative projects noted this as an urgently needed practice for consolidating and streamlining efforts collaboratively with government. The scoping of city vision and strategy clarifies levels of engagement with city structures long term. While individual projects start and conclude, World Vision's influence and partnership are embedded in city systems and processes. This gives World Vision a unique advantage in project elements such as local-to-municipal agenda setting, accountability and partnership on implementation of good policy, and responsiveness to emerging trends and needs. As projects mature and deliver on their goals, sound evaluation coupled with strong government liaison have the potential to see child-focused projects transformed into city-wide policy. This was important to ensure that the invisible poor and vulnerable groups were included in collective action and impact. City-wide design and vision allow for World Vision to scale up its interventions with and through partners.

### **2. Identifying Strategies to Strengthen and Sustain Accountable Action**

All Urban Programmes Initiative projects faced challenges of sustainable transition. This was due in part to using the systems and guidelines associated with World Vision's more slow-moving model of community development;



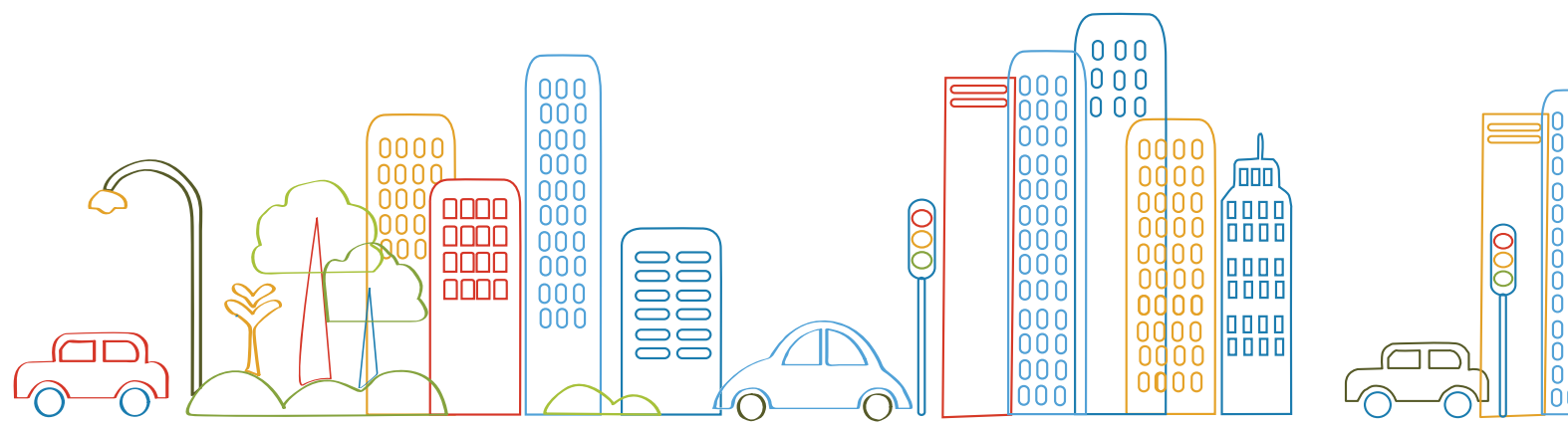
but it was due also to the time needed to understand the context, select the best possible local partners, identify significant capacity-building requirements and at times adapt to the changing relationships with individuals within government. When it came time to phase out, World Vision almost always found itself still at the centre of civil society networks. External respondents in all projects were concerned about the continuation of efforts if World Vision were to discontinue its attendance and technical support. The advocacy component of urban programming is more intense due to the focus on social issues. World Vision could become more agile and responsive in an urban context by turning its focus purely to building the capacity of others to lead the way, particularly on advocacy and social accountability.

### **3. Adapting Technical Capacity**

World Vision's staff raised issues of human resources and staff capacity in each of the meta-analysis reports. The skills, competencies and technical knowledge held by World Vision programme staff were not always suited to the needs of an urban project. It also proved difficult to recruit new team members because the job descriptions still reflected decades of refining rural project priorities. In traditional sectors such as health, nutrition, livelihoods and education, staff highlighted the difference between applying purely technical skills in rural environments and the need to become negotiators and advocates for effective urban impact. Even for staff who were used to government liaison, differences between rural and urban government approaches were noted. There were often more layers to local government, plus a large number of community organisations and NGOs also working in the same areas and with the same groups of people with individual agendas. Staff had to decide how to position World Vision in those complex contexts, including framing a succinct value proposition for World Vision's interventions to communities, civil society and government. World Vision needs to build, in its own teams as well as externally with partners, a wide range of urban expertise, for instance, town planning, advocacy and policy, research and data collection, social accountability, partnership brokering and environmental services.

### **4. Measuring Progress, Celebrating Success**

World Vision's staff who had traditionally worked in rural areas had to adapt to working with urban communities. The target population was in many cases geographically scattered, dispersed and mobile. Staff had to react much faster to moving and dynamic contexts and populations compared to those in rural areas. Sometimes transferred from other rural programmes, they did not know the details of the city context, history and 'DNA'. They also needed to face difficult, personally upsetting or dangerous situations. When it came time to explain what they had been working on, staff were challenged to report outputs or outcomes or even to fit their activities within World Vision's standard budget lines. Some researchers reported low staff morale at the end of projects because, unlike more tangible programmes in rural areas, staff were not convinced they had done enough. This is a common challenge for projects where the main activities are coordination and advocacy, and it can be overcome. Flexibility and adaptation on project parameters are vital; as well, alternative methods of monitoring and evaluation are needed that show results in terms of influence, community empowerment and strengthened civil society.



