

MAKING SENSE OF THE CITY

Developing evidence through action research and learning

Revised edition



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An earlier version of this report was published in February 2016 under the same title. This document has been substantially revised.

Urban Programme 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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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 Programmes Initiative (UPI) in World Vision (WV) in 2008, the hardest task was to convince staff and leaders of 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 practices through its innovative action research and learning agenda. During this journey we have brought along a range of internal and external stakeholders who have become champions of change within both WV and 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 880 million people are living in slums today, without the basic services required for dignified living. The demographic challenge is inevitable in the city and makes it difficult for stakeholders and institutions to collect and analyse big complex data – technological solutions are needed. The challenge of urban sprawl, with ever-increasing informal settlements of new migrants, needs to be addressed with pro-poor policy, and city visionaries need to create equitable and inclusive societies based on the principle of shared value and common good. Hence it is no surprise that Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals aspires to make cities inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable.

WV's investment in learning about this mega-trend and related complexities is therefore timely. The important products from our multi-year urban research pilot initiative have been summarised in this flagship report, specifically the Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and the City-wide Operating Framework. These two products are now in their next stage of development to inform a city-wide, self-sustaining model for consideration by WV's field offices.

The humanitarian aid and development sector must acknowledge the value of multiple experiences and expertise. It must also bring together social, economic and technological transformation to bridge the socio-economic divide in the city. WV is driving innovation across diverse regional contexts to address the inequality and exclusion of the most vulnerable in the city. The organisation is a recognised partner in providing 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 (Habitat III) in October 2016.

WV's 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 launching the action research and learning agenda through the urban initiative 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, enthusiasm and hard work.

We thank Randolph Head, Stephen Court, Remy Herbert, David Sweeting, Adrian Thompson, Annabel Hart, 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 on behalf of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, a research partner institute of WV's Urban Programmes. Katie Chalk and Karen Li have coordinated the collation of this report from several learning papers, evaluations and meta-reviews produced during the last five years.

Our gratitude to WV's global leaders Tim Costello, Conny Lenneberg and Mark Lorey for their leadership in launching and progressing this initiative.

Executive Summary

From mega-cities to emerging townships, urban and peri-urban centres are often considered symbols of development and opportunity. They are the bustling centres of social activity, business and commerce, cultural intermixing, transport linkages and political power. This century is the first ‘urban century’, with over half of the global population living in cities and towns. While urbanisation has provided numerous benefits, opportunities and successes for many urban residents, it has simultaneously increased inequalities, inequities and discrimination for a vast section of its population. Conservative estimates place almost one billion people as living in slum settlements worldwide, in the underprivileged, underserved and vulnerable margins of the city. The United Nations has projected that this slum population will increase to one-third of humanity within 30 years.

Currently, there are more than one billion children residing in cities and various urban centres around the world. Millions of these children live in squalid, unsanitary and unsafe slum conditions without access to education or viable employment opportunities in adulthood (UNICEF 2012). Trapped in these areas of cities across the world, children suffer terrible violations of their basic human rights. They live in overcrowded spaces, on streets contaminated with garbage and dangerous waste, and in urban zones where they lack safe public spaces to play. They become vulnerable to crime, street violence and other social risks such as drugs and unsafe sex. They engage in hazardous forms of forced and unforced child labour and even become victims to human and sex trafficking.

As a child-focused international NGO, WV has an organisational reach to more than 4.3 million children across 90 countries. WV is already present in the world’s most rapidly urbanising countries and regions. However, the urbanisation of poverty has presented NGOs like WV with largely unexplored territory. To date, the organisation, like many others, still predominately operates in addressing poverty in rural communities, with only an estimated 20–25 per cent of its programming in urban or peri-urban communities.

In 2008, WV recognised an organisational need to respond and adapt to the growing trend towards urbanisation. This includes addressing the negative impact urbanisation has had on the most vulnerable groups, especially children. WV, led by the Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming (Urban CoE), sought to address this gap by investigating the relevance of its current development theories, models and frameworks in diverse urban settings. Additional objectives were to provide operational insights through this global urban research initiative and to contribute innovations to the international development sector in technical urban programming.

To achieve these aims, the Urban CoE utilised an innovative action research methodology to promote programmatic responsiveness, flexibility and adaptation to the urban environment. This approach involved a symbiotic and simultaneous two-pronged approach of ‘exploratory learning’ and ‘programming action’, and it strongly emphasised and integrated programmatic flexibility and contextual adaptation. The methodology proposed that, first, the urban initiatives will seek to learn actively from field-based and desk-based research, programming experience and partnership collaboration in order to develop its expertise in the distinctive ‘urban character’ for developmental purposes. Simultaneously, the urban programming model will utilise these insights to inform its urban adaptation of the traditional WV rural programming model and respond to its specific urban context. The processes of reflection, evaluation and learning will be continuous in order to encourage ongoing programmatic development and evolution. This two-pronged action learning approach has become a signature component of the Urban Programmes Initiative (UPI) and of WV’s renewed focus on urban programming.

In collaboration with six WV field offices and various local stakeholders, the UPI was launched in 2008 with two goals:

1. to facilitate the successful adaptation of WV’s development theories and processes to address the contextual needs of various urban environments
2. to encourage and lead a new wave within the international development sector of effective research-informed and field-tested programming in urban spaces

For its first programmatic phase (2008–2013) six pilot initiatives across six countries were chosen to participate in the global learning initiative. Each pilot offered unique learning opportunities across various urban issues, including economic development, land rights, governance and policy reform, child protection (child labour and trafficking) and peacebuilding. The field research, experiential lessons and implementation best practices derived from each project were used to cross-pollinate and inform active learning and project development over all the projects.

Based on this first five-year phase of active learning, operational research and urban implementation, WV can confirm that *proximity to services in urban settings does not mean access*. Indeed, children are always the first casualties of urban poverty, and the urban poor continue to be excluded from the benefits of urbanisation due to political, social and economic factors.

The UPI further investigated adaptations to WV's current portfolio of development theories and frameworks. These adaptations were applied in the six diverse pilot initiatives across seven dynamic urban contexts, while exploring innovations and developments to improve urban programming with effective and sustainable strategies.

A brief outline of these six pilot initiatives and their respective approaches is listed below:

- **Bolivia Urban Pilot Project (La Paz)** promoted the active participation of children and youth in local governance processes. They engaged in city-planning processes and reviewed the city constitution and proposed changes. For the first time children and youth were permanently appointed as councillors and advisors in relevant local-government processes. The intentional inclusion of children and youth into various local decision-making processes alongside important relevant stakeholders was an important outcome of the project.
- **Cambodia Urban Pilot Project (Phnom Penh)** promoted community awareness about land-tenure security and Cambodian housing rights. It also worked to facilitate a dialogue between city authorities and marginalised communities over inclusion and pro-poor policies. Three communities (145 households) previously excluded from the opportunity for land registration have now received official correspondence confirming their new eligibility. Over eight communities succeeded in receiving government funding for informal settlements, and almost 300 households have applied for land title and possession rights.
- **India Urban Pilot Project (Siliguri and Kanpur)** promoted sustained civic engagement by establishing a city-wide network model to address and reduce the incidence of child labour and child trafficking. It also aimed to reduce the incidence of child labour by supporting rehabilitation, non-formal education, vocational training opportunities, capacity building and advocacy. In Siliguri, a robust anti-trafficking network was established, including local vigilance committees and child protection units. In Kanpur, transit and bridge schools were set up, rehabilitating over 700 children engaged in child labour. WV's relationship with the Department of Education in Kanpur resulted in the pilot's access to 15 government schools for education initiatives.
- **Indonesia Urban Pilot Project (Surabaya)** contributed to the development of pro-child policies within city-government processes through the promotion of a child friendly city model. Urban Surabaya Transformation Advocacy Research (U STAR) empowered children, increasing their active involvement and raising public awareness about their first-hand experiences regarding their community issues. U STAR intentionally included children and youth in all programmatic stages. Two of the seven project success indicators were derived from direct consultation with children and youth. Children learned to communicate their understanding of vulnerability through innovative methods, including photography.
- **Lebanon Urban Pilot Project (Beirut)** supported the youth of the Ain el Remaneh (AER) neighbourhood and Palestinian refugee camps, historically divided groups, using art and sport and various peer activities in order to gather youth for a number of activities about conflict transformation and social cohesion, including peace camps. Youth-led initiatives also included a music video production on the marginalisation of youth in decision-making processes and a 'green spaces' initiative. Youth also established a street-violence protection system in the AER/Chiyah area.

- **South Africa Urban Pilot Project (Orlando East)** aimed to create opportunities for local economic development through its joint initiatives with the NGO Plan Act and the municipal government of Johannesburg. WV assisted communities in advocacy and policy endeavours, particularly in terms of strengthening previously weak relationship channels with government and administrative bodies. As an example, one community forum assisted microbusinesses in navigating complex bureaucratic processes to access various grants, tax breaks and economic opportunities.

In accordance with the guiding principles of its action research methodology (flexibility, adaptivity, responsiveness and relevancy), each pilot project adapted its programming to:

- the immediate contextual environment by selecting a single issue as an entry point to enact its operational activities
- building relationships with the existing social actors and power structures of its target community; WV created platforms of engagement across the different tiers of the city, including community, neighbourhood and local government, to strengthen multi-level dialogue
- actively engaging children and youth at all stages of its projects. Voice was given to their experiences and shared with their families, communities and governments
- simultaneously in all projects connecting marginalised urban groups with municipal and city-level authorities in order to facilitate positive two-way dialogue and influence pro-poor policy.

As part of the evaluation phase of the UPI, a meta-review and meta-analysis cycle was initiated for all six pilot projects in order to establish common urban programming themes across all these diverse case studies. The Urban CoE developed an Urban Meta-Review Framework (UMF) to facilitate the global review in a structured yet adaptable way that maintains a level of consistency for comparative analysis. It also provides space to engage in investigations of issues pertinent to each pilot city. The UMF was designed to prompt researchers in exploring and analysing the intersection of the urban context, the enabling environment and WV's organisational capacity to respond to urban issues and dynamism.

Through this global research initiative, WV's experience indicates that the following insights require further consideration for all development activities 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.
- NGOs have traditionally focused their attention on rural areas, based on the assumption that services are easily accessible to urban residents. However, evidence shows that for many poor urban residents, proximity to services does not mean access.
- Urban housing conditions, unlike those in rural areas, are insecure and expensive, with many families sleeping in rotation in overcrowded housing and thus increasing their vulnerability to transmittable diseases.
- Urban poverty is often underestimated or misunderstood by governments and aid agencies that tend to rely on static income-based poverty lines to measure poverty. If poverty lines were based on real costs of avoiding poverty in urban areas, the proportion of urban dwellers living below the poverty line would increase dramatically.
- Urban advantage is a myth. Many urban dwellers living a mere 50 metres from a hospital still cannot access its 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.
- Poor and vulnerable groups continue to be marginalised and invisible in cities. This points to a critical need to advocate for inclusion of these groups in city planning and policy-making processes in order to achieve long-term, sustainable and effective urban development.

- There remains a shortage of credible data to support programme assessment and design.
- The notion of community does not exist in the complex, multi-layered, dynamic and fluid urban environment. People belong to several communities simultaneously and with overlap. These can be communities united around interest, practice and culture, and not communities of place. Urban neighbourhoods are fragmented and diverse. Building and strengthening communities are critical to creating resilient and socially cohesive urban neighbourhoods, communities and societies.
- Urban environments are volatile and ever changing. This dynamism needs to be considered when designing long-term development interventions. Frequent assessments should be an ongoing requirement within the project lifecycle. Monitoring and evaluation also 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 through the strategic selection of entry points proved more appropriate for urban programmes.
- The political context of many urban centres is complex and challenging. There are many actors already existing in the city space. WV needs to become visible among them and to articulate a clear and succinct value proposition to be effective in the city.
- WV needs to form strategic partnerships in the city in order 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 large-scale ‘wicked’ challenges, such as dense slum areas and informal settlements. Combining knowledge and resources with partners promotes greater city-wide programme impact with far less investment.
- Adaptive programme management and flexible processes are required organisationally in order to respond to dynamic environments and to remain relevant.
- The skill set required for urban programming – adaptability, problem solving, partnership development, networking and policy influence – is different from the skills traditionally needed by community development practitioners.

As the fundamental outcomes of the multi-year urban research pilot initiative, the research and experiential evidence have informed the development of two initial guiding frameworks: the Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and the City-wide Operating Framework. Both frameworks are still in their nascent stages of development and will be further explored, implemented, tested, refined and evaluated in WV’s next learning phase in new urban learning sites across its field offices globally.

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



Introduction

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

Historically, NGOs’ development interventions have largely focused on the rural context. Their respective policies and implementation approaches were designed to respond to the needs of rural communities. However, the urban poor face different livelihood challenges.¹ The distinct characteristics of vulnerable urban communities in developing countries demand the adaptation of existing development theory, frameworks and methodologies in order to remain relevant and effective in diverse urban settings. To facilitate the successful adaptation of these theories and processes, the Urban CoE developed an innovative methodology and implementation framework based on the concepts of action research and continuous learning and programmatic evolution.

By using this action research methodology, which will be discussed in detail in later chapters, WV hopes to encourage and lead a new wave within the international development sector of effective research-informed and field-tested programming in urban spaces. As this meta-review report contends, any successful response to urban poverty must depend on the empowerment of community voices in decision-making processes, especially the voices of children and youth. This is necessary to equip local communities with the tools needed to become effective agents of change in locally driven solutions and to drive society-wide transformations.

WV hopes to encourage and lead a new wave within the international development sector of effective research-informed and field-tested programming in urban spaces.

The urbanisation of poverty remains largely unexplored territory for the international development community. The traditional NGO concentration on rural poverty is mainly based on the inaccurate assumption that those experiencing rural poverty are far more destitute than those living in urban poverty. It also assumes that poor urban residents are able to access more services due to their location.

However, such assumptions dismiss the real struggles of millions of residents living in poor urban communities and informal settlements. They face numerous manifestations of poverty and vulnerability, including insufficient income or employment prospects, squalid housing, lack of hygiene facilities, unsafe drinking water, and street and domestic violence. *Proximity to services does not mean access.* The urban poor continue to be excluded due to political, social or economic factors.

The international development community, however, has acknowledged the changing face of poverty. In response, it has developed various locally derived solutions that address contextual vulnerabilities, including those in urban contexts. Based on their experience over many decades, these organisations have shared best practices in creating sustainable, community-led change to benefit people affected by poverty, inequity and violence. WV drew upon some of this expertise to inform the urban approach laid out in this report. Despite these positive movements, however, NGOs still require methodological innovation to address the critical challenges and complexities they face in urban environments.

International development actors must respond with some urgency to the rapid emergence of the global urban mega-trend. The world is racing towards urbanisation at an unprecedented rate (see Table 1). Official UN estimates project that from 2014 to 2050 there will be an additional 2.5 billion urban residents, with 90 per cent of this increase concentrated in Asia and Africa. By 2050, 66 per cent of the world’s population will live in urban areas (UN-DESA

¹ 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.

2014, 2). We therefore need to adapt and apply poverty-reduction principles in a way that effectively responds to our rapidly urbanising world as a *top priority*.

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 and its associated consequences for development are heavily biased towards developing nations with high urban population densities. Significant obstacles to planning and resourcing these urban communities already exist (UN-DESA 2014, 12). For example, urban poverty is visible in long-term, extensive slum communities throughout the developing world. UN-Habitat estimated that in 2000, 39 per cent of urban dwellers in developing regions were already living in urban slum conditions. Sixty-one million urban slum dwellers have been added from 2008 to 2016 (UN-Habitat) alone, bringing the current total to nearly one billion people.

