

URBAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

UN-Habitat's **Urban Humanitarian Response Programme** works with partners, including the Global Alliance on Urban Crisis (GAUC) in developing new ways to address the humanitarian crisis affecting urban populations, reduce reliance on traditional IDP and refugee camps, and increase emphasis on integrated responses in urban areas and city extensions. This is done with full engagement of local governance actors and representatives of affected communities in an effort to provide holistic, inclusive and dignified support strategies.

THE CHALLENGE

Since humanitarian crises are increasingly occurring in urban areas or causing populations to flee to urban areas, the need for planned responses in and around cities has never been greater.

- Urbanisation in low income and fragile states has grown by more than 300% in the past four decades.
- **Approximately 35 million people are displaced every year**, with a growing number of them seeking refuge in urban areas.
- The impact of natural disasters and conflicts on urban areas is growing exponentially.
- These new phenomena in urbanization are seriously challenging the skills sets and experience of the humanitarian response community.
- Established local governance structures are being marginalised by the creation of parallel humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- Short term emergency response operations are taking precedence over sustainable solutions.
- The complexity of urban areas requires the development of specialized urban response expertise and tools.

UN-HABITAT'S APPROACH

In its responses to both rural and urban humanitarian emergencies, UN-Habitat is guided by the following basic principles: trust and engagement of communities; close collaboration with local governance structures; support for holistic neighborhood strategies; sustainable response from day 1 of the crisis to reduce the humanitarian development gap; broad based partnerships and coalitions for maximum impact; and development of resilient response strategies.

Global Alliance for Urban Crisis (GAUC)

- **The Global Alliance for Urban Crises** addresses trends and challenges emerging on the humanitarian landscape which is changing rapidly as urbanization intersects with conflict, displacement and climate change. **Traditional humanitarian crisis response mechanisms are no longer adequate or even appropriate**, and the rapid growth of cities, towns and other human settlements provide opportunities to develop more effective response mechanisms.

The Alliance is an innovative partnership of 65 organizations including local authorities, humanitarian, development, and urban actors. It is a 'network of networks' working to prevent, prepare for and effectively respond to humanitarian crises in urban settings.

GAUC was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, with UN-Habitat the International Rescue Committee (IRC), DFID and the WHS Secretariat leading the 'Urban Track'.

UN-Habitat Crisis Response Principles in Action

Iraq

UN-Habitat has provided vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with durable shelter in prefabricated units with basic infrastructure and public facilities. Approximately 18,000 IDPs have been accommodated in city extensions rather than camps in Baghdad, Basrah, Kerbala, Missan, Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimaniyah.

Afghanistan

UN-Habitat is supporting re-integration, protection and settlement upgrading for returnees and IDPs by respecting their dignity and building citizen engagement in local

governance. In the last three years alone, UN-Habitat has supported over 110,000 vulnerable people to rebuild destroyed and damaged houses, improve access to safe water and sanitation facilities, and strengthen tenure security. This breakthrough in implementing 'development' solutions in several IDP sites has been achieved by UN-Habitat while improving the role of women in society and building resilience.

Somalia

UN-Habitat focuses on reconstruction, rehabilitation and the 'seamless transition' from humanitarian to recovery and development. The Shelter programme has provided 26,900 vulnerable people with low-cost durable housing solutions with families guaranteed tenure security and access to sanitation, water and other basic infrastructure. Skills development, livelihood opportunities, and gender empowerment training is also provided, while local authorities have been supported in setting up Land Dispute Tribunals.

Sri Lanka

When 300,000 IDPs returned home in 2009 to find their houses, schools, and infrastructure destroyed, UN-Habitat successfully advocated a durable solutions approach with key partners, while ensuring that housing, land and property rights for the vulnerable were protected.

The UN-Habitat Crisis Response Programme supported construction of 30 000 new homes for 120 000 returnees and rehabilitation of community water systems, roads, community centres and schools. This was achieved through a community orientated 'cash transfer' programme (USD150 million) implemented with close technical support from UN-Habitat.

IMPACT

- **120,000 vulnerable people in Sri Lanka, 110,000 in Afghanistan, 27,000 in Somalia and 18,000 in Iraq** have been provided with durable, dignified shelter and infrastructure solutions.
- **Successful advocacy has resulted in linking relief to development and closing of the humanitarian development divide.**
- **The Global Alliance for Urban Crisis is providing an effective platform for networking by stakeholders in humanitarian urban crisis response.**
- **UN-Habitat has made a real contribution to peace building and stabilization by significantly improving the lives of conflict affected populations.**
- **Local Authorities and local governance structures have been supported and strengthened rather than marginalized.**

CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Urban Humanitarian Response Programme contributes to **Goal 11** and support action on **Goal 11** Targets related to resilience, inclusion, protection of the poor and vulnerable, improving safety and the integrity of buildings.

TARGETS

- By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.
- Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in **building sustainable and resilient buildings** utilizing local materials.
- By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

BENEFICIARY VIEWS

I am the head and only breadwinner in the family. My children were very concerned that the roof might fall on us. With the support of UN-Habitat we organised ourselves into a community council, rebuilt our house, and now live with hope of a better and safer future.

Ms. Masoma, IDP, Kabul city

Many families in our village who had no money to build permanent houses have been supported by this project. On behalf my family, I want to thank everyone who helped us to build this beautiful house.

Mrs. Ushananthini Sivarasa

UN-Habitat's shelter project in Bosaso town in Puntland, Somalia has significantly improved quality of life for affected families and has contributed to stabilization and return to normalcy for conflict affected communities including returnees, urban poor and IDPs. More than 500 permanent and durable housing units were provided to the beneficiary families between 2010 and 2015. These early interventions play a crucial role in taking families from the humanitarian context into recovery and development.

Eng. Yasin Mirre, Mayor of Bosaso, Puntland

We feel so much safer in our permanent house. It has given our family much needed privacy and security. My children are so much happier since we moved as they have enough space to study.

Mr. Sivarasa, Homeowner, Jaffna

DONORS AND PARTNERS

DONORS



European Commission



Japan



United States of America



Federal Republic of Germany



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Kingdom of Norway



Swiss Confederation



Republic of India

PARTNERS



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UN HABITAT