## Part 5: Recommendations from Urban Research Initiative

The World Vision *Cities for Children* framework and the City-wide Approach emerged from the knowledge and experience gained applying an action research approach throughout the pilot initiatives in six countries.

### *Cities for Children Framework*

Applying the lessons and innovations from the pilot programmes, the Urban Unit has developed a *Cities for Children* framework to address the multidimensional nature of urban poverty.<sup>9</sup> This framework provides a multidisciplinary, integrated model for contributing to Child Well-Being Outcomes in urban contexts. It highlights key levers of sustainable change by focusing on four interrelated sectoral domains affecting child well-being: healthy cities, prosperous cities, safer cities and resilient cities (see Figure 7). Underpinning these domains is the enabling factor of advocacy through our contributions to just cities. Each of the four domains will apply these principles and outline essential entry points and goals, evidence-based strategies, tools and indicators that can be implemented in programmes to ensure a city-wide impact.

**Figure 7: World Vision’s *Cities for Children* Framework**



<sup>9</sup> The framework is anchored in the principles of World Vision’s organisational framework of Child Well-Being Aspirations in urban contexts. Informed by four global frameworks – (1) WHO’s Healthy Cities framework (WHO 2012b), (2) UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities framework (UN-Habitat 2007), (3) UNISDR’s Resilient Cities framework (UNISDR 2012) and (4) UN-Habitat’s City Prosperity Index (UN-Habitat 2012) – the four-part World Vision *Cities for Children* framework seeks to represent World Vision’s future intention to design city-wide holistic urban programmes.



These domains of change are then described and presented in more detail to demonstrate alignment with World Vision’s aspirational goals and the recently launched Sustainable Development Goals listed in Table 5.

**Table 5: World Vision’s Cities for Children Framework alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals**

Domains of change	Thematic objectives	World Vision’s Child Well-Being Aspirations	Sustainable Development Goals
Safer cities	To ensure that children and their families live in a safe, protected and peaceful environment, free from violence, abuse and harm.	Children are cared for, protected and participating	11
Healthy cities	To ensure that children and their families have access to health services and water, and live in a clean environment.	Children enjoy good health	3 6
Prosperous cities	To create an enabling environment for urban livelihoods by enhancing pro-poor employment, local assets, skills and productivity.	Children are educated for life	4 8
Resilient cities	To support city dwellers – to prepare for, respond to and adapt to urban chronic and sudden crises, hazards and disasters.	Children care for others and their environment	11
Just cities (enabler)	To advocate for justice and peace in the city, ensuring that the voices of children, their families and communities are heard and included in city planning and decision-making processes.	Children experience love of God and their neighbours	10 16

**Figure 8. UN Sustainable Development Goals**





## Why Do We Need This Framework?

This framework enables multiple World Vision entities to develop their urban-specific strategies, technical approaches and programmes. It allows practitioners and thought leaders to:

- enhance the significance and relevance of child well-being outcomes
- adapt and apply World Vision sectoral strategies in urban contexts
- develop partnerships with other agencies to address specific issues of the city
- enhance the assessment, design and impact of urban programmes
- use it as an advocacy tool with urban stakeholders and decision-makers.

One of the key operating principles in World Vision's *Cities for Children* framework is that children can play a central role in creating cities where children can thrive. World Vision is committed to 'genuine child participation and applies contextual and diverse strategies to ensure that children's voices are included at the local and national levels' (World Vision 2014a, 3). This knowledge from action and local practice informed the development of World Vision's *Cities for Children* framework.