According to the UNICEF report *Children in an Urban World*, this global urban mega-trend has a major influence on children. Childhood has become increasingly urban. On the one hand, childhood in the city can provide the numerous benefits of urban life, including access to education, health care and recreational activities. However, for many children (and especially for those living in informal communities), urban childhood is more likely to be characterised by poverty, vulnerability and a lack access to essential services, such as water, electricity, education and health care. Once again, proximity to services does *not* mean access for many poor urban families and their children, who live in overcrowded dwellings with a constant threat of eviction. Instead of a consistent and quality education, poor urban children are often forced into dangerous and exploitative labour or exposed to other urban risks and hazards.

About World Vision's Urban Programmes Initiative

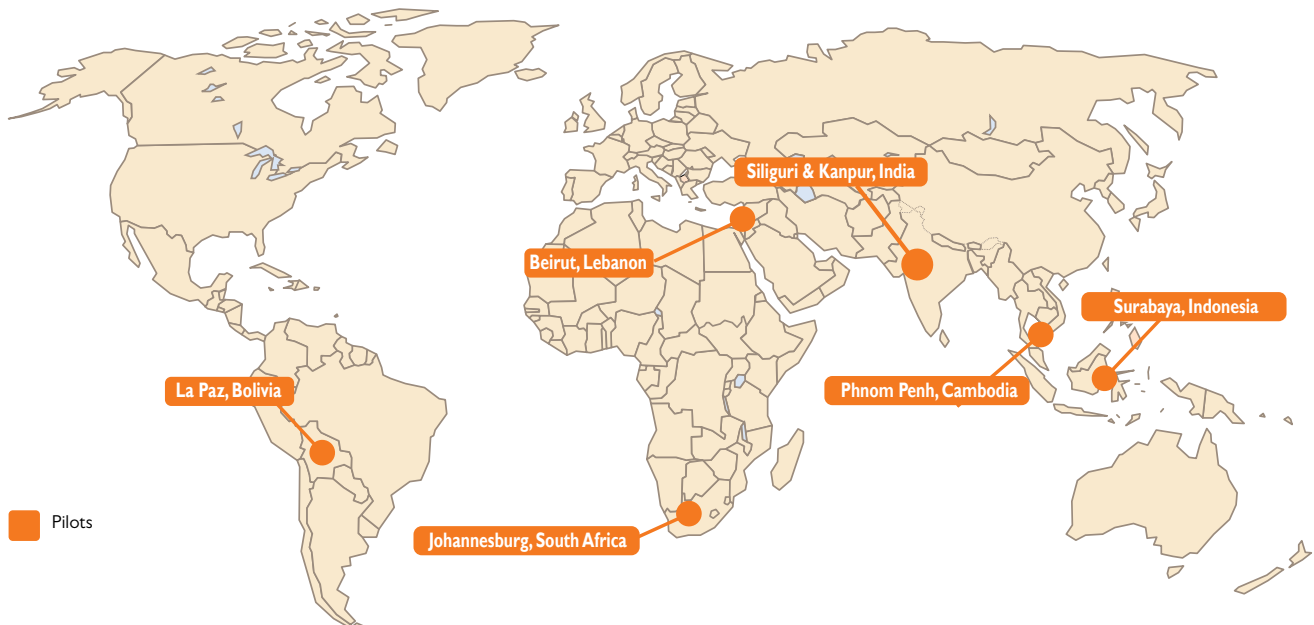
The rapid urbanisation of poverty requires the immediate research, experimentation and formulation of alternative development models that respond to the unique challenges present in cities and other urban areas. After spending over 60 years developing technical capacity in rural poverty response, WV's transition towards a suitable urban response has presented a significant organisational challenge. WV invested in urban research and development beginning in the 1980s with the launch of the Urban Advance programme. However, the recent 2007 research draft report 'Keys to the City' has created renewed interest and focus on urban issues, calling for the launch of a test and pilot phase to explore innovation and develop institutional capacity to respond to urbanisation. In 2008, WV launched its global UPI. It also established a dedicated urban research unit, the Urban CoE,² to lead and advance the urban agenda throughout WV's global and field offices.

The UPI's first five-year cycle (2008–2013) was planned as a research and operational learning phase devoted to developing an understanding of the specifics and complexities of various urban contexts. Carried out in six pilot initiatives around the world (see Figure 2), this phase was pivotal in helping the Urban CoE gain a sense of how WV's approaches, systems, structures, policies and procedures facilitate or impede effective sustainable urban programming.

² The Urban CoE is a think tank that seeks to develop improved, robust models to drive sustained change in urban contexts, explicitly 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 want to strengthen their urban portfolios.

To guide pilot projects in their programming, the Urban CoE specifically encouraged active use of the action research methodology and framework, focusing on simultaneous exploratory learning and adaptive, responsive and relevant programming. This methodology, described in more detail in Part 2, has become a signature component of the UPI, as well as WV’s new urban direction. The UPI intent was to utilise the evidence and lessons derived from its six urban pilot initiatives, along with the cross-fertilisation and shared learning of findings, to produce an evidentiary base in order to inform the direction and decisions of future urban-programming approaches.

Figure 2. The Urban Programmes Initiative pilot sites



With the individual meta-reviews of the pilots completed in 2014, this document is able to present consolidated knowledge gained through the implementation of diverse programming approaches in a variety of urban environments over several years.

As the fundamental outcomes of the multi-year urban research initiative, the research and experiential evidence informed the development of two initial guiding frameworks: Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and City-wide Operating Framework. The Urban CoE hopes both to improve WV’s future urban programming and contribute new insights to global urban research and new technical and programming innovations to the international development sector. WV’s Cities for Children (Programming) Framework laid out in this meta-review report is a research-informed multi-dimensional urban development framework, which is aimed at assisting the international development community to approach urban development in a holistic, effective and sustainable way. This work is guided by established United Nations (UN) development documents (including the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities framework [UNICEF 2004]), and anchored in WV’s aspirational goals for child well-being.

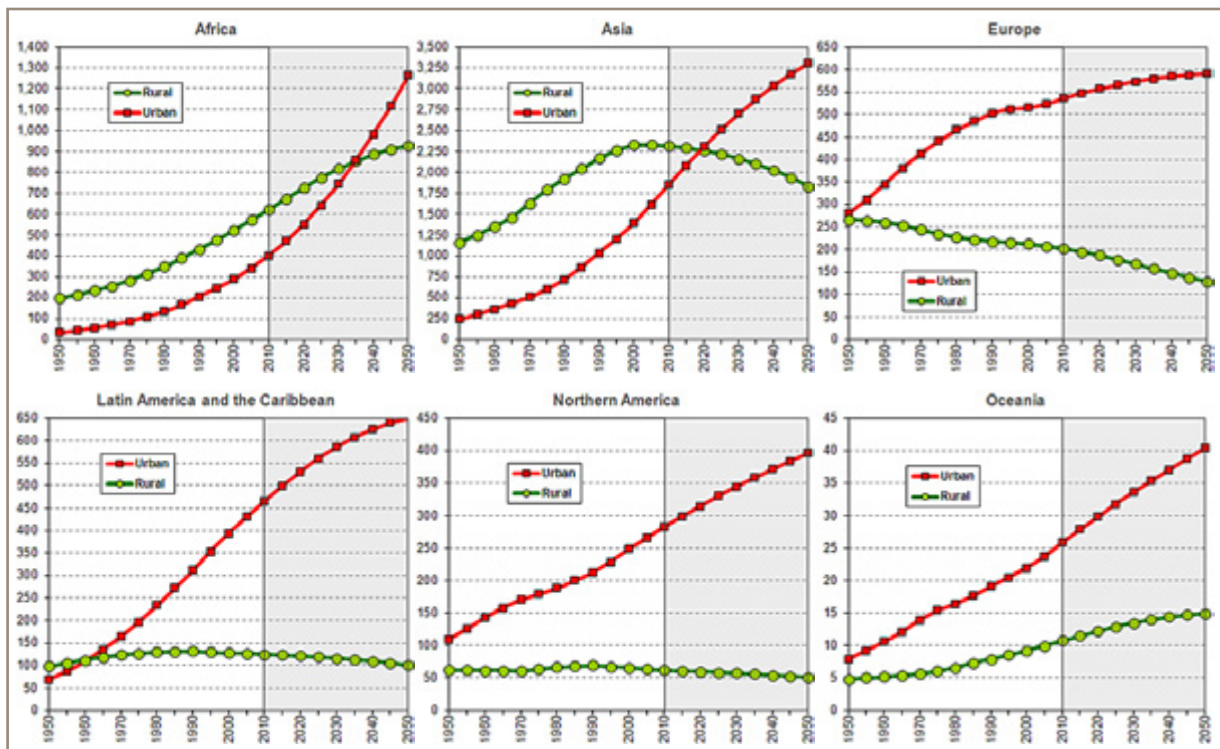
The UPI recognises the simultaneous need to scale up community-level initiatives through an intentional policy approach in order to achieve integrated, sustainable and long-term, city-wide impact. This is captured in the City-wide Operating Framework. Both frameworks were designed to guide WV’s issue-based approach by determining the pertinent issues and opportunities in each distinct urban setting and adapting programming accordingly. In each case building ‘soft’ infrastructure through partnerships, advocacy, facilitation and capacity building is a strong priority.

The lessons produced by this meta-review cycle have led to the development of the two frameworks, which are only in the nascent stages of development. WV will further explore, implement, test, refine and evaluate these frameworks during its next learning phase in new urban learning sites globally.

Part I: Urbanisation: Issues, Lessons and Development Impact

Urbanisation denotes the rapid and exponential population growth in urban centres (see Figure 3). This trend is accompanied by a strongly correlated increase in urban poverty. From 1955 to 2005, the percentage of the global population living in urban environments increased from 27 per cent to 43 per cent, and it continues to grow at a rate of 60 million people per year. The figure is projected to reach 6.3 billion by 2050 (UN-Habitat 2010). Most of this growth, however, does not take place in the mega-cities but in smaller cities and peri-urban towns (UN-Habitat 2010, 29). These ‘secondary cities’ (150,000 to 5 million inhabitants) are growing at the fastest rate globally. Yet due to their smaller size and limited resources, they have ‘fewer capacities to plan and manage urban development, including promoting sufficient employment and economic growth’ (Cities Alliance 2014, 2), thus making 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 exponentially. The United Nations predicts that the global slum population will increase from one-sixth (in 2012) to one-third of humanity within 30 years (UN-Habitat 2010). These predictions constitute a global societal, economic and environmental transition that will significantly change and shift the way people live and experience poverty.

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



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision* (2011), http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/urbanization/WUP2011_Report.pdf

Currently, there is a critical lack of data that accurately illustrates the extreme poverty that urban slum communities and poor urban children experience. Existing data on urban communities is often represented in aggregated forms, where the real measures of urban poverty are obscured by the relative affluence of neighbouring communities living within the same urban space (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 prevalent in urban slums, such as crime, violence, poor infrastructure and inadequate services, as well as general social, economic, political and physical exclusion (World Vision 2014c). The exclusion is intensified by the overall exponential rise in urban populations and spread of urban poverty, despite these same populations being in close proximity to essential resources. Nevertheless, this should not suggest that urbanisation is necessarily incompatible with child friendly cities and spaces. The changing faces of poverty

Existing data on urban communities is often represented in aggregated forms, where the real measures of urban poverty are obscured by the relative affluence of neighbouring communities living within the same urban space (UNICEF 2012).

(the vulnerability of children, growth of urban slums and differences between urban and rural poverty) have also encouraged substantial ongoing developments in the aid and development landscape. Child-focused organisations must continue to build upon this momentum. They must formulate and implement new, improved, urban-specific development processes that aspire to sustainable long-term impacts that will bring about true improvements to child well-being in diverse urban environments.

In this section important lessons were drawn from existing global best practices, various relevant literature and WV's field-based research and experiences. These were used to create the foundational definitions and concepts that guided the organisation's initial investigatory and exploratory action research approach in its global UPI and the entailed six urban pilot projects.

Urban programming begins with a necessary theoretical and working definition of *urban*. Though seemingly simple, this is in fact a problematic task. Should an urban area be defined on the basis of population size? On the nature of administrative and governance structures? On the presence of infrastructure? On the nature of industries present? Or on its influence at national or international levels? There are always explicit normative and programming risks entailed with definitions that are too narrow. Therefore, WV has found it useful to incorporate the social dimension along with geographic and population-based characteristics to help understand and define the urban context. Table 2 presents some of the proposed characteristics. Each of these characteristics was chosen for its significance in differentiating the 'urban' from what is traditionally labelled 'rural'. While such characteristics can also exist in practice in rural communities, any rural community that increasingly displays these characteristics can be described as becoming increasingly urban.



Jakarta slum, Indonesia. Children's vulnerabilities are heightened living in informal settlements and in disaster-prone zones in the city.

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 | Diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages, religions and identities | Territory governed through municipalities or similar administrative 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 have 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 create environmental hazards |

In the following sections a brief introduction summarises the complex, nuanced insights drawn from the large volume of literature explaining the nature of ‘urban’. The summary is disaggregated into the following sub-topics: (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. This report does not seek to produce an exhaustive examination of urban studies literature but simply to provide an introductory overview and highlight some of the critical issues commonly found in urban contexts.

Diverse Urban Communities

Urban environments tend to exhibit higher heterogeneity than rural ones. New urban neighbourhoods often constitute a highly diverse intermix of residents from various cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious and political backgrounds, motivated to relocate to the city by the promise of economic opportunities. The trust and solidarity usually existing among rural community members can be lacking in the diverse, often fragmented, urban societies. People often lack the relationships fundamental for maintaining cohesive and strongly networked communities. This is especially true for urban migrants. They are often separated from their perceived ‘homes’ back in rural areas, a concept emotionally denoted by familial, kinship, cultural and land ties.

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 the intergenerational links and support that hold rural communities together.

The concept of social poverty is prevalent in many cities where dissent and marginalisation have replaced social and cultural cohesion. Unfortunately, an acknowledgement of and mitigation strategies for the risk of fragile or broken community ties is under-represented in development programming (Sapirstein 2006). WV urban practitioners report that urban residents do not necessarily feel a sense of belonging to their urban neighbourhood, irrespective of the actual length of time spent as residents there. This results in less willingness to participate in community initiatives

that benefit themselves and their urban community. The challenges posed by urban diversity provoke questions about programming approaches and community-mobilisation techniques that are based upon notions of community as cohesive and geographically confined. For example, more innovative community mobilisation strategies addressing urban diversity within and across the same geographically defined territory can include 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 urban-appropriate definition of community based upon five distinct dimensions:

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

These considerations assist in providing a more nuanced and reflective understanding of community and place. An incorporation of these urban-specific aspects of community – namely, the way communities develop, self-identify, bond through common issues and interests, and develop social cohesion – is critical for designing relevant urban-poverty-reduction responses. WV’s standard programming framework is designed to target contained geographical areas. Such an approach does continue to hold some relevance in urban environments. However, there needs to be further institutional acknowledgement of the dynamic community links that extend beyond confined geographical boundaries or the fluctuations within them. Neighbours do not necessarily experience the same problems or possess the same vulnerabilities, despite living within the same neighbourhood space. Even around a single issue or event, communities can form, strengthen or fracture.

