

Global Alliance for Urban Crises

Urban Recommendations

World Humanitarian Summit

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Complex urban crises demand multi-scale, multi-faceted, cross-sector based approaches well beyond traditional humanitarian and development boundaries. The following recommendations developed by the Urban Expert Group, and validated in the WHS Global Urban Consultation (June 2015), are aimed at local actors, development agencies and humanitarian responders.

1. Recognize the nature, scale and complexity of urban crisis

Emergency interventions must recognize the specificity of urban crises and that they require a more tailored response than is currently employed.

- a) Identify the most at-risk cities and take steps to strengthen urban resilience.
- b) Establish a 'trigger' for urban response, similar to the protocols put in place for a Level 3 crisis, that sets in motion a systems approach, backed up by city-level analysis, use of existing data and involvement of local actors and urban expertise.
- c) Adopt area-based approaches to programming and coordination that are adapted and appropriate, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and building on, rather than duplicating, existing city systems.
- d) Foster collaboration between city, humanitarian and development actors so that all are contributing to assessment and strategic frameworks for recovery.

2. Work with the systems that shape cities

Move from a mindset of supply to one of support, engage with local actors, and invest in the systems that shape cities (governance, society, markets and infrastructure).

- a) Understand context through urban specific assessments, including spatial analysis, assessments of services, supply chains, critical infrastructure, governance arrangements and land tenure.
- b) Establish rosters of national, regional or international deployable urban leaders, managers and technical experts, who can surge through local authorities, to support, transfer knowledge, and strengthen local responders' ability to lead and coordinate crisis response and recovery.
- c) Prioritize cash-based responses alongside economic stimuli for markets. Develop standards and approaches to re-establish and support local economic development.

3. Manage urban displacement

Ensure that the most at-risk towns and cities are able to manage displacement, recognizing existing poverty and vulnerability in urban areas, and the added strain that displacement can place on local services.

- a) Improve understanding of the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of displaced women and men in urban areas, as compared to host communities, and develop tools and approaches for the protection of dispersed, mobile and less visible populations, including older people, youth and people with disabilities.
- b) Consider the wide range of shelter options already housing people in the city, and support authorities and communities to find appropriate housing solutions for the displaced, rather than camps being the default option.
- c) Invest in infrastructure and services, contributing as much as possible to longer-term sustainable urban growth.
- d) Support the creation of livelihood opportunities for displaced populations, ensuring urban areas benefit from the expertise refugees and IDPs bring with them, and that those moving from rural areas are able to develop new skills.