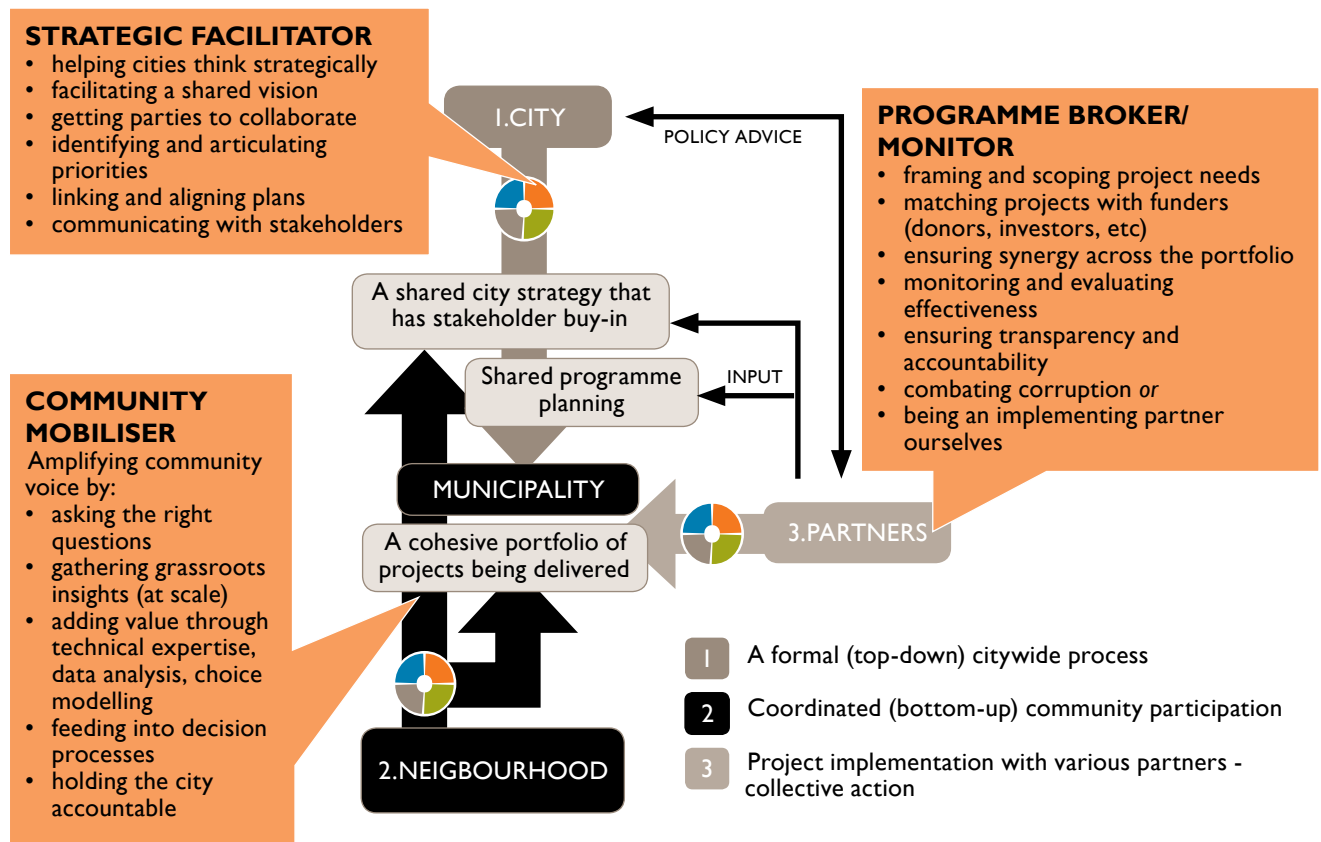
## City-wide Programming Approach

The *Cities for Children* framework will be operationalised through a three-stream application process called the *City-wide Approach*, derived from World Vision's development experience and perspective on effective implementation. It seeks to ensure that implementation equips communities at multiple levels of society with the capacity to drive sustained momentum for change and development through (1) a formal (top-down) city-wide policy-impact process, (2) a coordinated (bottom-up) community participation process and (3) an NGO partnership component for improved project implementation and scale up. This multiple-streamed city-wide approach is represented visually in Figure 9 below.

Development programmes need to address issues at all levels of the city. This idea has been captured in World Vision's *City-wide Approach*, which explicitly states that to achieve the desired long-term transformational outcomes, urban programmes will need to act intentionally at the neighbourhood, municipal and city levels. The *City-wide Approach* allows for interventions at the neighbourhood level to influence the transformation of urban policy to ensure that the needs of the urban poor are met. This is mobilised through innovative partnerships to encourage the processes of co-design and co-management among the private sector, communities, government and other civil society actors. World Vision was asked to play multiple roles in the city, including strategic facilitator, programme broker/monitor and community mobiliser. Figure 9 captures the roles played by World Vision in its six pilot country research initiative.



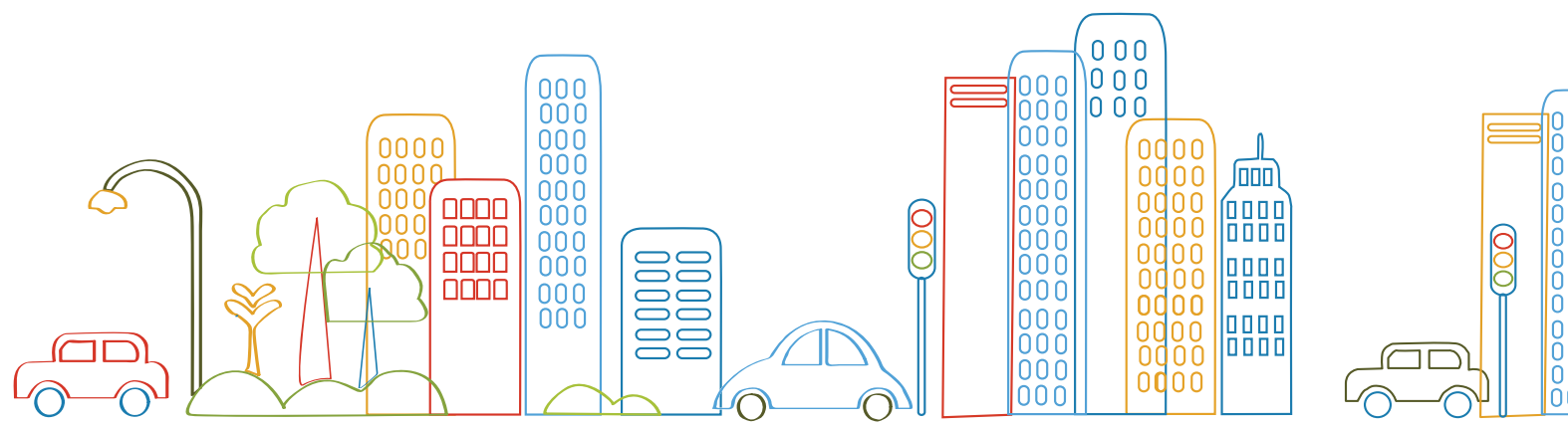
**Figure 9: The City-wide Approach for implementing World Vision’s Cities for Children Framework**