Spatial inequality is closely tied to economic and gender inequalities. This often leads to the exclusion and criminalisation of vulnerable groups, such as slum dwellers, migrant workers and urban refugees, especially the children and youth among them. Tensions arise and often lead to conflicts in highly diverse contexts (religious, political, ethnic, and so on) where some groups are excluded from the rights and opportunities that others who live in very close proximity have access to. A just city for children is one where children and youth from diverse communities feel included and where their rights are respected and protected.

Measuring Urban Poverty and Vulnerability

Material poverty, social vulnerability and environmental fragility are intertwined. They all have the ability to influence and shape the types of hardships and risks faced by disadvantaged urban communities. While material poverty may be the most visually discernible (and therefore often inferred to have greater significance), social and environmental vulnerabilities also need to be addressed in holistic poverty reduction.

The international poverty line attempts to establish a financial level below which a household can no longer afford basic needs. This line is used to define what constitutes extreme poverty or ‘living on the edge of subsistence’.³ However,



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

³ In 2010, the poverty line was set at a daily rate of US\$1.25 per person. However, it has been suggested that a generic value fails to allow for the changing costs of living in different countries, contexts and cultures. It is useful for demonstrating trends across multiple years, but it 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>.

applying either the international poverty line (US\$1.25 per person per day) or national poverty lines to communities living in urban contexts is rarely helpful. The costs of living in an urban setting are often far higher than those of rural living and can be exacerbated by fewer opportunities to supplement cash income with subsistence agriculture. Urban individuals and households therefore require a higher financial baseline to demarcate what constitutes extreme poverty in urban areas.⁴ The most vulnerable are usually new immigrants, who lack the important financial or support networks to offset the higher costs of urban life. They are often isolated from family members and community networks and arrive with very little if they were displaced by war or natural disaster.

In a similar vein urban vulnerability is strongly influenced by fluctuations in the labour market. This influences the quality and security of residents' access to necessities, including shelter, food, clothing and children's needs. Thus, urban poverty is tied to household resilience – the family's ability to withstand both short-term shocks (for example, unexpected costs or sudden unemployment) and long-term stressors (such as rising costs, growing debts and increasing food requirements as children grow).

Individuals and families experiencing material poverty are vulnerable to:

- inadequate income or 'safety net', leading to shortages of basic necessities, such as nutritious food, educational needs and medical care
- reliance on the informal economy, leading to labour exploitation, income insecurity and, at times, child labour
- low housing stability and quality, which often forces the urban poor into settlement areas that are poorly serviced, unsafe, or violent.



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

In addition to material poverty, urban communities are also at risk of social poverty, more commonly referred to as social vulnerability. Social vulnerability can appear 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, resulting legislations or policies will act to institutionally disadvantage the residents of these communities. Undoubtedly, there are cases where municipal governments deliberately discriminate against the poor by focusing on gentrification and service provision in middle-class neighbourhoods rather than city-wide inclusion (e.g., Baker and McClain 2009). Similarly, those with the highest social vulnerability are the socially or institutionally 'invisible' populations, who live 'off the radar' without official documentation and outside of formal institutions. Their invisibility acts to severely obstruct their access to a multitude of basic services, social safety nets, and economic opportunities, thus intensifying their urban poverty and marginalisation.

Finally, urban residents and families without ongoing employment or stable housing are considered environmentally vulnerable. Such households are often forced into the margins of urban spaces – along riverbanks, drainage channels, train lines, near industrial estates or waste dumps – where those with less vulnerability choose not to live. Being forced to live in these squalid and often illegal locations places disadvantaged urban communities at higher risk of disasters associated with natural climatic events and public health impacts resulting from neighbouring industrial pollution as well as general insecurity from the threat of forced eviction.

⁴ This fact is recognised by the World Bank following research, which found that living expenses in India were nearly 50 per cent more in urban areas than in rural communities (World Bank 2008).

'Invisible' urban populations

When entire societal groups are rendered socially or institutionally 'invisible' due to their lack of identity within formal institutions or lack of representation in official data, it is a particularly nefarious manifestation of urban poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation. This 'invisibility' excludes these poor urban communities from development and social welfare initiatives and obliterates recognition of their presence.

'Invisible' children – including street children, children without birth registration and children of unregistered migrants – are the most vulnerable. They face severely restricted access to food, drinking water, education and medical care, and child protection and welfare programmes, increasing their risk of abuse and exploitation. Their 'invisibility' causes their high levels of social vulnerability. They are also the hardest for development practitioners to reach. They have no fixed address and are not registered at school or medical centres. Often they are deliberately trying to stay out of the sight of police or welfare agencies.

This issue is related to the lack of accurate and representative data about urban poverty. The extent of urban poverty has been obscured by unrepresentative official figures. By further excluding 'invisible' populations from this official data, it becomes difficult for both official authorities and development actors to realise the true extent of existing urban poverty, let alone identify these vulnerable families and children and develop policies and interventions to address the specific challenges, threats and risks that they encounter.

World Vision recognises that effective urban development and poverty reduction will require the empowerment of marginalised 'invisible' populations both in terms of visibility and voice, so that they may benefit from future urban development initiatives and take the lead in their own rise from urban poverty.

Slums and Informal Communities

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 usually not applied with

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

equity on a city-wide scale. Municipal authorities tend to prioritise areas of the city that are prospering, rather than those that are lagging or seen as 'problem areas'. Dense and fragmented neighbourhoods are thus neglected to remain environments of poor infrastructure, inadequate service access, economic and geographic exclusion (no roads or transport), crime, violence, and micro-politics. Health, protection and safety risks for slum residents are physical, political and social, with children especially affected.

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 pilot projects in this first UPI phase, it was necessary to explore first an adequate definition of *slum* in order to respond to slum-specific urban issues. 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). Arguably, 'slum' is a divisive word that creates negative connotations for its inhabitants. This is largely due to the fact that there is no commonly accepted definition or understanding of what a

slum actually is. Slums are often home to significantly large proportions of the urban population, which range from those living comfortably to those on societal margins. Slums have become significant urban features in many cities worldwide, housing large proportions of the urban population and home to a wide range of 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.

Mobility and Fluidity in the Urban Environment

Population mobility is one of the most significant features of the urban setting. Generally speaking, areas that house high concentrations of urban poor or vulnerable new migrants are more likely to suffer from a lack of infrastructural, social or financial investment. They are also marked by low levels of property or land entitlement, higher possibilities of forced evictions and rent increases, and an overall deficit of viable employment opportunities. Consequently, poor urban residents are far more likely than their rural counterparts to view their dwelling situations as temporary. This directly contributes to higher rates of intra- and inter-city urban mobility. It also makes tracking and measuring the effectiveness of programmes for the urban poor more difficult. Vulnerable children in urban areas, such as street children, are particularly mobile. Hence, the design of urban programmes may need to include indicators that measure impact at a collective or higher level rather than at the traditional individual level. For instance, they could attempt to measure a programme's impact regarding policy influence. This could include advocating for equitable, 'pro-poor' government policy or the successful inclusion of children and youth in municipal planning processes or strengthening sustainable coalitions and partnerships with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and development actors.

Because urban communities are more susceptible to change, project timeframes may need to be shorter than the usual 10–15 year implementation cycle. Intentional and regular reflection processes become even more important in such fluid environments in order to tailor project interventions to adapt to the poor's changing and emerging needs. 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 lack of essential data explicating the nature of urban poverty is one of the biggest issues in contemporary urban programming. Such data is needed to inform programming design, implementation and evaluation. Currently, the majority of data is generally considered to be lacking in accuracy, quality or relevance. Existing data on urban communities is often represented in aggregated forms, where the real measures of urban poverty are obscured by the relative affluence of their neighbouring communities living within the same urban space. The specific needs and vulnerabilities of poor urban communities living on the fringes of society are excluded at the institutional level. This leads to skewed policy and development interventions and resulting social services and economic opportunities that neglect those needing it the most.

The government bodies responsible for data collection (for example, the census every 10 years) are often poorly resourced and lack technical skills, and they frequently use inconsistent data-collection methodology. Urban mobility exacerbates the issue, as vulnerable unregistered migrants are often not included in formal reports and figures. The follow-on effect for urban programming is increased difficulty in identifying those most in need of support.

Consequently, these unregistered migrants and invisible poor become 'slum casualties'. NGOs need to consider additional strategies for primary data collection during the assessment phase to produce more informed urban programme designs.

Urban Governance

The complex urban governance environment in which NGOs operate is one of the greatest dilemmas facing them as they seek to address the larger societal issues associated with urban poverty. This arena incorporates formal governance structures of government, civil society and private-sector activities, as well as the informal governance

Overcoming the ‘wicked’ challenges associated with urban governance to becoming a positive enabling force will require long-term collaboration and partnerships that strive to identify mutually agreeable objectives and develop enduring trust and meaningful participation.

unclear among these different layers of government. This is ultimately an issue of implementing necessary institutional change through better town planning, targeted services and pro-poor investment. However, much of the power to do so lies in the hands of official who may not have the political will or the technical and financial capacity to make such changes. Local government is the most likely level of government to lack sufficient resources and skills. Yet, it is at this level that the most direct difference can be made in an urban context (USAID 2013; World Bank 2011). Most service-provision and development policies will require locally led analysis and problem solving, including policies 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 informal urban communities, notoriously involving gang violence, coercion and extortion. On the other hand, micro-politics also offer services and genuine protection for affiliated community groups, though at the exclusion of others (Jorgensen and Dasgupta 2011, 24).

One key advantage of urban development is the number and scale of local actors who can collaborate and develop shared visions and goals. They can act in tandem as catalysts for change and jointly mobilise communities for their own development. Informal networks of local NGOs and community-based organisations hold significant potential to influence urban-development pathways. For example, Nairobi’s Kibera slum has more than 500 NGOs and CSOs working on different challenges that could potentially collaborate through informal networks.

It is precisely this fluid, nuanced and multi-layered complexity of actors, power, priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources that transforms urban governance into a long-term, complex ‘wicked’ challenge for urban poverty reduction (Glouberman and Zimmerman 2002).

Diversity of Actors

Central to the complexity of the ‘urban’ environment are its dense multi-layered social structures and heavily intertwined networks of relationships, associations, identities and groupings among numerous and diverse societal actors. The same diversity is present in actors involved in urban poverty reduction and development activities. These include local community leaders and organisations, official local and national administrative authorities and government institutions, various local and international NGOs, international bodies such as UN agencies, small local micro-enterprises, multinational corporations and foreign social impact investors. Complexity is further compounded as each actor contributes a specific assortment of ideas, skill sets, resources, constraints, interests, agendas and motivations. Effective and sustainable urban development will require appropriate engagement with this complexity.

The role of local, national and regional governments is critical in providing improved urban services and in facilitating increased community participation and awareness of children’s needs. Government authorities and official actors should continue to be encouraged, consulted and considered to be central players in urban development activities.

Economic actors, such as for-profit social enterprises, private businesses and social impact investors, are all capable of contributing to urban development through improving the conditions for economic and financial viability. Such ‘corporate citizenship’ can have significant societal impact, given the strong connection between societal prosperity and the health of its business sector. In rapidly growing urban economies this relationship can have both positive and negative outcomes. In some cases the strong relationship between growth and wealth can result in economic and

dynamics of power, decision-making, networks and relationships. Both formal and informal governance components can either facilitate the functioning of NGOs in an urban context or create challenges and resistance to their programme implementation.

Local government, municipal authorities and national departments all have responsibilities and interests in making a city function effectively. Policy ‘territory’ is

political corruption at the expense of the poor (Baker and McClain 2009). However, there is also great potential for the development of positive models for corporate responsibility, engagement and investment in pro-poor or pro-child city initiatives (for instance, see Steinberg 2011). Public-private partnerships bring resources for collaborative projects with communities. They also contribute to innovative joint solutions to various social issues, such as improving workplace safety, wages and conditions, adherence to laws and protocols on child labour, and engagement in environmental restoration and disaster risk reduction.

Children in the Urban Context

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that children have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and well-being (UNICEF 1989). Children must be empowered to participate throughout the developmental process as active, empowered and discerning agents for change so they can help transform their own lives and living conditions for their families, communities and societies.

Child-focused development organisations are mobilising government bodies to engage with children as active stakeholders in their communities. They are empowering children to address issues that directly affect them. These organisations recognise the strategic role children and youth can play in facilitating community attitudinal and behavioural changes. They can also contribute to effective planning processes within municipal/government bodies and monitor ground-level programmatic development indicators. Where children's voices are encouraged and enabled, dynamic development happens.

UNICEF's *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action* implements child participation by identifying urban processes through which children's rights and needs can be realised in an urban context. It translates the 'process needed to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by national governments into a local government process' and identifies the steps necessary to build a local system of governance committed to fulfilling children's rights (UNICEF 2004, 3). A city will be recognised as child friendly only if it is able to demonstrate full commitment to the implementation of this framework.

A well-functioning city offers its child citizens innumerable development advantages, including

- 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 access to quality education and health care
- access to information, including online access (in a safe way)
- opportunities for safe, dignified and viable employment as adolescents and young adults.

Once again, these advantages are heavily reliant on effective urban planning by an appropriately resourced and capable municipal authority.

WV recognises that children, adolescents and youth have different development priorities at different stages of their lives. A successful, sustainable development programme acknowledges this. Such programmes engage children's active participation and attention, build their life skills, improve their living conditions and encourage their optimism for the future at all stages of their lives. This 'lifecycle approach' is promoted in all programmes and was considered in specific UPI pilots.

Part 2: The Urban Programmes Initiative

Background

Global poverty manifests itself in many ways in dense, diverse and dynamic urban contexts.⁵ This complexity presents a unique challenge for development activities in urban areas, which differ from established approaches in rural areas. As highlighted by the Urban Meta-Review Framework, each urban environment is characterised by specific poverty/vulnerability structures as well as increased diversity, mobility and dynamism.

The Urban CoE used an innovative action research methodology to promote programmatic responsiveness, flexibility and adaptation to the urban environment. This approach involves a symbiotic, simultaneous two-pronged approach of active learning and programming action. It strongly emphasises and integrates programmatic flexibility and contextual adaptation.

First, the urban initiatives sought to learn actively from field-based and desk-based research, programming experience and partnership collaboration to develop its expertise to address the complex 'urban character' in its programming. Simultaneously, the urban programming model used these insights to inform its urban adaptation of the traditional WV rural programming model and to adapt to its specific urban context. Reflection, evaluation and learning were continuously practised to encourage ongoing programmatic development and evolution. This two-pronged approach has become a signature component of the UPI and of WV's renewed focus on urban programming.

WV launched the UPI for two main reasons: first, to contribute to global research and the practical implementation of knowledge on urban elements and environments and second, to contribute to the development of practical programmatic models and approaches that assist the international development community to operate more effectively in diverse urban and peri-urban contexts, particularly in relation to increasing child well-being.

WV was already operating in many of the world's most rapidly urbanising countries and regions. In its initial programmatic phase (2008–2013), the UPI selected six WV field offices to participate in the first urban development pilot projects in this global learning initiative. These six pilot initiatives operated in seven diverse urban centres across six countries: South Africa, Cambodia, India, Bolivia, Indonesia and Lebanon. Each pilot offered learning opportunities across various urban issues. The field research, experiential lessons and implementation of best practices derived from each project were used to cross-pollinate and inform active learning and project development in all the projects.

Action Research Framework and Methodology

As an essential part of its contribution to improving urban knowledge and programmatic implementation, WV applied an innovative action research methodology to guide the UPI in testing, piloting and evaluating various learning and implementation approaches as a way to acquire new knowledge and lessons on urban elements and environments.

The fundamental concept underlying the action research methodology follows a specific constructivist (Poerksen 2004) understanding of the social space, social meanings and social identities. According to this perspective, social phenomena are not grounded in fixed or stable meanings but are instead continually being negotiated and constructed through social interactions and interpersonal discursive processes (Bryman 2004, 538). Urban environments are dynamic; relationships with people constantly change, and urban environments are characterised by high mobility and shifting interactions. All this creates a complex web of interrelationships and dense networks, including rapidly shifting power dynamics and structures. Therefore, no static system of knowledge can fully understand or reflect the sheer complexity of fast, fluid and multi-layered social, economic, political, physical and discursive geometry present in an urban landscape. Rather, appropriate knowledge creation must also entail a dynamic reflective process. In the

⁵ 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 live in close proximity. Dynamics: urban environments are fluid and changing, characterised by high mobility and shifting interactions within sometimes rapidly shifting power relationships.

development context these simultaneous components of learning and reflection are central to achieving redefinition and refinement of project goals and approaches in order to adapt successfully to an urban context. It is a process of trial and error, of learning and adaption – exploring a problem rather than implementing a predefined template solution.

Differing from the traditional static and linear ‘theory informs practice’ approach, the action research methodology is cyclical. It involves the continuous transfer of knowledge laterally to inform other ongoing pilot projects and vertically to inform future project stages and future urban programming. In other words, practice informs theory, and theory then informs the establishment of learning networks. These networks then facilitate effective, efficient implementation of practice, from which new knowledge gleaned informs a more defined and specialised theory. The end of any project cycle represents a new stage of learning and development. For the UPI, the research and lessons produced from the meta-review of this first global programmatic phase will be used to guide the scaling up of its goals, direction and outcomes. The continuous cyclical action research process and adaptive approach is far more relevant for urban programming. It ensures that development theory will perpetually retain an adequate level of responsiveness, receptiveness and relevancy to the dynamic, malleable and complex nature of urban environments and communities.

Appropriate knowledge creation must entail a dynamic reflective process that could be thought of as knowing *in action* rather than knowing *before action* (Schön 1991). For the purposes of WV’s urban direction, this meta-review report focuses specifically on the specificities of the urban context and its implications for programming. This is done with view to define and develop urban approaches and tools for both WV practitioners and the broader NGO community and international development sector at large.

Research Approach

The Urban CoE’s Urban Programmes Initiative began with the specific aim to explore the cityscape from a holistic lens that incorporates the social, cultural, environmental, political and economic dimensions, as well as taking into account specific development issues pertinent within each selected urban or peri-urban context.

As complex urban issues tend to cut across multiple stakeholders, perspectives and goals, each country-based pilot strategically identified a contextually significant and appropriate issue to act as an entry point for its operations and around which to focus its stakeholder engagement. Some of the issues included economic development, land rights, governance and policy reform, child protection (child labour and trafficking) and peacebuilding.

The UPI’s global view of seven cities enabled the development of a meta-review framework tool allowing for structured comparative analysis and systematic review of projects based on specific contexts, objectives, methods, monitoring and impacts. Each pilot project engaged in its own processes of learning and development through action and research. However, this meta-analysis cycle provides a consolidated review of the main themes and trends regarding urban environments, as extrapolated from individual pilot reviews. Each pilot project was treated as a case study of programming innovations in the urban context. The meta-review framework of inquiry across the seven different city contexts generated conclusions regarding guiding principles and approaches to inform WV’s current and future work in diverse urban settings. These reflections also considered potential additional underlying or parallel factors that may have influenced the effectiveness and outcomes of the pilot projects.

This initiative will not be the conventional linear two-stage approach of testing a small number of pilots with the aim of scaling up. In fact, such a developmental approach has been recognised to be problematic when dealing with complex issues, because the knowledge generated often is of limited value or relevance outside the particular time-context from which it was developed. Rather, complexity is best managed by allowing questions to emerge from implementation while simultaneously learning through continuous reflection (World Vision 2008). Thus, by deliberating seeking out problems, the action research methodology invites innovation, transparency and risk management. Such an approach has the added advantage of bringing grassroots players and implementing staff closer to thought leaders and policymakers.

This dynamic poses significant challenges to WV's organisational structure and systems, particularly as the scope and targets developed at the outset of each project may have evolved significantly by the conclusion of an implementation cycle. This proved difficult related to programme design, monitoring and implementation. The pilot projects were encouraged to consider strategies to address this inevitable challenge as early as the baseline-assessment stage of programme design.

The UPI ensured that mechanisms were in place at the organisational level so that WV could invest significant resources in understanding the distinct nature of urban poverty and vulnerability, their implications on urban programming and the dominant issues facing children and youth in urban environments.

In this first programmatic phase each pilot project was given the 'space' – time, human and financial resources – to generate and test various methods in addressing its contextually relevant urban challenges, akin to 'living laboratories'. Here, the pilot projects adapted to their contextual environments by choosing a single issue as an entry point to build relationships and collaboration with the existing social actors and power structures of their target communities. Such single-issue entry points (such as peacebuilding or land tenure) allowed for greater trust building with local stakeholders (including children and youth, the intended beneficiaries) within a shorter span of time – thus more effectively keeping pace with the rapid nature of the urban landscape. The pilot projects were not only encouraged to adapt contextually at the community grassroots level but also simultaneously to allow programmatic latitude for a broader city-wide impact by engaging at the policy level with municipal and city-level actors. Capacity building, strategic partnering and the need for policy engagement were highlighted as key components in achieving effective and sustainable transformations.

From the beginning, systems were put into place to allow for the sharing of knowledge and research across the pilot projects. The research initiative was launched with a desk review of emerging urban trends and external promising practices. The pilot projects were closely monitored, and a process of learning cross-pollination among project practitioners was instituted. This contributed to improved understanding of the urban context throughout the implementation cycle, including cross-sharing of the progress, challenges and lessons faced by each pilot. Workshops were organised to share this initial knowledge and information with participating field offices, and 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.



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

Research Objectives

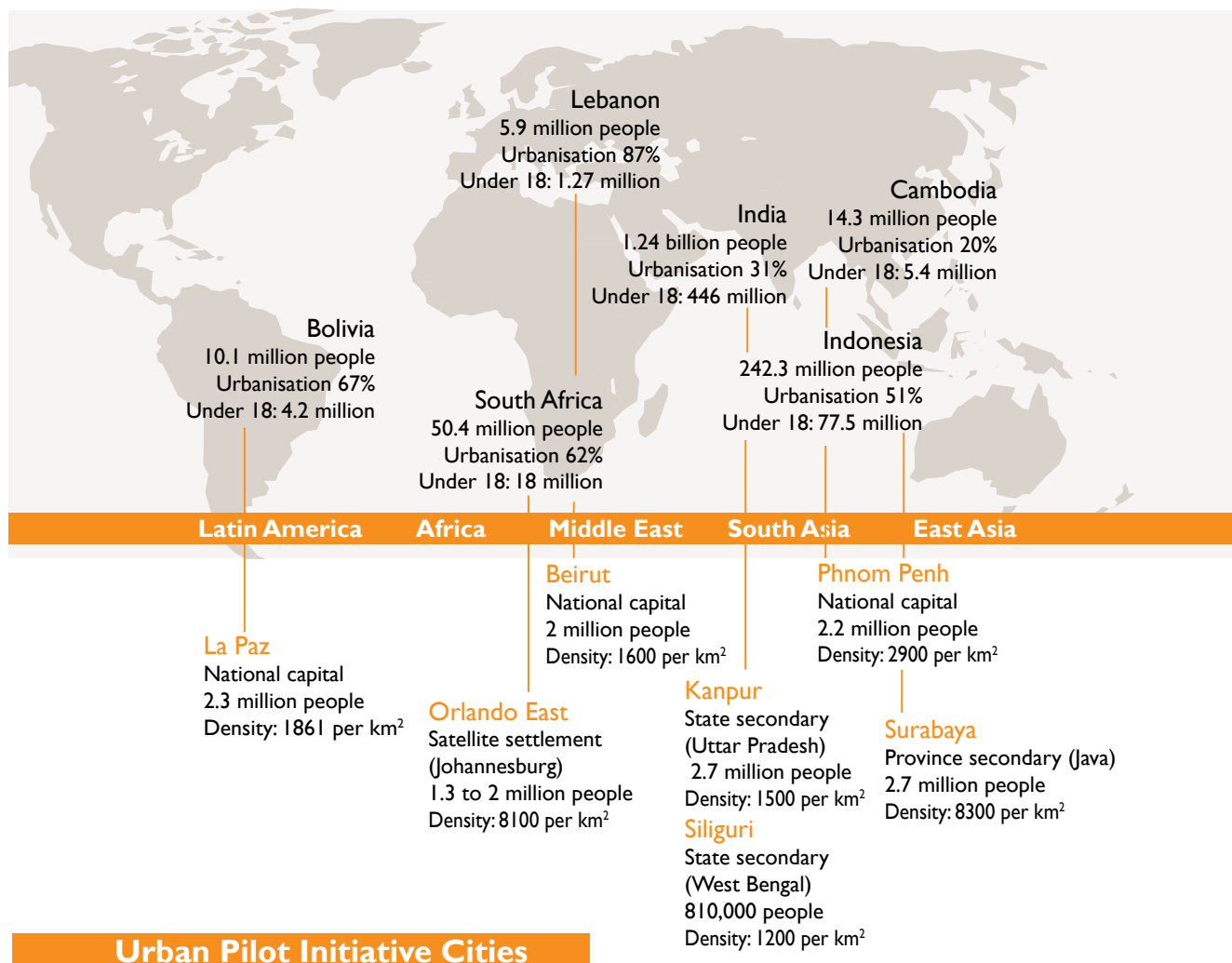
- Develop a deeper understanding of diverse urban contexts, city processes and actors.
- Apply World Vision's area development action research model in an urban context and observe closely how it operates in dense, diverse and dynamic urban environments in order to recommend adaptations.
- Encourage flexibility within the design of context-specific, single-issue-based interventions as an entry point into city-wide programming rather than conventional, large-scale, multi-sectoral programmes.
- Explore strategies to link neighbourhood-based interventions to municipal planning for city-wide policy change and impacts.
- Explore partnerships to develop organisational capacity and scale up strategies.

The pilot projects selected for the UPI were carefully considered to achieve a wide cross-sectional representation of urban environments, from small urban centres (population under 1 million) to mega-cities, political centres to economic and commercial hubs, violent neighbourhoods to post-conflict cultures. It was hoped that such contextual diversity would increase the relevancy of lessons extracted across a greater range of urban communities and also provide further insight into the role INGOs of WV’s size can adopt in order to adapt effectively to different environments.

The UPI was launched acknowledging LEAP (Learning through Evaluation, with Accountability and Planning), a standard WV programming framework providing sound development principles and guidelines for community development approaches. A deliberate choice was made to support and guide each urban pilot in adapting LEAP and its associated operational and normative standards and sponsorship funding model to ensure contextual relevance (World Vision 2007).

The urban research initiative was proposed as ‘LEAP Plus’. It recommended additional questions to programme cycle processes, ensuring that contextual analysis and relevance were considered and applied to project preparation. The lessons learned from this adaptation process contributed substantially to the third edition of LEAP launched by WV in 2014, as well as new WV initiatives, such as the Integrated Programming Model (later renamed Development Programming Approach) (World Vision 2011a).

Figure 4. Basic characteristics of each urban pilot city



About the Six Urban Pilot Initiatives

The six urban pilot initiatives (in seven cities) selected by the UPI differ in size, demographics, density, gross domestic product, economic growth rates and national levels of urbanisation (see Figure 4). The cities also have individual histories, population movements and patterns of vulnerability. Issues identified in each city are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Issues identified in each pilot project city

| Pilot city | Thematic area |
|----------------------------|--|
| Orlando East, South Africa | Local economic development |
| Phnom Penh, Cambodia | Land tenure |
| Kanpur, India | Child labour |
| Siliguri, India | Child labour and trafficking |
| La Paz, Bolivia | Urban governance and youth participation |
| Surabaya, Indonesia | Child friendly cities |
| Beirut, Lebanon | Peacebuilding and social cohesion |

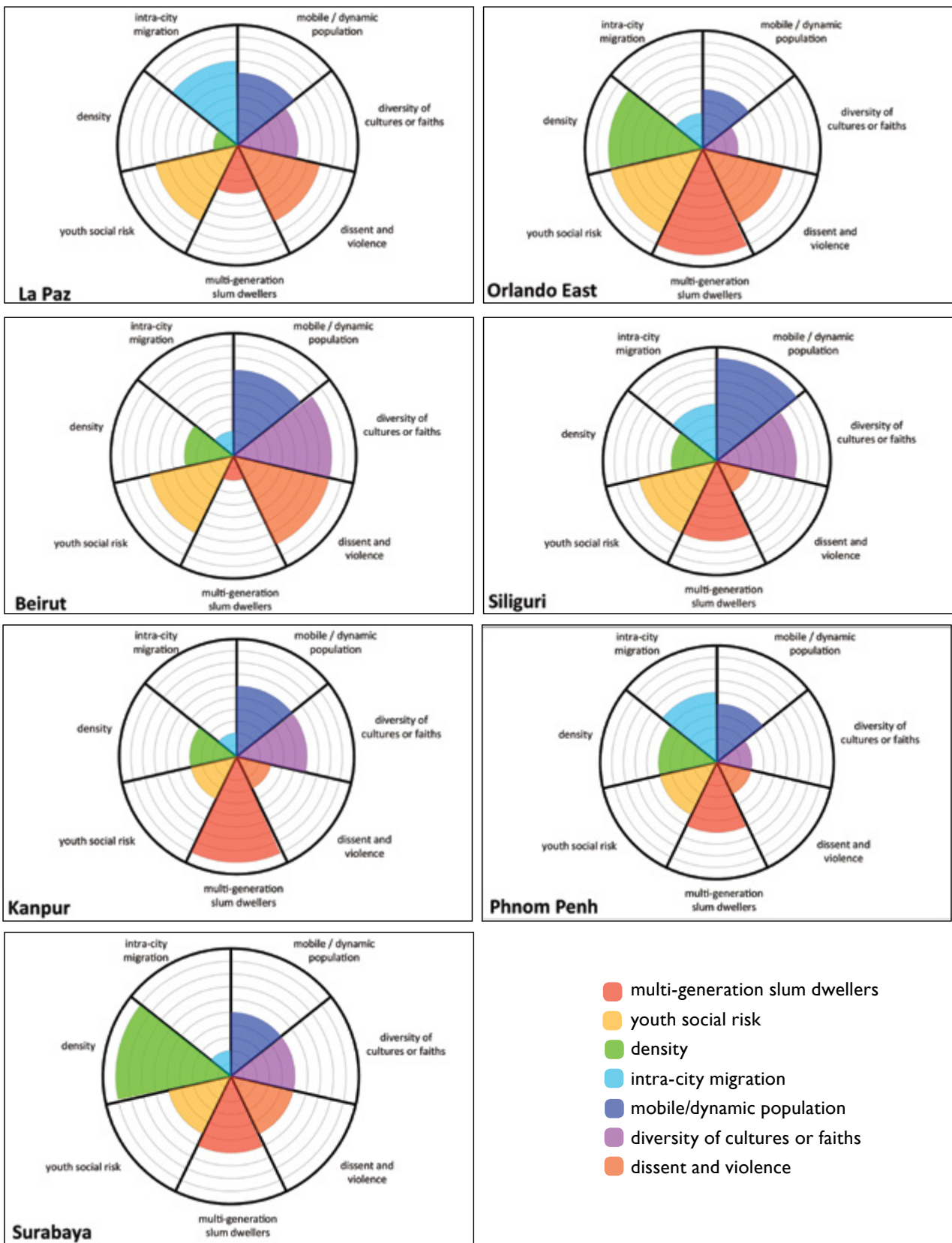
In developing an overarching urban framework for the UPI, this meta-review analysis identifies seven urban characteristics contributing to the patterns of urban poverty and vulnerability. An analytical profiling of these urban characteristics allowed the meta-review to differentiate and understand the ‘DNA’ of each urban context and how it can affect its corresponding pilot project.