### The Neighbourhood Level

The local neighbourhood is the level of engagement that has traditionally been the scale at which both local and international non-governmental organisations have operated with most success. Similarly, it is at the neighbourhood level that community or other local organisations have potential for impact and effective communication within the communities. Operating at the neighbourhood scale will see urban stakeholders engage in activities such as the following:

- processes of community engagement
- community planning
- establishing community-based organisations and focus groups
- delivering education- and behaviour-change programmes
- capacity training for local community leaders
- implementing local infrastructure projects.



## The Municipality Level

The municipality level sees World Vision working closely with the urban stakeholders at the local council, identifying fragile pockets and vulnerable groups of the city, highlighting the gaps in service provision to the most vulnerable and advocating programmes to ensure that the mid-term to long-term requirements of communities are met. This level also includes assisting in the development of business models and capacities of private service providers and linking them to marginalised communities.

The key role for urban stakeholders at this level is through activities such as the following:

- mapping the most vulnerable pockets of the city
- identifying gaps in service provision
- developing capacity
- providing access for small- and medium-size enterprises to skills development, technology and credit
- assisting with service provision coordination
- assisting with monitoring or network performance and required maintenance
- facilitating meaningful communication and linkages between communities and service providers.

## The City Level

To enable significant change in service delivery, NGOs such as World Vision will need to influence city planning processes. Strategic conversations at the city level will assist in ensuring political support, guiding the direction of policy development and maintaining momentum for change. At the city level there is capacity for involvement from the private sector and business councils, universities and research organisations, international donor bodies, development banks and INGOs. Specifically, they can assist promoting the urban agenda through the following:

- identifying and equipping leaders and creating change agents within the city
- communicating best practice and new research outcomes to city governments
- influencing city planning and budgeting processes to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups
- assisting governments to develop and communicate a desired future vision that politicians and stakeholders invest in and take ownership of
- establishing effective networks and strategic partnerships
- engaging well with media
- improving high-level policy development capacity.



## Conclusion

Through this action research initiative, World Vision has learnt that urban environments are dynamic places where relationships with people, communities and institutions constantly shift and change. This fluidity, characterised by high mobility, creates a complex web of relationships, including rapidly shifting power dynamics. Development actors need to invest in regular assessment and mapping of governance structures and power relationships and apply adaptive development strategies to respond to the changing dynamics of the city throughout the project lifecycle.

The pilot project experience illustrates that trying to tackle multiple issues in a complex and dynamic environment is risky: it leads to staff becoming overwhelmed with multiple priorities within a programme. Launching a large-scale programme is difficult to manage in an urban environment. An issue-based approach allows direct collaboration with issue-based communities and local actors. Scaling-up programmes through this issue across the city with partners has more chances of sustainable impact.

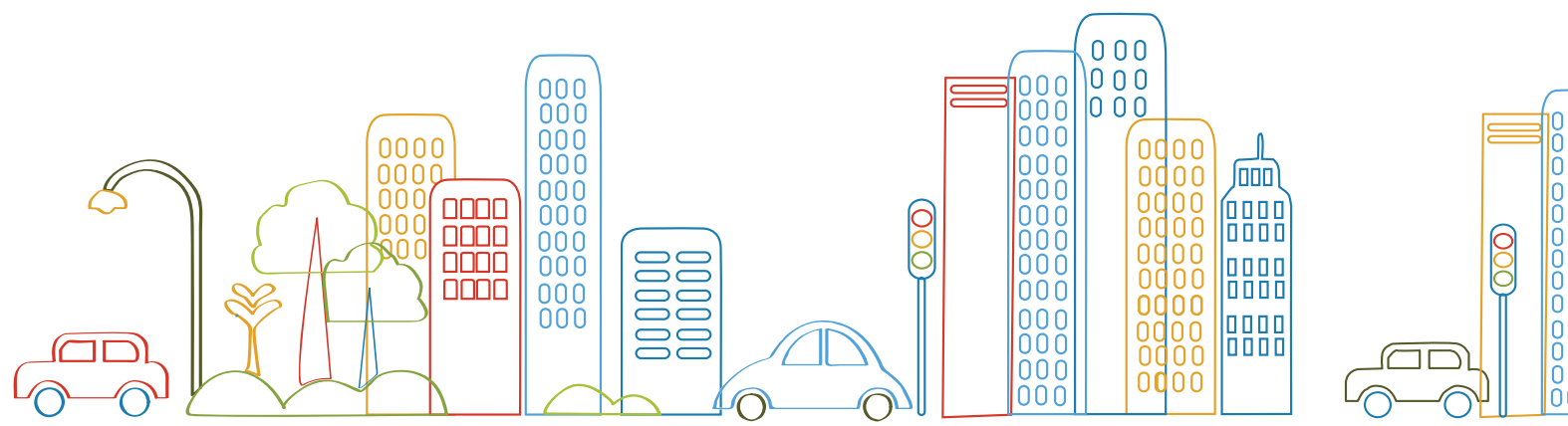
The pilot reviews demonstrated the need for World Vision to establish strong partnerships in urban contexts for impact and sustained change. The research initiative challenged existing modalities of programme development and the need to understand as well as deal with multiple organisations, community groups, government agencies and private enterprises concentrated in the urban settings.