The seven characteristics identified 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.

Figure 5 shows a diagrammatic representation of the distinct profiles generated for each pilot project city mapped against the identified urban characteristics in terms of relevance and dominance. The further the colour progresses from the centre, the more significant that factor is in that urban context. Comparing the radial graphs of Figure 5 is essential to understanding diversity across urban landscapes.

Figure 5. Seven dominant characteristics causing urban poverty and vulnerability and their differing degrees of severity and impact for each pilot city



All of the pilot projects completed their first implementation phase as of the end of 2012, so a consolidated meta-review could be conducted of all six pilot initiatives by 2014. The individual evaluations of pilot projects are summarised below.

ORLANDO EAST: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Context

A densely packed satellite township of South Africa's capital mega-city, Johannesburg, Orlando East lies within the disadvantaged urban area of Soweto (South West Township). Soweto accounts for 40 per cent of Johannesburg's Region D population but contributes less than 5 per cent economically. Soweto has had a difficult history. Notorious for oppression and police brutality, the township emerged from a cluster of shantytowns created during the Apartheid era as a settlement area for the forcibly relocated black labour population.

Currently, Soweto's socio-economic distribution reflects the highest level of inequality in South Africa, and population density continues to grow exponentially from both birth rate and migration. Parallel economic growth, however, is stumped by a lack of vocational skills, education, financial management and business knowledge, and access to microfinance and credit options. Young people are subjected to an array of social risks and hazards, including drug and alcohol abuse, crime, gang activity, sexual violence, and the prevalence and stigma of HIV and AIDS. Vulnerability is further exacerbated by a chronic shortage of housing, basic infrastructure and services. New urban migrants are among the most disadvantaged, mistrusted by existing residents due to a perception of increased competition for limited resources. This fragmented social structure and a deep-seated and historical distrust of authorities create stark obstacles for productive collaboration and community-led change.

Approach

The Orlando East urban discovery pilot project was adapted from an existing WV Area Development Program (ADP) operated in the area by the WV South Africa National Office. It began in 2008 and has now completed its second implementation cycle (2011–14), with a particular focus on developing a local economic development approach suitable for addressing issues of livelihoods in the urban context and helping to transition the existing ADP towards more sustainable forms of development programming. The project utilised the Participatory Appraisal for Competitive Advantage⁶ tool, from which several thematic priority areas were identified (small and medium enterprises, skills development, tourism, informal traders, gender, child protection and environment). Task teams were then formed around each theme. While the pilot team was also involved in direct implementation of initiatives, an emphasis was placed on a collaborative engagement approach through public and private partnerships and community engagement. Each thematic task team evolved into a thematic community forum that networked individual residents, local leaders, organisations and government institutions, all working together to improve the economic, social and policy conditions in Orlando East with the ultimate view to enhance the quality of life for children, youth and women.

As the first pilot to be reviewed in the meta-review process, the Orlando East pilot presented an opportunity to test, refine and learn various methodologies and approaches of the Urban Meta-Review Framework to inform the evaluation procedures for later phases of the UPI.



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

⁶ An overview of the methodology is available at <http://paca.mesopartner.com/>.

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Empowering the community, improving economic conditions and the business environment (particularly for small and medium microbusinesses), and integrating marginalised groups, such as youth and women

- WV contributed to the capacity development of the thematic task teams and community forums. This was recognised as strengthening social cohesion and empowering local communities to seek more enabling environment to further economic and social development. For example, through events and workshops these forums not only provided vocational training for business and social entrepreneurship and connected recipients with tangible job opportunities, but they also raised awareness of important issues affecting the holistic well-being of children. Its joint initiatives with the NGO Plan Act and the Municipal Government of Johannesburg have continued to support growth of community action groups and local economic-development activities.
- WV also assisted communities in advocacy and policy endeavours, particularly in terms of strengthening previously weak relationship channels with government and administrative bodies. As an example, one community forum assisted microbusinesses in navigating complex bureaucratic processes to access various grants, tax breaks and economic opportunities. Another success was a five-day Child Protection Week of training and awareness raising, attended by 2,000 people, leading to the submission of an official memorandum on child abuse by local children. This submission prompted an official police pledge to expedite future cases of child and domestic abuse.
- The project team, however, faced challenges in articulating the important connection between a healthy business and economic environment and child well-being, particularly in the context of the wider multi-priority area approach taken to target-related crosscutting issues. This experience highlighted the importance of developing a clearer theory of change and articulating a targeted development roadmap.
- Economic issues should not be addressed in isolation but rather in tandem with issues of social well-being, governance and identity. For example, social obstacles to the realisation of local economic 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.

Promoting a strategic development approach in strengthening 'soft' infrastructure

- The pilot project was involved in direct implementation of development activities (for example, providing financial and life-skills training). However, ongoing reflections identified that the most practical way to effect transformation in Orlando East was to invest in 'soft' infrastructure, including facilitation, partnering, networking and advocacy, and building on the capacity of existing governance mechanisms, partner organisations and local resources. In one instance WV acted as a resource mobiliser in providing school uniforms to facilitate the education activities of a local partner organisation. WV has also contributed to organisational growth of its partners, including the successful registration of Soweto's Women's Forum as a legal entity, which entitles the forum access to official funding sources.
- WV strived, where possible, to conduct direct implementation by partnering with local actors in order to support existing governance structures, including joint collaborations and building their capacity. For example, WV's partnership with Plan Act has been recognised by community members as a significant contribution to building social cohesion and helping overcome political and social intolerances or fragmentation.
- WV has a long-term presence in South Africa and is held in high regard by communities and partners. However, its successful cultivation of partnerships led to unintentional dependencies by some organisations, despite all partner respondents agreeing that WV actively promoted partner sustainability and autonomy. Especially for less established organisations, confidence in realistic sustainability after a WV exit remains low. Interestingly, this seemed to be a result of the appreciated social and human capital that WV can provide rather than financial resources. This challenge, as the final evaluation report surmises, may reflect the short project timeframe.

The timeframe was perhaps insufficient to allow partnerships to reach the level of maturity required for sustainability and may indicate that WV's partnering strategy needs further consideration. Suggestions for strategic partnering include 'group-based' partnering and inclusion of the most vulnerable organisations.

Contributing to the continuous development of WV's innovative urban action research and evaluation methodology

- As the first pilot project to test WV's new urban programming approach, the Orlando East pilot project was clearly effective in communicating the *transition* from the long-term direct implementation and community-support approach of the existing ADP to a short-term project cycle focusing on 'soft' development of facilitation, information sharing and various forms of advocacy.
- Through its characteristically flexible and continuous learning, reflection and refinement systems, the pilot noted several key lessons. Given the disconnect between the ambitious multidimensional project design (in line with the traditional rural LEAP model) and the practical resources on the ground, this evaluation supports the single-issue entry-point approach advocated by the Urban CoE. This focuses resources on a pertinent issue to ensure maximum impact while still integrating cross-cutting concerns. Similarly, the evaluation supports concentration on 'high yield' activities, referring to the 'three-plank' soft development approach of advocacy, partnering and facilitation.
- The Orlando East pilot also provided an opportunity to test and refine the Urban Meta-Review Framework as a way to standardise evaluations across all urban pilots and to inform the lessons, conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report. The initial findings and recommendations were later reproduced in the subsequent individual meta-reviews for the other five pilot projects.

PHNOM PENH: LAND TENURE

Context

As of 2013, approximately 85 per cent of the Cambodian population continues to reside in rural areas. However, Cambodia's rapidly growing economy and manufacturing industry, largely concentrated in the capital, Phnom Penh, has given rise to rapidly increasing rural-to-urban migration in search of work and other economic opportunities. As the only major large-scale urban settlement in the country, rapid urbanisation rates have led to increased land pressure in Phnom Penh, which will likely continue in the future. The most vulnerable tend to be new unskilled worker migrants who, unable to afford the higher urban housing and cost of living prices, are forced to settle into unsafe illegal settlements on the outskirts of the city lacking any legal or political recognition. Rapid increases in land value have also seen large-scale forced evictions of established slum communities (around 11 per cent of Phnom Penh's population was evicted from 1990 to 2009). Those evicted have inadequate resettlement support and also take up residence in squalid settlements. The continued insecurity of land tenure keeps families trapped in a cycle of poverty. Children of this new urban underclass are particularly vulnerable, with multiple dimensions of their lives (including education and health) negatively affected. The average rising level of wealth and development in Phnom Penh further obscures their vulnerability in these pockets of poverty.

Land rights have long been a highly contentious issue in Cambodia. The mass forced land appropriation instituted by the Pol Pot regime in 1975 and subsequent informal nature of land reclaim after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 gave rise to a convoluted web of land disputes. Currently, national land legislation is highly complex and beset with red tape. While systematic land registration to claim official land ownership began with the 2001 Land Law, land registration in urban areas was deferred until 2014/2015. The process is further bedevilled by factors such as political 'land grabbing', weak institutions and weak rule of law, and a lack of technical land management expertise. As 'sporadic' land registration fees are often too high, vulnerable urban poor must continue to wait for 'systematic' land registration amid the uncertainty of potentially imminent forced eviction.

Approach

The urban pilot project ran from 2008 to 2013, focusing its activities in 16 communities (7,153 individuals, 2,511 children). Utilising the innovative action research methodology of identifying contextually appropriate entry points, action areas and strategic partnerships, land rights and housing tenure were identified as the ‘entry point’ to improving overall child well-being and development. Though at first the link may seem tenuous, land rights permeate a range of other important social concerns, including health, education, livelihood, safety and security, and citizenship rights. Given the restrictive political context (Cambodia is high on the Transparency International Global Corruption Index), the project took a ‘soft’ advocacy approach at multiple levels. Locally, it worked to empower the communities at risk to make their own case for security of land tenure. With municipal government it advocated for pro-poor policy inclusions. It also collaborated with 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, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Addressing land tenure and future increased competition for land rights

- Of tangible successes in land-rights advocacy, three communities (145 households) previously excluded from the opportunity for land registration have now received official correspondence confirming their new eligibility. Over eight communities succeeded in receiving government funding for informal settlements, with almost 300 households applying for land title and possession rights. Several communities have also successfully had their community plans accepted into their local government annual investment plan.
- All community research participants felt the project’s activities yielded numerous indirect benefits in physical improvements (for example, infrastructure upgrades such as access roads to schools, flooding and fire protection, and basic service provision) and social improvements (such as greater community awareness and cohesion and improved education for children). One challenge remains: guiding communities to consider and plan for alternative strategies in the event that land issues are not resolved by the government

Empowering the community

- The pilot manager felt that the project’s greatest accomplishment was the ‘awakening’ and empowering of the community to lead its own development in order to increase land-tenure security. Through WV legal and capacity training and awareness raising, project community members demonstrated increased ability and confidence in communication, negotiation, dialogue and fundraising when interacting with various government institutions on improving land and housing rights. The improved community relationship with local governments led to better government provision of information on land and community rights. Community leaders were

also trained to raise awareness and, in turn, train new leaders in other communities, thereby expanding a locally led transformation. For more detailed information, see ‘Lessons on Governments, Power Structures and Accountability’ in Part 4.

- The project also engendered community solidarity. A strong community-driven city-wide network of over 19 communities regularly met, shared knowledge, and coordinated activities and advocacy strategies to address land issues together. In January 2012, facilitated by WV, this network brought together a simultaneous community-level mobilisation of action and NGO-level advocacy. It successfully overturned the forced eviction of the Lorkambor community. The network also successfully negotiated various infrastructural and land registration applications in consultation with local authorities.

Creating productive government working relationships and contributing to an enabling policy environment

- The pilot project worked with the Cambodian government and international bodies in its activities. For example, WV identified and connected with key international institutions such as the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the World Bank, which were already involved in land-mapping activities, in order to include vulnerable groups in land-registration processes.
- WV’s presence has been effective in counterbalancing these strong interests, and it is recommended that WV maintain ongoing symbolic involvement after project completion for the period of the government’s provisional timeline for land registration.
- This pilot highlighted the need to develop organisational resources and hire staff with adequate ‘soft’ skills in advocacy, legal knowledge and flexible monitoring and evaluation suitable for working in urban environments with complex urban players. For the specific Cambodian context, where fluctuations in policy have implications on project progress, organisational risk management and contingency planning are needed.

Pursuing and fostering strategic and sustainable partnerships

- Partnering is a vital engagement and scale-up strategy in urban contexts. The pilot project successfully built a partner coalition around the land-rights issue. This network has engaged in numerous constructive dialogues with interested stakeholders and contributed to joint initiatives and research projects to improve the land-registration process. The network has achieved some official recognition, succeeding in receiving official technical and professional assistance from the Ministry of Land, Urban Planning and Construction. WV is also an active member of various other networks, coalitions and working groups concerned with land rights.
- Partner respondents, however, at times felt that the pilot project team was inexperienced in dealing with this complex issue. This, however, may reflect the team’s difficulty in clearly explicating the action research methodology and ‘soft’ advocacy approach regarding a complex issue such as land tenure, which is not an issue that WV has expertise in addressing. It is recommended that the project engage with other relevant stakeholders, including those contesting the urban poor’s access to land rights (commercial and political actors) and wider indirect stakeholders.
- WV’s exit strategy requires refining. Government respondents seem to view the delivery of essential services as the role of WV, which suggests that WV has become too ‘central’. Other partners saw WV simply as a facilitator. Partners also had mixed views in terms of both the benefit and involvement levels of WV’s potential ongoing symbolic commitment.

Relevant, adaptive and responsive action learning methodology in urban context, and knowledge sharing

- As the second pilot project to test the issue-based approach, the project has shown great flexibility in choosing land tenure as an issue-based entry point to effect broader change. An indirect benefit of the project’s presence and openness to the action-research methodology is encouraging experimentation and innovation in partner organisations and the WV Cambodia national office.

- A main issue faced was the difficulty experienced in articulating the project's adaptable, exploratory approach and issue-based focus. Local actors perceived WV's expertise in the issue it was addressing rather than the overall goal of the UPI, which promoted contextual adaptation.

KANPUR AND SILIGURI, INDIA: CHILD LABOUR AND CHILD TRAFFICKING

Context

Child labour and child trafficking are complex and prevalent global issues. In 2008, official estimates reported that 215 million children were involved in child labour and over 300,000 trafficked annually. Though often related, these two issues are not synonymous. While child trafficking is universally regarded as an abuse of basic human rights, there is less agreement on normative and legal definitions of child labour. However, WV's field research found that legal distinctions between, for example, 'permissible light work' and 'hazardous work' are often difficult to maintain in practice where a majority of children are exposed to physical hazards, exploitation and indirect forced labour. Many are employed within their own homes or local businesses in order to contribute to family income at the expense of an education.

Such issues are prevalent across India. A previously industrial city, Kanpur has recently diversified its economic activities and now hosts a large demand for informal, low-skilled and poorly remunerated labour that engages children. Siliguri is an emerging commercial transit corridor city connecting India internally and regionally, and functioning as a hub for migration, some of which includes unsupervised children. Both of these small cities contain high levels of chronic income inequity and significant areas of slum settlements, while being precariously low in viable employment opportunities. At the household level there is an alarming gender inequity. Low household income fosters gender violence, child abuse and labour exploitation. As there is no adequate, accessible and affordable schooling system, parents often justify full-time work for their children as a viable alternative to poor education. Despite the number of national, state and local initiatives designed to combat the worst forms of child labour and trafficking, available evidence demonstrates they have not generated palpable substantial improvements for real Indian urban children.

Approach

The urban pilot project consists of two related projects in two separate urban localities, Kanpur and Siliguri. In accordance with the innovative WV urban action research approach and methodology, the pilot adapted its programming design and operations to respond to local and city-wide contexts. By choosing appropriate strategic entry points, each project sought to improve overall child well-being and ensure a sustainable and effective enabling environment to that effect.

Both the Kanpur and Siliguri projects addressed the broad issue of child protection in the urban context. However, the Kanpur project focused on child labour. It sought direct engagement with slum communities through raising awareness of the issue and building knowledge about how to access basic services, supporting grassroots advocacy and creating behaviour attitudinal change throughout the community. The Siliguri project took a more ambitious dual-issue approach, addressing both child labour and trafficking. The nature of trafficking required a greater focus on working through partnerships and engaging institutional and enforcement actors. Community stakeholders were also empowered to prevent, protect and restore children at risk of child labour and trafficking, including creating community monitoring and vigilance mechanisms.

While this meta-review focuses largely on the first implementation cycle (2008–2013), both projects are currently testing various opportunities for scale-up to the city-wide level.



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

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Improving issue-specific urban learning about the complex issues of child labour and child trafficking

- Poverty was found to be the overwhelming cause of urban children being employed in hazardous situations. Children in urban centres are exposed to two distinct vulnerabilities: short-term exposure to various hazards and risks (such as physical harm from unsafe working environments, emotional and sexual abuse) and the long-term consequences from lacking vital education and the vocational and social skills required for formal work in adulthood. Quality education emerged as the critical issue to generate possibilities for alternative and more productive forms of employment and to exit endemic and cyclical poverty.
- The high fluidity of trafficking trends, largely due to efforts by criminal groups to circumvent legal and enforcement developments, poses unique challenges for urban programming. Nevertheless, engaging with existing governance structures and official enforcement agencies remains essential.
- Technology provides a potential strategic tool for engagement, particularly as urban youth often have high access to mobile technology. Importantly, such an approach may negate the use of technology by criminal trafficking groups and its associated comparative advantage.

Promoting sustained civic engagement to reduce incidences of child labour and child trafficking

- The pilot project exhibited very strong levels of community engagement through children's groups, community events and various awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives. In Siliguri, a robust social-protection network was established to include local vigilance committees and child protection units. Some instances of success include the transit and bridge schools set up in Kanpur, rehabilitating over 700 children engaged in child labour. 'I enjoy attending the bridging school in my neighbourhood as I'm learning to read and write.' Similarly, multiple non-formal education centres in Siliguri have provided educational support and life skills training to children outside the formal education system, including an initiative specifically targeting rag pickers in the Bengali community.
- WV worked to sensitise parents, school authorities, governments and police on child rights and child-labour legislation, while advocating for pro-child and pro-education behaviour changes. This included coordinating training and raising awareness for police and border patrol officers on legal mechanisms designed to combat human trafficking. Not only did this result in the community exhibiting 'genuine concern' and a high awareness of child protection issues, but most respondents were also able to articulate ways they were developing progressive economic independence (for example, through education, savings, social capital building).
- While both projects were successful in reaching initial project goals, the broader issues of child protection remain critical. Therefore, there is a need for a city-wide behaviour and attitudinal shift. This includes both positive and negative messaging and reinforcements, including establishing a culture of active intolerance to child labour and trafficking amongst communities and the public and private sectors.

Creating effective, sustainable and strategic partnerships in the urban context

- WV's work was well received by local and governmental partners. For example, WV's relationship with the Department of Education in Kanpur resulted in the pilot's access to 15 government schools for education initiatives. A key success was WV's role in establishing and nurturing the first common civil society platform on a broad-based commitment to a common cause. Working closely with government authorities, the Anti-Trafficking Network in Siliguri brought together local and national NGOs to coordinate, collaborate and pool expertise and resources. The Anti-Trafficking Network has assisted in the repatriation, return and support of trafficked children, trained enforcement authorities on child rights and anti-trafficking laws, and generally improved government accountability, with officials more likely to respond to a request from the network.
- Given WV's limited direct experience with child trafficking, evidence supports the WV urban approach of strategic partnering. This involved collaboration with urban actors that strategically fit WV's own capabilities and goals as a practical alternative to WV developing these same skills from scratch. However, there is a need for a clear and consolidated focus around which partners can coordinate.
- Engagement with the business community is needed to introduce 'ethical change' into the commercial sector supporting anti-labour movements. Furthermore, while there was clear evidence of mutual respect with government partners, these relationships were not formalised and can seem superficial.

Sustainability and the role played by WV

- As the success of the Anti-Trafficking Network shows, WV has an imperative role in supporting the facilitation and networking amongst local organisations of significantly lesser resources and capacities.
- Unfortunately, given the complexity of the issues, many stakeholders often displace responsibility for societal child protection issues in a negatively reinforced circular 'blame chain'. WV, as an independent actor with strong relationships with all stakeholders, is thus well positioned as a strategic 'lever' to break the 'blame chain' and to encourage cooperation and collaboration.
- The importance of WV's role presented problems of project sustainability and WV's eventual exit. A rethinking of sustainability as the frame of reference for success may be needed. The final evaluation report emphasised that problems of such magnitude need long-term investment. Therefore, it is recommended that sustainability be reinterpreted to acknowledge the important achievements and progress made, particularly in terms of building intangible 'soft' infrastructure, rather than in terms of a comprehensive understanding of 'success' or 'failure'.

Continuous development and refining of the urban action research methodology

- The pilot represented an excellent opportunity for programmatic experimentation and innovation. However, the flexible, single-issue, rights-based approach was at first difficult to articulate to partners and the community; it also presented flexibility issues for WV's internal systems and structures, particularly funding.
- Importantly, this action learning programme concluded there was great potential for a 'scale-up' of both projects to the municipal and city levels, using an intentional policy-influence and general attitudinal-change approach. It is recommended that scale-up utilise a 'geometric approach' of diffusing the work and results from the pilots through various means, such as social dispersion, art and cultural outreach (for example, documentaries and photography) and social media. This is in contrast to the 'arithmetic approach', which looks at replicating community development work in other slum areas.

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA: YOUTH GOVERNANCE

Context

Bolivia has one of the highest levels of poverty and income inequality in Latin America. As the main motivation for migration within Bolivia, economic considerations and family aspirations for a better life have forced individuals and communities to relocate to urban settings in search of increased employment and economic opportunities, and affordable housing. The city of La Paz is home to 23 per cent of the total population, with a further 70 per cent living in the surrounding urban corridors. It has substantial levels of both rural-to-urban and intra-city migration. Poor urban migrants often settle in irregular, disordered neighbourhoods and vulnerable 'slope' areas. Children's well-being and development are further hampered by their unregistered status, political under-representation, low community organisation and mobilisation, lack of access to critical services, cultural prejudice and other environmental risks and hazards that produce a fragile setting of vulnerability, insecurity and violence. Interestingly, cultural and ethnic diversity was of little influence. Political and economic diversity, on the other hand, became an obstacle for the formation of a united political leadership within the community.

The five-year pilot project ran from October 2010 to September 2015 through two separate community programmes working in 38 neighbourhoods across La Paz. The pilot's activities were centred in the district of Ciudadela Ferroviaria and the macro-district of San Antonio. The project focused on four indicator aspects: area security, local management of territory, capacity for knowledge and child sponsorship mobilisation. The initial baseline report suggested that children and youth received insufficient quality education and employment training. They also had low levels of representation and participation in urban governance and decision-making processes and suffered from chronic lack of supervision by parents and guardians. Furthermore, violence was identified as a pertinent issue, with high rates of domestic violence and child labour exploitation (particularly in the mining industry), while risky youth behaviours, such as street-gang formation, also proved challenging in this urban context.

Approach

The Bolivian pilot followed a strategy aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty and violence through empowerment, capacity building and advocacy. The project used the WV Citizen Voice and Action (CVA)⁷ approach, which seeks to increase the participation and the voice of affected urban groups in order to hold their government accountable. The pilot integrated CVA with the lifecycle developmental approach, whereby children are engaged throughout their developmental stages until adulthood. Furthermore, the innovative WV urban action research methodology guided the pilot team's engagement in a consultative, inclusive process of diagnosis and design with the active participation of community stakeholders, including children and youth.

Through this process the team identified prevalent contextualised issues that obstructed children's well-being. They adapted programmatic activities to address these needs. The United to Live Better programme focused on transformative development to improve children's quality of life. It addressed prevention and protection against violence, abuse and rights infringement; improved education and development competencies; and promoted active involvement of children, adolescents and youth in leadership and decision-making processes. The Sowing for Unity programme focused on improving the active empowerment of local agents. This included supporting the self-organisation and active political and civic participation of children and youth. It implemented empowerment activities in coordination with diverse partner organisations and institutions. It also strengthened the overall partnership network for long-term sustainability and responsiveness to child well-being issues, such as improving coordination and facilitating a permanent dialogue within the network.

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

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Empowering children and youth to become important agents of change

- The most important achievement of the La Paz pilot project was facilitating the *intentional* inclusion of children, youth and women into various local decision-making processes, alongside important relevant stakeholders, as well as into the project's own participatory consultation procedures. This followed the identification of inclusive urban governance as the single-issue entry point from which the pilot project could affect broader multi-sectoral transformation. For the first time children and youth have been permanently appointed as councillors and advisors in the relevant local government processes, including the review of the 2009 Constitution.



Youth leaders discussing constitutional changes for La Paz, Bolivia.

- The pilot succeeded in supporting mobilisation and networking amongst adolescents and youth, although efforts continue regarding the overall political inclusion of children and youth. WV facilitated the formation of 'youth squads' within local organisations. It also formed a youth network that brought together dispersed groups for collaborative, coordinated activities, generating a space for dialogue and reflection. For example, local youth actors facilitated WV workshops to engage children and youth on issues. 'We are afraid to walk back from school alone because there are many bad people in the neighbourhoods and we wanted to reach out to the police to discuss safety.' WV also partnered with various local actors to generate safe spaces for children and youth, such as the jointly created neighbourhood reinforcement centres.
- The participation of children and youth had a twofold success. It not only improved children's understanding of their rights, responsibilities and access to safe spaces, but also fundamentally encouraged local governance decision-makers to prioritise holistic childhood development and well-being alongside traditional development priorities (such as physical infrastructure). For example, an agreement amongst WV, the Organic Charter project and the president of the La Paz Municipal Council resulted in the creation of a municipal law specifically created to aspire towards the holistic development of children and adolescents, the first of its kind. Another success of youth-led action was the creation of the first Police Patrol Unit to ensure public safety in the neighbourhood.

Strengthening local governance structures as part of the WV urban strategy of 'soft' development

- The La Paz project evaluation noted that, compared to traditional WV rural programming models, the urban pilot team very rapidly generated greater community engagement and locally led project progress. It also developed strategic synergies with empowered partner organisations. This directly supports the Urban CoE's programming strategy in developing 'soft' architecture as the best strategic approach for maximum impact in the urban environment. The pilot project succeeded in collaborating with partners in raising awareness and conducting training activities on important issues identified by the community, particularly domestic and partner violence.
- A fundamental success was the creation of several Committees of Local Actors. This convened the most representative social actors to discuss child-related issues, including local government, civil society, educators and project staff. Importantly, the group's constitution intentionally includes children and youth as equal

participants in this process. An essential lesson shows that holistic child development can act as a common ground among local actors.

Pursuing strategic and operational partnerships and advocacy opportunities

- Another fundamental success was the creation of the Platform of Partners, a multi-stakeholder partnership network with a diverse range of local stakeholders, including local NGOs, community-based organisations and public and private institutions. This network created a productive space for coordination, mediation, information and idea sharing, particularly given the complex, high levels of diversity among urban actors that can be a challenge for urban development programmes. It also provided a way to reduce duplication and competition among development stakeholders while engendering a stronger network advocating for children’s well-being. The network assisted in connecting child well-being as a single issue to broader societal development activities and aspirations.
- Problems regarding the financial and structural sustainability of the Platform of Partners arose in the project evaluation, particularly in view of WV’s eventual exit. Thus, WV is currently considering possible strategies to enhance sustainability, including emphasising alliances with institutions rather than rotating leaderships. It is also considering registering the partnership networks as independent legal entities. This would entitle the platform to access official funding sources, as in the Orlando East pilot.

SURABAYA: CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES

Context

Located on Java Island, Surabaya is the second largest city in Indonesia. More than half of its 31 districts are classified as high-density areas – more than 11,000 persons per square kilometre – which are concentrated in the central region, according to Statistics Indonesia in 2010. The village of Pegirian is situated on the perimeter of this dense central area. It has experienced the result of Surabaya’s forced informal settlement expansions, with high levels of poverty, large income disparity and hazardous living conditions for its urban poor. Pegirian’s convenient location close to Madura Island makes it a common transit site for incoming economic Madurese migrants. Compared to the stable, majority Javanese residents, the Madurese are highly mobile and retain strong ties to their home communities. Even long-term residents tend to view their residency in Pegirian as transitional or temporary, resulting in limited involvement with their immediate community or government. This produces skewed access for the Madurese to community-based rights and initiatives, which are intended to benefit them as a vulnerable group. It also gives rise to cultural and ethnic tensions with their Javanese neighbours.

Inadequate access to basic services (such as clean drinking water and sanitation facilities) and safe microcredit loan options further exacerbates the vulnerabilities of poor urban communities. Many poor families succumb to various negative coping mechanisms. Their children are often poorly supervised due to parents’ long working hours. Children and youth often drop out of school to contribute to family income. Initial baseline assessments suggest that community members do not understand child rights well. Corporal punishment of children is deemed culturally acceptable. Family nutrition is less of a priority than coffee and cigarettes for adult males. Infrastructural vulnerabilities (floods and urban fires) highly concern community residents, particularly those in dangerous informal settlements. Children do not have access to safe public spaces; they play in graveyards or alongside roads and railway tracks. They are by far the most vulnerable, with their needs under-prioritised and their voices not heard in decision-making processes.



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

Approach

The five-year Urban Surabaya Transformation Advocacy Research (U STAR) urban pilot project ran from 2008 to 2013. It aimed to promote children's rights and child friendly neighbourhoods in four areas. Through targeted advocacy and awareness-raising efforts the project highlighted the importance of child prioritisation and participation. It employed the urban action research methodology in identifying strategic entry points, action areas and partnerships. U STAR intentionally continued, refined, and addressed 'gaps' in existing or ongoing pro-child initiatives in its strategy to achieve long-term sustainable development success. It capitalised on the Indonesian government's political commitment to the UNICEF Child Friendly City movement and the foundational work of WV's Indonesian national office staff members by playing an essential role in developing child friendly villages at the community level. U STAR soon scaled up its advocacy efforts beyond Pegirian to the city-wide Surabaya municipal level. Following U STAR's conclusion, the WV Indonesia national office continued its work with an initiative called U Health.