One of the key lessons from the urban pilots was the need for World Vision to play multiple roles in the city, including a community mobiliser, strategic facilitator and programme monitor/broker. Through these diverse roles, World Vision staff were able to establish trust and strengthen local networks. Partnerships were critical to scaling up interventions to respond to fragile pockets of the city. Joining knowledge and resources with partners, pilot projects were able to do much more with much less investment and demonstrate city-wide impact through policy change. World Vision programmes need to be focused and able to succinctly articulate their value proposition to all stakeholders in the city

Flexibility of organisational processes such as long-term planning and adaptations to current models are required to be relevant in city programmes and in developing meaningful partnerships. Humanitarian development is political in the city. Staff need a better understanding of risks that play out in urban environments and need to develop risk mitigation strategies to address challenges.

The roles of NGOs and local stakeholders researched in World Vision's urban pilot projects and articulated in the World Vision *Cities for Children* framework offer a development perspective on successful project implementation and adaptations to traditional models such as World Vision's area development programmes as well as international concepts and frameworks such as Child Friendly Cities articulated by UNICEF.

This action research approach has strengthened the links between research and practice, bringing grassroots players and project implementation staff closer to thought leaders and policymakers. World Vision is now applying lessons from the pilot phase and using the *Cities for Children* framework to scale up urban programming globally. New urban learning sites, now being established in multiple regions, will continue to contribute to and promote just cities where children thrive.



## Annex: International Urban Actors

### Development – International

**Oxfam:** In 2012, Oxfam GB articulated a strategy for increased urban programming and partnerships centred on a rights-based framework for citizenship, participation and accountability. Oxfam constructed the urban framework based on previous lessons and experiences in working in cities and on the value that an international rights campaigner can have within the urban environment. It sees citizens and governance as a primary focus, along with opportunities for income, habitat and responsiveness to change. Through increased investment as well as learning and innovation, Oxfam now aims to support the urban poor ‘to fulfil their rights to decent incomes, dignified habitat, safety and security’ (Oxfam GB 2012, 3).

**Plan International:** Plan International has incorporated the principles and goals of UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities into an important partnership to deliver the Because I Am a Girl (BIAAG) urban programme. BIAAG is a broader initiative for Plan International, aiming to reach 4 million girls directly and a further 400 million through policy change. In the urban context BIAAG is working in five capital cities around the world to ensure that youth programming in these cities includes and actively encourages the participation of adolescent girls. BIAAG research from 2012 revealed alarming rates of fear, isolation and exclusion among teenage girls interviewed. In some cultures it was not possible for girls to go anywhere on their own; in others, girls who travelled unaccompanied through the city reported harassment in the streets and on public transport. Confidence to use emergency services, including the police, was limited across all contexts. Girls also felt excluded or overlooked in community-based discussions, including those on issues directly concerning them, such as safety, mobility, protection and equality.

**Save the Children:** A pivotal insight into the experiences of city children is provided in the Save the Children report *Voices from Urban Africa* (Save the Children 2012). The study clarifies, through wealth-group ranking, some of the deviations of poverty and exclusion hidden in city-wide or national statistics. These inequities affect children now and in the future as they are pushed further away from safety-net policies that are not sufficiently informed or targeted to protect them. Children’s well-being is shown to be largely dependent on household wealth, but the results of urban poverty manifest in multiple ways, from lack of respectable clothing or shoes through to violence, exploitation and early marriage or transactional sex. The report concludes that challenges in community cohesion are affecting the resilience of households of low income, and suggests that programming priorities should focus on disaggregated data, building social networks, mitigating the social risk for seasonal migrants and ensuring inclusive quality governance.

**World Vision:** In 2008, World Vision established the Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming (Urban CoE) as a knowledge asset to lead urban research and development, learning facilitation, capacity building and organisational adaptation. The centre launched six country pilot initiatives to develop and test approaches to address child well-being in cities in collaboration with six field offices located in Bolivia, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lebanon and South Africa. The learnings from the urban pilots are now being applied to scale up World Vision’s urban programmes globally (and are also the subject of this report). Urban learning sites are being established in multiple regions, including Latin America, South Asia, East Africa and the Middle East, with the purpose of contributing to and promoting just and inclusive cities where children thrive.



## Development – Grassroots

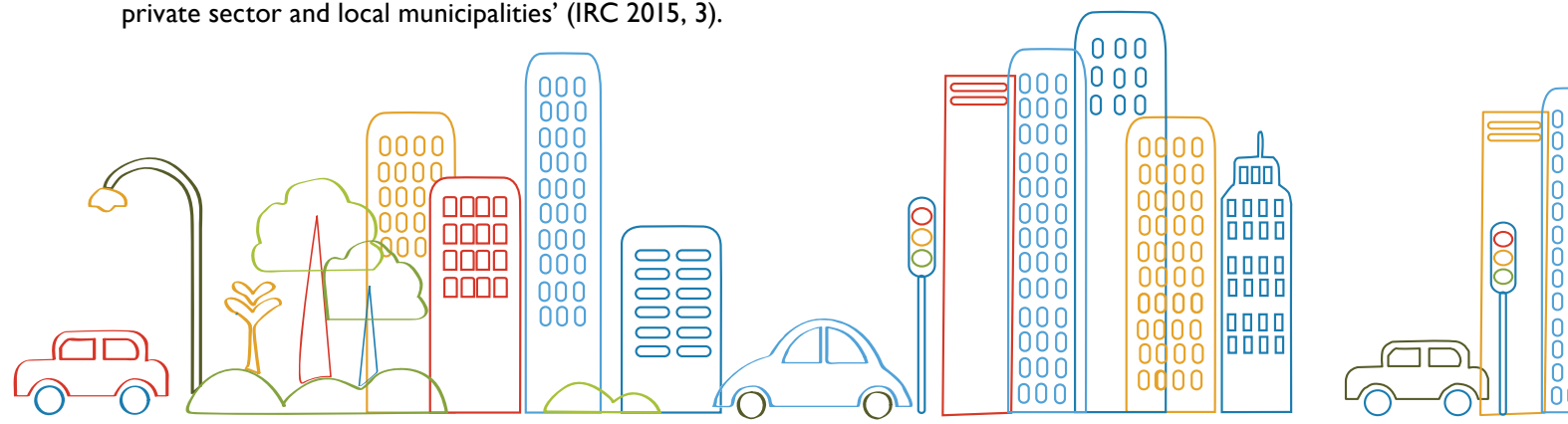
**Shack / Slum Dwellers International:** Federations of urban activists have established themselves as the most innovative bodies working at the community level. Among them, the networked Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) stands out for its ability to raise not only the concerns but also the achievements of locally mobilised groups. SDI focuses on knowledge and shared practice so that activist groups worldwide can learn and deliver solutions that work for them. SDI fosters networks of interest in housing and shelter, land tenure, water and sanitation, community and gender protection from violence, and other issues that must be resolved for life in informal settlements to become tolerable.

**Habitat for Humanity:** Habitat for Humanity provides community-led housing solutions for low-income families in over 60 countries. In 2008, Habitat for Humanity noted that its experience in the United States had been almost exclusively urban, but in developing contexts almost exclusively rural. While acknowledging that the environmental and legislative considerations of rural builds are simpler, the paper marked a turning point for the organisation to ramp up systems and solutions to meet the demands of the urban poor more consistently (HFH 2008). Case studies in the paper showed that the organisation's local and inclusive planning mandate can work equally well in urban environments but that new patterns of negotiation, inclusion and problem solving are calling for the organisation to provide a different set of skills to urban projects – a very similar conclusion to that found in World Vision's Urban Programmes Initiative pilots. Since then, the focus on urban housing solutions has increased, particularly in the Asia Pacific and Latin America, with housing seen as a 'foundation for breaking the poverty cycle' (HFH 2013).

## Humanitarian Aid Organisations

**International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):** Facing humanitarian emergency situations requires rapid understanding and responsive solutions. As a first responder and key disaster-management partner in cities worldwide, the Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies are at the forefront of urban disaster planning and response. In 2012, British Red Cross reported its experiences in response and risk reduction from multiple cities. The report 'Learning from the City' (BRC 2012) highlights the differences between urban and rural settings for familiar and standard operating procedures such as assessment, community engagement and mitigation of everyday risks. Inadequate shelter, insecure tenure, cash shortages, lost livelihoods and homelessness were issues year round, not just in the wake of emergencies. Among other conclusions, British Red Cross called for a better understanding of urban systems, partners and pressures, which differ in each context. If well understood, these influences can work effectively to create pro-poor resilience and support; if misunderstood, efforts to reach the city's most vulnerable residents are significantly undermined.

**International Rescue Committee:** In 2015, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) released a position paper clarifying the role of humanitarian organisations in complex urban environments (IRC 2015). The document calls for a radical shift in the traditional model of response to recognise both local and city-wide implications of a natural or manmade crisis. Coordination mechanisms affect different levels and layers of governance, including, at times, informal power structures. To be effective when disaster strikes, international organisations must be better prepared 'with an improved understanding of the city and its inhabitants through analysis and mapping appropriate for the urban setting, and by investing in partnerships with a wide range of actors, including urban planners, private sector and local municipalities' (IRC 2015, 3).



## UN/Multilateral

**Asian Development Bank:** Asia is currently facing a very rapid transformation from rural to urban and bears in numerical terms much of the burden of urban poverty. For instance, their strategy notes not only that nearly one-third of workers in the region are unemployed or under employed – by a 2008 estimate, ‘at least 500 million of 1.7 billion’ (World Bank 2008, 7) – but also that an extra 420 million jobs will be required by 2030 just to maintain this level. In 2008, the Asia Development Bank began to implement its Strategy 2020, which aims to address nine fundamental challenges: poverty, disparity, demographic changes, environment, infrastructure, regional cooperation, financial stability, innovation/technology/higher education and governance. All strategic areas acknowledge the vital nature of building healthy cities, articulated with clarity in a secondary strategy in 2012, the Urban Operational Plan 2012–2020 (ADB 2012b). Five focus areas for ADB urban programming are city cluster economic development, urban transport, waste management, municipal finance and urban renewal (slum rehabilitation).