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

- U STAR's intentional inclusion of children in all its programmatic stages empowered children to translate their needs and desires into development action. The adaptive approach of continuing existing initiatives has been likened positively to a 'living laboratory'. The WV urban approach was very successful at incorporating local contextual analysis and knowledge into its project development and implementation to respond effectively to community needs.
- Increased cultural and urban understanding and adaptability are still needed. The project faced significant challenges in engaging with the Madurese population. A fruitful partnership with local academic institutions might increase research understanding of Madurese migration patterns and complex social interactions. Such a partnership could also create new entry points into the community, including on Madura Island before migration occurs.

Empowering children and youth voices

- U STAR empowered children, increasing their active involvement and raising public awareness about their first-hand experiences regarding their community issues. U STAR intentionally included children and youth in all programmatic stages. Two of the seven project success indicators were derived from direct consultation with children and youth. Children learned to communicate their understanding of vulnerability through innovative methods, including photography. They expressed their thoughts about place and identity and their hopes for the future. 'I would love to have more safe space in our slum to play. My friends and I play on the railway tracks and cemetery because there is no space.' Awareness about child rights and the involvement of parents and the community increased through numerous youth-led campaign activities. Children now have direct access points to local leaders. A 'base camp' was set up at the village government office to coordinate efforts. Several safe child friendly public spaces were also constructed, such as public parks and playgrounds, by lobbying local government and influencing urban planning.
- The Joyful Learning Development (JLD), a community children's club, is the backbone of these empowerment efforts. WV continued and expanded this initiative, begun by Plan International, successfully ensuring a safe and collaborative space for children and youth. Education, life skills, leadership and self-development are nurtured through workshops, events, trainings and recreational activities. 'I fell in love with Pegirian when I started collaborating with JLD,' said one youth evaluation respondent. JLD was invited to participate in the village's annual policy-planning processes.
- Community awareness of child and basic human rights is increasing through WV's involvement, but it is still inadequate. The pilot evaluation recommended continuing the WV urban strategy of simultaneous village-level community awareness raising and city-level advocacy.

WV's intentional role as a 'catalyser'

- U STAR's strategic approach of working within existing power structures and 'catalysing' existing political will and pro-child initiatives was seen as an 'intelligent' and 'most effective' strategy. WV's continuation of the JLD club resulted in tangible positive changes in children's development and behaviour, as well as increased community trust and involvement. This motivated stakeholders at all levels to invest in the pilot's intangible 'soft' architecture building. The JLD model has received increased attention from district and city levels.
- The main lesson to be drawn is the need for better articulation of strategy. This includes WV's urban vision and methodology, a consolidated theory of change, and WV's added value to existing initiatives, as well as potentially greater transparency in its organisational structure and budget.

Contributing to an enabling policy environment to advance the national Child Friendly Cities movement

- U STAR was instrumental in contributing to the practical development of the Child Friendly Villages initiative at the village level, including community awareness, strategic advocacy and direct participation of children into decision-making processes. The project's advocacy efforts, in collaboration with the coalition of NGOs, had two important policy outcomes: (1) the official municipal declaration of Surabaya's commitment to Child Friendly Cities and (2) the 2011 Child Protection Bill. WV also gained an advocacy presence at the Healthy City Forum. A prevailing challenge is the need to reframe policy discussions with a city-wide lens that includes urban areas beyond the affluent 'booming' economic zones and formal housing areas.
- U STAR's sustainability strategy is based on creating both bilateral issue-based partnerships and a civil society network platform of partners. The project received positive feedback from partners regarding WV's efforts to build trust and capacity. However, its reliance on strong personal rather than institutional relationships may present future sustainability challenges. Community respondents noted that direct relationships with village-level government was 'easy and good', but that more work is needed to improve community access at higher municipal and sub-municipal levels.
- The project's abstract output goals posed another challenge. As one evaluation respondent succinctly summarised, 'Advocacy works well in Indonesia if you have a tangible example to show the government; otherwise they get confused and lose interest.' U STAR's successor project, U Health, has addressed this gap by including more tangible outputs (for example, catfish husbandry).

BEIRUT: PEACEBUILDING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Context

Beirut is one of the most cosmopolitan urban centres in the Middle East. The city has an extraordinarily diverse and complex social geography that traverses political affiliations, religious and sectarian identities, culture, linguistics, socio-economic characteristics, geographical placement and background origin. Beirut has a long history of inter-state and intra-state conflict and security tensions, as well as multiple large-scale population movements. Its rapid urbanisation further complicates the religious and political rifts among its highly stratified population. The target AER/Chiyah neighbourhood is precariously positioned along the historic 'green line' which divided Christians and Muslims during the Lebanese civil war (1975–90). It is located on the outskirts of Beirut and has an extremely high population density (more than 90,000 persons over its 1.875 square kilometres). The neighbourhood straddles two administrative municipalities and therefore lacks clear administrative jurisdiction. The area corresponds to historical sets of social and political identifiers. Its diverse social groupings continuously negotiate boundaries against one another to gain majority representation, often demarcated physically (such as by flags and graffiti) throughout the neighbourhood. These same social boundaries deeply affect experiences of space, power, poverty, vulnerability and identity. As elsewhere in Lebanon, AER residents rely on informal social networks (*wasta*), often with clear religious-political affiliations, to access basic services and employment opportunities. The unaffiliated, such as refugees, become excluded.

The AER/Chiyah region has the highest urban refugee concentration, with over one million registered Syrian refugees hosted as of June 2014 (UNHCR 2014). Ongoing migration strains the delicate political balance along religious lines, where power and access are allocated according to identity groupings. Common to many post-conflict cities, AER has crumbling infrastructure, with limited resources or accountability to maintain or repair them. Poverty and vulnerability are demonstrated through a stagnated economic environment with high unemployment rates and a deteriorating security situation. Children and youth, particularly from unaffiliated refugee homes, are among the most vulnerable.

Approach

Political developments and the influence of changing demographics on the political co-habitational balance have the biggest impact on community relations. Therefore, in accordance with the innovative urban action research methodology, focusing on flexible, responsive, adaptive, and relevant approach, the Beirut urban pilot (2009–2013) aimed to ‘achieve cooperative, accepting and resilient communities that foster education and a peaceful environment’. Peacebuilding was chosen as its single-issue entry point to bring about wider transformational change and improve the living conditions and opportunities for children and youth. WV invested in the mobilisation of youth following the organisation’s post-2006 war-recovery activities. It aimed to build resilience to historical tensions and move the next generation closer to community cohesion. Through peace and civic education, and building local capacities for emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation, the pilot brought together youths from different backgrounds to participate in youth-led activities and groups. This enabled peers to explore the challenges their society faces. WV also worked to improve a supportive education environment and train youth in life skills to assist them in driving positive social change.



Lebanese youth transforming public space into peaceful environments.

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Empowering local youth to self-organise and self-mobilise to achieve peacebuilding and social cohesion goals

- Youths participating in this project became catalysts for change within their own communities. These WV-supported and youth-led activities aimed at promoting understanding, tolerance and acceptance amongst children and youth from diverse political, religious and ethnic groups, including youth from long-existing Palestinian refugee camps. Due to WV’s continuous outreach and engagement with new organisations, such as existing peacebuilding groups and a youth basketball committee, local activism and youth-led engagement has significantly increased.
- WV supported the youth of the AER neighbourhood and Palestinian refugee camps to gather for a number of activities about conflict transformation and social cohesion, for example, in peace camps. Youth-led initiatives also included a music video production on the marginalisation of youth in decision-making processes and a ‘green spaces’ initiative. Youth also established a street-violence protection system in the AER/Chiyah area. They have begun working on an awareness-raising documentary highlighting key neighbourhood issues and how to address them. One youth group successfully acquired multiple funding sources to sustain its activities.
- The deteriorating security situation has discouraged parents from sending their children to the project’s youth activities. This highlighted the importance of establishing wider support networks and risk-mitigation strategies. The parents’ association was seen as a particularly effective way to address this, bringing together previously mistrustful parents in an effective model of interfaith cooperation.

Developing strategic partnerships in the urban context in order to achieve developmental sustainability

- WV's active role in developing public-private partnerships has helped ensure sustained intra-community and inter-community relations and trust. All youth-group activities were implemented in coordination with local authorities and various new partner organisations. In addition, the Disaster Mitigation and Peace Initiative Committee was formed to conduct a community-owned vulnerability and capacity assessment, from which a community-based disaster preparedness plan was developed. The pilot also strived to identify and engage with new organisations to expand its reach, including the Chiyah youth basketball committee.
- A major lesson was understanding the importance of partnerships and how partnerships relate to actual practice. For example, the pilot evaluation highlighted the importance of building awareness and consensus over key principles for successful participatory implementation. It also showed the added value that collaboration with likeminded organisations can have on the success and maturity of projects.
- The political nature of the Lebanese context has given rise to some partnering challenges, particularly given the dominance of faith-based political parties over everyday service provision and access. Partners' reluctance to work with specific groups leads to clear discrimination against one large population group, compromising peacebuilding efforts from the outset. The meta-review recommends engaging with *all* stakeholders as an integral strategy in the urban context.

The challenge posed by high urban diversity and its politicisation on social solidarity and community relations

- The manifestation of diversity in the Lebanese context is highly complex, with multiple layers of identity differences grounded in contested geographical territories. Research participants almost unanimously perceived diversity as a 'threat' rather than a possible wealth of their community. It is believed they fear the potentially explosive violence of the type observed during the civil war but also – and more simply put – a dilution of their own political, religious or national identity and its associated power within the neighbourhood. Research participants tended to dismiss the poverty of refugees and migrant workers (due to a prevailing perception of pro-discrimination aid and opportunities), perceiving their own group as most disadvantaged. Such perceptions increased animosity levels and hindered community cohesion and long-term development goals. The project team concluded that it was essential to train people to see diversity as a positive neighbourhood characteristic.

Contributing to the urban action research approach, methodology and evaluative framework

- The Beirut urban pilot is an excellent example of strategic adaptability and evidence-based programmatic evolution in the urban environment, particularly given the volatile security history, complicated most recently by the Syrian crisis. WV's existing work in Beirut largely utilised the traditional LEAP design, seeking to improve children's well-being through direct service delivery and economic development. After the 2006 Israeli-Lebanon war the organisation shifted towards humanitarian relief and peacebuilding. The urban pilot built upon this history, transitioning from humanitarian relief and service delivery towards education, life skills and peacebuilding development.
- The Beirut pilot has faced organisational challenges, given the fluidity and fast-paced nature of the urban political context and frequent staff changes. The pilot will need to develop further its procedural flexibility, including administration, information management and lesson sharing.
- The final pilot evaluation produced important contributions in terms of creating long-term sustainable approaches and structures at a city-wide scale. The Child Friendly Streets initiative has already seen the success of AER youth expanding and engaging with wider neighbourhoods, initiating positive social change in those areas. Currently, the possibility of a larger Beirut youth network is being tested, with a view to creating a broader development vision that scales up local community-based projects to a city-wide programme.

Part 3: Meta-Review Themes

Approach to Meta-Review

From the outset, the Urban CoE planned to integrate findings, conclusions and recommendations from all six pilot projects into a consolidated meta-analysis. This was an important step in developing improved, robust programming models to drive sustained change in urban contexts through the explicit acknowledgement of the dynamism, diversity and density characterising urban communities.

In order to facilitate the meta-review and ensure a level of analytical consistency amongst very different pilot projects and their respective urban contexts, the meta-evaluations applied a comparative analysis methodology to the diverse project models, approaches, goals and results. The review took into consideration the specific contextual characteristics of each urban site and target community. It also considered the political and social environment for change, and WV's own capacity, expertise and limitations working in the chosen sector. Both quantitative and qualitative tools were employed for evaluations.

The Urban CoE specifically developed the UMF to guide a consistent, coherent and insightful comparative analysis amongst all six pilot projects. The framework consists of key urban themes, questions and indicators to be explored across the six country contexts. In the early assessment stages of the implementation phase (2008–2013), this directed individual pilot projects to formulate their baseline assessment studies and project designs to respond directly to relevant contextual urban issues.

The UMF also assisted the pilots to identify an appropriate implementation space for WV in the existing development territory in the target area, as well as existing urban partners, policies and initiatives. This ensured that the projects avoided programmatic duplications, competition and contradictions with other actors. In its global evaluation phase after implementations were concluded (2013–14), the UMF provided a structured evaluative framework to collect, analyse and evaluate data across key urban themes in the different city contexts. This permitted the meta-review to extrapolate commonalities in thematic lessons and to project successes and limitations as well as localised lessons. The framework was designed to provide an analytical overview of thematic commonalities on urban issues and to incorporate mechanisms facilitating its adaptation to local conditions. This included the capacity to extend evaluation questions to incorporate specific issue areas relevant to the context. This balance allowed some level of comparison amongst the projects on common issues, such as the diversity of urban context, participation, partnering, governance and social accountability, but it does not limit the UMF's ability to investigate the specificities of each project.

The meta-review is structured around three common themes: the urban context, the enabling environment and existing WV organisational capacity in the urban environment.

- *Urban context:* What impacts do urban density, diversity and dynamism have on programmes? How do differing levels of poverty and urban vulnerabilities affect programme outcomes?
- *Enabling environment:* How do partnering, creating networks and connections increase the potential for programme effectiveness and scale-up plans? How are programmes affected by the nature of urban governance, power dynamics, formal structures and accountability? How did WV create an enabling environment for sustainable development in the city?
- *Organisational capacity:* Do WV organisational systems and structures enable urban programming efficiency and effectiveness? Is the existing internal staff capacity suitable for urban contexts?

Summary of Results

All six pilot projects completed their first phase of programme implementation by 2013. Their individual project meta-review evaluations (for contribution to the UPI's first meta-review cycle) were conducted and concluded between 2013 and 2014. These evaluations highlighted both common and specific needs, vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities

within the urban environment, as well as WV's capabilities to address these issues in order to achieve sustainable child-focused poverty reduction. The evaluations also provided a measure of the effectiveness and impact for each pilot project and its ability to operate in urban areas. They also provided a general assessment of the action research methodology advanced by the Urban CoE for its ability to respond to urban learning and programming challenges.

The causes of poverty are complex and driven by country-specific and city-specific issues across physical, social, economic, political and environmental dimensions. The effects of urban poverty, however, are clear. This meta-review confirmed some common features of urban poverty across the six country contexts (seven city contexts). It is, therefore, imperative for WV to consider the following common characteristics in its design and implementation of urban programmes:

- Children are often the first group to suffer the consequences of urban poverty and vulnerability.
- Urban neighbourhoods are fragmented and diverse. Building and strengthening communities is critical to building stronger neighbourhoods and socially cohesive societies within city spaces.
- Poor urban communities often experience greater food insecurity than their rural counterparts because they frequently rely on informal, unregulated, cash-based economies and thus exhibit greater vulnerability to fluctuations in the markets.
- Unlike rural areas, urban housing conditions are insecure and expensive. Many families living in overcrowded housing resort to sleeping in rotation. Overcrowding is also an enabling condition for various transmittable diseases.
- Although social services are generally more available and expansive in urban areas, access for the most vulnerable is often denied. This is exacerbated by the informal, unregistered status of many urban slum inhabitants.
- A shortage of credible data to support programme assessment and design remains.
- The political context of many urban centres is complex and challenging, with dense and complicated networks of actors. In order to be effective in its city activities, WV needs to ensure a good level of visibility and to articulate a clear value proposition.
- Governance and coordination problems result in policy failures that worsen conditions for the urban poor.
- As an organisation, WV needs to be agile and to be able to adapt to ever-changing urban dynamics.
- 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.