**UNFPA:** The role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is to enhance the sustainability and well-being of populations, both rural and urban. It focuses efforts on reproductive health information and access, safe births, and the protection and empowerment of young people to lead healthy, productive lives. UNFPA highlights the urban-specific vulnerabilities of women and young people who are missing out on essential health care and advisory services as a result of poverty, exclusion or cultural pressures. In 2007, its annual report, *Growing Up Urban: The State of World Population 2007 Youth Supplement*, focused on the urban context, including an annex addressing the particular challenges of young people growing up in urban environments: gender exclusion, crime and violence, unemployment or exploitative informal labour, neglect and homelessness, among others (UNFPA 2007).

**UNICEF/Child Friendly Cities:** Since its launch in 1996 as a result of HABITAT II, UNICEF’s Child Friendly City (CFC) initiative has been considered by many city authorities. Many agencies, including World Vision, are working in cities to test the CFC initiative at the local level. The movement is not focused on developing countries only; it recognises that children need to be part of planning for an inclusive and safe environment in all cities. Initially the CFC was thought of as city-wide, particularly the municipal decision-making processes, working together on child friendly principles and practices. More recently it has evolved to acknowledge the challenges of defining where a city starts and ends, and the diversity of experiences and needs within and around a city, allowing for a more inclusive and localised terminology of child friendly city or community (UNICEF 2009).

**UNISDR/Resilient Cities:** The risks of natural or manmade disasters are heightened in a poorly planned city, and the urban poor bear the brunt of this reality (World Vision 2013). UNISDR coordinates the Resilient Cities campaign to reduce the risk of disasters and mitigate the impact when they do occur. Under the slogan ‘My City is Getting Ready’, Resilient Cities calls on local governments and community organisations to work towards 10 essentials from committees, budget and early warning through to hazard mapping, maintenance and protection of positive environmental assets. The list of participating cities – available on the [unisdr.org](http://unisdr.org) website – implies that uptake of Resilient Cities is often a national decision or a ‘domino effect’ among cities of a nation. As such, it also acts as an indicator of current political will for disaster risk reduction; for instance, Brazil has 344 participating governments, while China has 7.

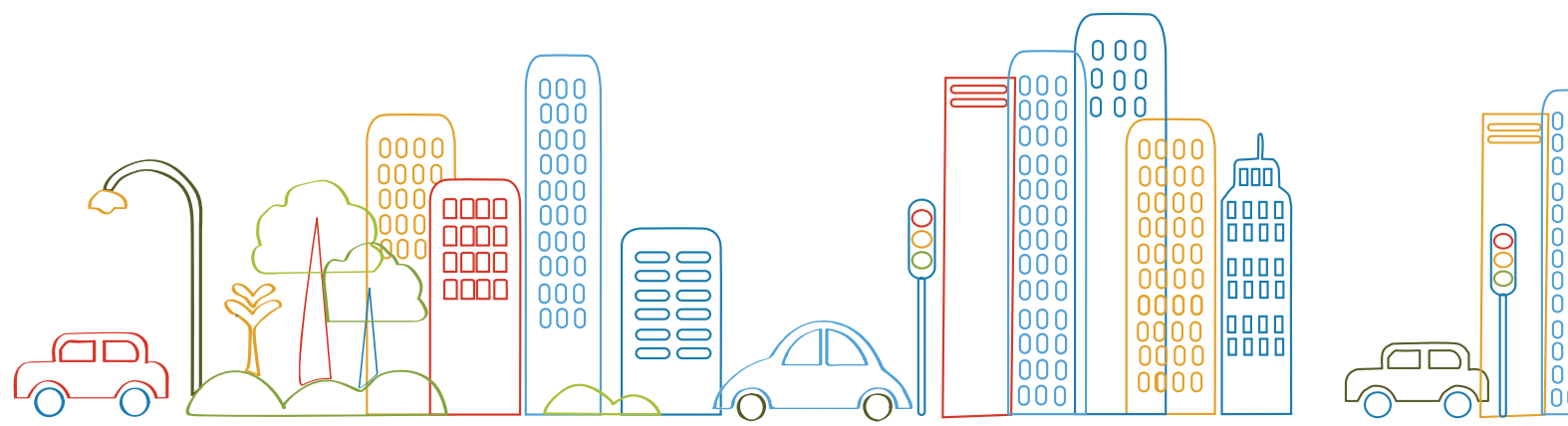


**UN-Habitat/Safer Cities:** UN-Habitat is the peak UN agency working towards a better urban future. The agency takes and encourages a holistic and global approach to improving cities with significant emphasis on research, sharing and innovation. The UN-Habitat website, [unhabitat.org](http://unhabitat.org), lists 16 core thematic investments for urban improvements, including safety, housing, gender, resilience, governance and many others. UN-Habitat supports and guides many urban initiatives, including the Safer Cities initiative, the World Urban Campaign, the Participatory Slum Upgrade Programme, the Cities and Climate Change Initiative, the City Prosperity Initiative, and the Urban Youth Fund.

**World Bank:** A key urban infrastructure player, the World Bank is part way through implementation of a strategy focusing its financial and other resources on ‘harnessing urbanisation’ to drive poverty alleviation (World Bank 2009). The strategy recognises the significance of stable and equitable cities to national growth and stability, and that building these types of cities requires strong urban policy and planning. It argues that cities should not be left to work through their challenges alone; they require overarching support from national governments, advisors and technical experts. The strategy also sees support to local and state governments as a way to pre-empt rapidly emerging pressures of population, land use and livelihoods in secondary cities (World Bank 2011).

**World Health Organization/Healthy Cities:** As a primary stakeholder in four out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),<sup>10</sup> the World Health Organization is a vital strategic actor for responding to urban health challenges. The World Health Organization consistently highlights social determinants of health problems in cities (WHO 2012a; WHO 2012b) and sees its role as falling within five target areas: promoting urban planning for healthy behaviours and safety, improving urban living conditions, ensuring participatory urban governance, building inclusive cities that are accessible and age friendly, and making urban areas resilient to emergencies and disasters). An important movement within this is the Healthy Cities Initiative, which networks and encourages cities to find their own solutions under a global framework for urban health (WHO 1998).

<sup>10</sup> MDG 4 (child survival), MDG 5 (maternal survival) and MDG 6 (combatting disease), plus a significant portfolio in nutrition as part of MDG 1 (eradicating hunger).





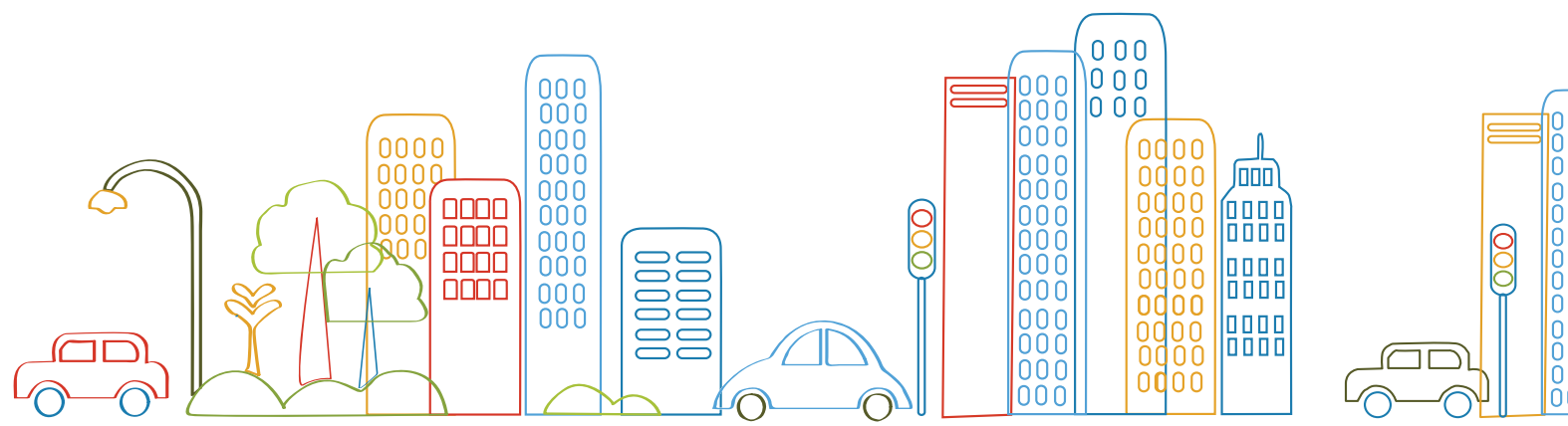
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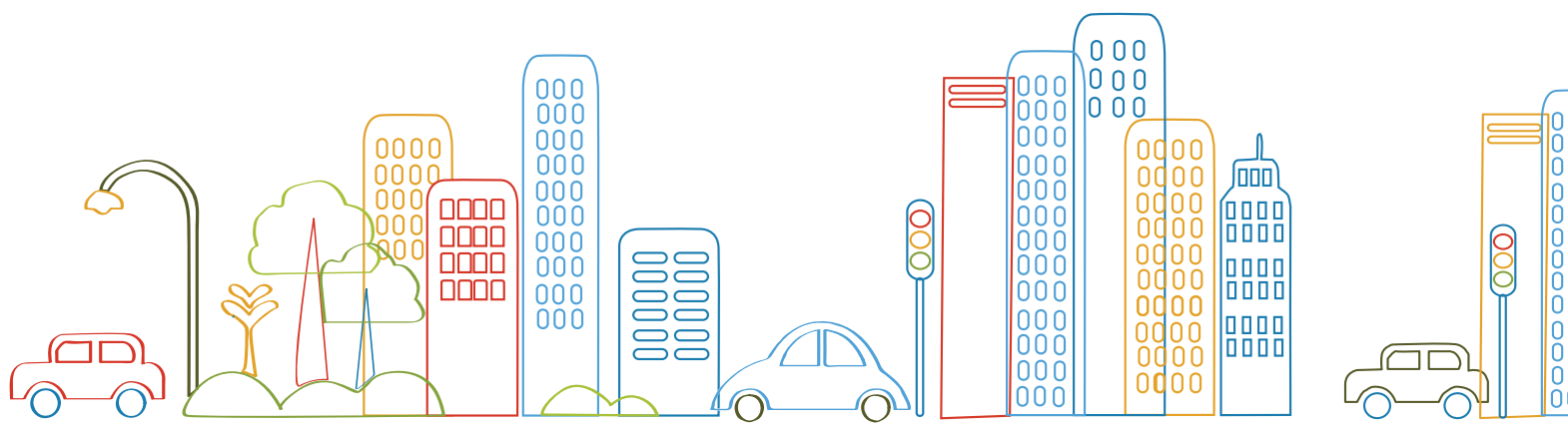
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