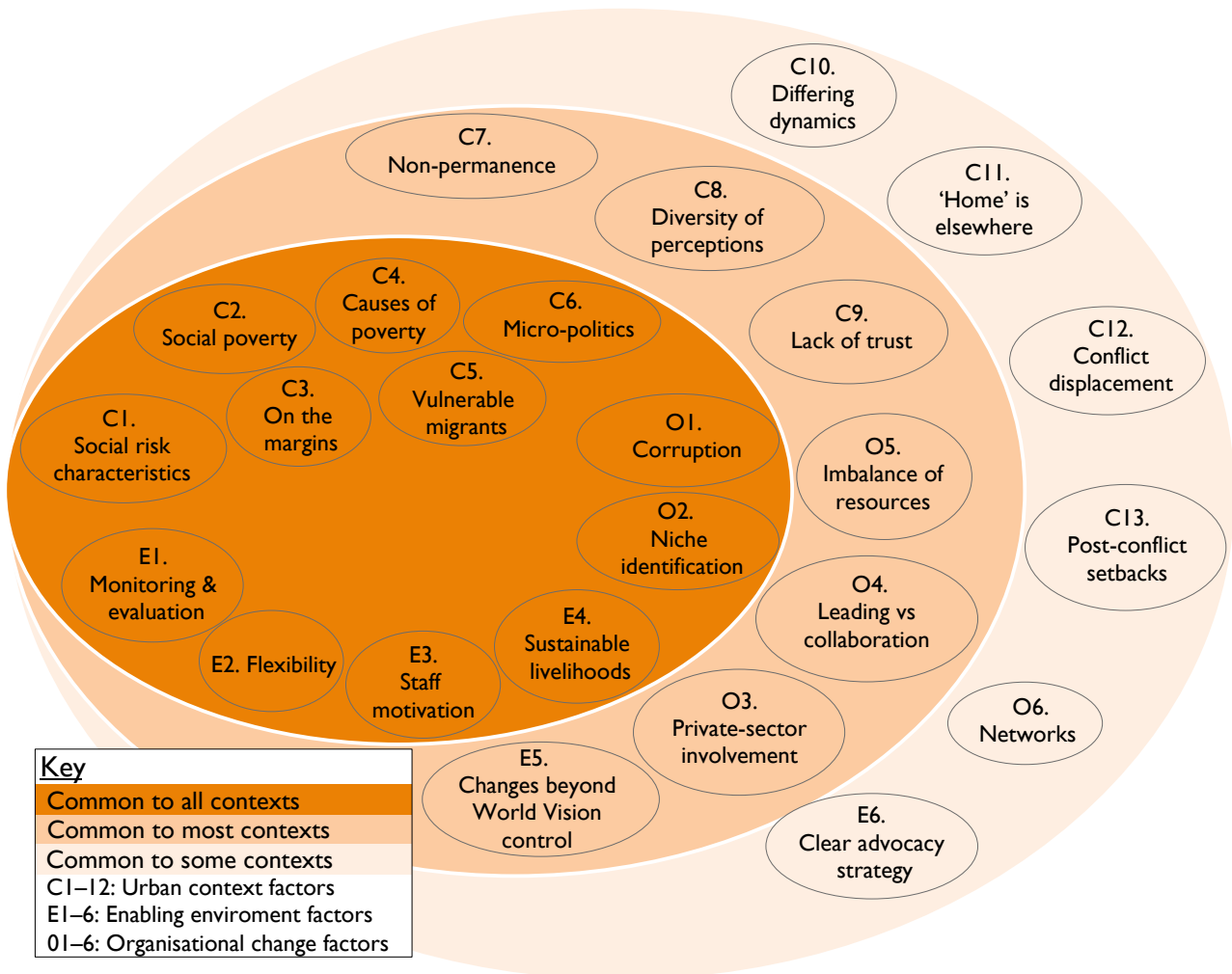
While urban centres clearly share commonalities, warnings continue to be reiterated throughout urban studies literature (for example, Satterthwaite 2007) to avoid generalisations and presumptions about the nature of cities, towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods. Operationally derived evidence from the pilot projects aligns compellingly with this advice. Every pilot witnessed a city in flux – of communities struggling with dynamic change, of local governments desperately in need of data, models and ideas to reach the most vulnerable sites and citizens through inclusive policies and programmes.

Similarly, the meta-review demonstrates that, while there are common issues across the urban sites (such as quality and access of education for poor vulnerable children), the distinct political, economic, cultural and historical background of each urban context requires *context-specific interventions* rather than standardised approaches. This directly supports the fundamental concepts of relevancy, adaptability/flexibility and responsiveness that drive the exploratory action-research methodology advocated by WV and the Urban CoE. The pilot project in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, provides a good example of contextualisation around a pertinent local issue. The issue of land security and tenure was found to be an important enabling factor in the pursuit of holistic child well-being. It was, therefore, an important entry point through

which WVV could contribute meaningfully to holistic urban poverty reduction. Land tenure was the strategic entry point around which the pilot project organised its development activities and engagement with partners, governments and the community. This prevented the project’s attention and resources from being dispersed too ambitiously or working unproductively within the existing density of urban actors.

Figure 6 presents the 25 key urban characteristics identified from the UPI research and individual pilot evaluations. These characteristics are mapped according to commonality vs. uniqueness across the diverse pilot project contexts. They are grouped according to the three meta-analysis themes of (1) urban contexts; (2) enabling environment; and (3) organisational change. In Table 4 they are further explained with specific evidence emerging from the pilot projects as well as the frequency with which they occur.

Figure 6. Key characteristics identified through the UPI as essential considerations in urban programming



In the following section an explanation is provided for each of these 25 key urban characteristics, including its background and implications for urban programming.

The Inner Circle

E1. Monitoring and evaluation. Faster, more adaptable and broader approaches to monitoring and evaluation are required to respond to the dynamic nature of the urban context. Data needs to be collected using quantitative and qualitative tools. Storytelling was promoted as a method to document changes in the urban environment.

Measuring social change is very difficult in cities. This is especially true when social change is of an intangible nature, achieved through intangible activities of urban advocacy or using WV's CVA to increase empowerment. For example, child clubs and youth groups encouraged children to build peaceful and cohesive relationships through critical engagement and heightening awareness of their city across traditional social, political and physical barriers. However, the pilots found that these activities were often difficult to measure, particularly in terms of tangible outputs, external outcomes and child well-being indicators. Similarly, the enormous time resources staff invested into facilitation activities or 'soft' development (meetings, public gatherings, stakeholder engagement, coalition building, individual referrals to service providers, and so forth) was not always duly acknowledged using the standard monitoring and evaluation tools, which are biased towards tangible inputs and outputs.

E2. Flexibility. Urban programmes need to have shorter timeframes and more flexible allocation of resources compared to the standard WV programming systems and processes. All pilots found a need for greater flexibility in order to adapt new innovations and models to the fast-paced and fluid urban environment. Local partners noted WV's limited capability for flexible collaboration and planning compared to what was needed. This differs from the standard long-term ADP approach (usually 10–15 years). As such, responsive adaptation was revealed to be an important component of urban programming success. This insight was not always understood by internal WV stakeholders who were complacent about using traditional procedures. In activities that require longer periods of time, systems of compliance were set up to deliver logframes.

E3. Staff motivation. The presence of 'wicked' and complex challenges in urban contexts confused and drained staff motivation, particularly as progress often can appear slow. Historically, WV systems have been geared towards rural activities, with their large support network. In the pilots staff were sometimes frustrated by a lack of urban programming guidance from their local offices. Furthermore, staff knowledge of the city's political, historical and economic dimensions was limited if they were not from the area themselves (which is usually the case). To overcome the challenge of staff motivation, it is critical to ensure that WV presents itself as a transparent and responsive organisation open to learning and evolving. The training of staff in context-specific knowledge, urban-specific approaches and cross-sharing of lessons and challenges from the different pilot projects not only increased their capacity to respond to complexity, but also contributed to an improved sense of progress and satisfaction.

E4. Sustainable livelihoods. Livelihood programming aimed at generating employment is a non-negotiable component of urban programming. It was deemed crucial by WV, partners and community members in all cases.

C1. Social risk. Social risks differ across various cross-sections of urban societies. Certain urban groups are more vulnerable to social risks than others. This depends on various factors, such as cultural or religious differences and other forms of formal or informal discrimination. For example, the Madurese of Surabaya, Indonesia, were generally found to face greater social risks than their majority Javanese counterparts. Understanding and addressing the underlying causes of disparate social risk characteristics will require more long-term investments and partnerships.

C2. Social vulnerability. In each study area researchers were able to identify some of the causes of urban poverty and vulnerability, which almost invariably included a lack of voice or visibility in decision-making processes, limited access to local private or public services (which were often inadequate), insufficient infrastructure and fragile and/or unresponsive institutions. This was particularly the case for those deemed to be illegal occupants (such as refugees or unregistered urban migrants) and for those from a history of exclusion or oppression.

C3. On the margins. In all of the pilot project cities, increased urbanisation was partially driven by economic growth. The higher costs of living in urban centres forced the urban poor to occupy areas they were able to afford, usually on the fringes of the city or in underdeveloped or unsafe pockets of land (such as riverbanks, swamp lands, drainage channels or along train tracks). It is usually in such places that illegal urban settlements or 'slum areas' proliferate.

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

C5. Vulnerable migrants. Throughout the pilot projects the newest urban arrivals were typically found to dwell in the most vulnerable communities. They face a multifaceted amalgamation of vulnerabilities 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 unjustifiably stealing resources meant for existing residents. Of the six pilots, Beirut experienced the most rapid population growth from migration. The Syrian conflict brought a large influx of refugees to the city, skyrocketing urban population figures in the space of a few short years. The meta-review study found a range of issues faced by Beirut's poor urban residents as a direct result of their urban poverty and exacerbated by increased population density. These vulnerabilities included unemployment, child labour and child trafficking, community instability and conflict, insecurity of housing tenure, and unstable access to local governments and services.

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 on the micro level can also act to disadvantage the poor. Official investments tend to support and service those with significant voice in the community, while the voiceless remaining underserved and ignored.

O1. Corruption. Corruption appears to be a pertinent issue at all levels of government. This presents important operational challenges for urban programming because urban development is necessarily political. Success depends on productive partnerships with all stakeholders, including government institutions and official authorities. It is, therefore, difficult for development actors to remain neutral when choosing partnerships and advocacy targets. WV 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 resilience to the frequent changes in power and political leadership.

O2. Niche identification. Ambitious project scopes that attempted to address multiple social challenges in a complex, dense and dynamic environment were found to be overwhelming to project staff, particularly during the early programmatic stages. Based on the lessons derived from WV's continuous innovative action research methodology and approach, the Urban CoE encouraged pilots to carve out 'niche' implementation spaces for their activities by selecting single-issue entry points and action areas. As expected, the meta-review data strongly support this issue-based approach as possessing strong advantages over the traditional large-scale programming approach (with multiple interventions in various sectors). Regular shared learning and reflection workshops across the pilot projects ensured a high level of responsiveness to changing urban conditions. As a result, two pilot projects decided to redesign their project scope in order to narrow to a single-issue entry point based on the most pertinent contextual issue uncovered.

The Middle Circle

Note: Not all of the following themes were necessarily highlighted in every meta-review.

E5. Changes beyond control. Often the issues that were being addressed in the pilot projects were long-term, 'wicked' problems and, as such, required interventions outside of WV's scope and control. Additionally, various external factors have the ability fundamentally to affect urban programming 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 or sense of belonging to the community. This is often the case with economic migrants with strong ties to their original 'home' communities, who regularly seek new opportunities elsewhere and invest little time or resources to their immediate neighbourhoods.

C8. Diversity of perceptions. The high levels of diversity and disparity across groupings and strata of urban populations can have an impact on the way individual urban residents or groups perceive events, vulnerabilities, opportunities, challenges, potential collaboration and partnerships, and accessible resources. For example, this was found to be an important challenge for social cohesion in the Beirut pilot project.

C9. Lack of trust. Cultivating trust with community stakeholders and with government and NGO implementing partners is crucial to successful urban programming. For instance, the city mayor was an influential driver of change in the La Paz and Surabaya pilots, and therefore an important stakeholder to engage with. However, it was also found that the pilot projects enjoying the highest levels of relationship stability and productivity with government partners were those with strong organisational relationships to government *institutions* rather than strong personal relationships with individual partisan politicians. On the local level several pilots struggled with effective community engagement. The target population was usually geographically dispersed and mobile, making area-defined improvements less appealing for the urban poor, who often viewed their living situation as only ‘temporary’. Vulnerable individuals who deliberately sought to stay ‘under the radar’ of government authorities were particularly distrustful.

O3. Private-sector involvement. Partnering with the business sector is essential for urban development. WV’s voice was not the only one calling for greater ‘corporate citizenship’. While several pilots found that natural synergies of goals and interests exist with corporate partners, in general, such partnerships were initiated late in the ideal timeline due to the low confidence of project staff in their ability to win and manage partnerships of this nature.

O4. Leading vs. collaboration. The pilot projects’ experiences in forming urban partnerships, including those with local development organisations and governance authorities, showed that WV is valued and welcomed as an urban actor. This is partly due to the fact that WV is a well-respected international development organisation with significant exposure and resources. Most partners preferred WV in a facilitating role – contributing ideas, coordinating resources, assisting in network building amongst diverse local stakeholders. However, the ‘soft’ nature of the role is not always well understood and over the long term will require greater articulation of purpose, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and consistency. In other cases WV’s success and centrality in establishing thriving partnerships and networks resulted in a dependency problem; that is, partners would be unlikely to function as successfully without WV’s presence. This is particularly so in 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. This can naturally lead to an imbalance of power. Power, resource or visibility imbalances make it difficult for WV to develop an effective exit strategy and transition project activities to local actors while ensuring project outcomes continue to gain sustainability. In some cases, such as Orlando East, it was suggested that the time limitation of the pilot project made ‘sustainability’ an ambitious partnering indicator of success. Further, in the interim there was an ambiguous relationship between the detrimental creation of dependencies among partners, on the one hand, and the benefit of providing local actors with enough support to achieve at least some positive changes, on the other.

The Outer Circle

E6. Clear advocacy strategy. One important component of the WV urban approach is the prioritisation of building ‘soft’ infrastructure (facilitation, partnering and networking, advocacy) over direct implementation as a way to create an enabling environment for long-lasting sustainable change. As expected by the context-specific approach entailed in WV’s urban action research methodology, no pilot project conducted its advocacy strategy in the same way. This was most revealing in the Siliguri and Kanpur projects. Siliguri required greater policy action, and its advocacy strategy was mobilised around the formation of a partner coalition with a clear and defined policy goal. In Kanpur, advocacy took the form of less formal partnerships in order to effect behavioural change, enforcement and political accountability for *already existing* policies. Furthermore, as ‘soft’ development relies on intangible indicators and outputs, it is important to articulate clearly the project’s value proposition, as well as to develop a better monitoring and evaluation strategy to capture real achievements and challenges.

C10. Differing dynamics. Urban communities differ immensely in their local social structures and community dynamics. For example, some have had stable populations for over 15 years, while others change demographics every few months. Responding to the varying and fluctuating dynamics increases programmatic complexity and organisational flexibility.

C11. 'Home' is elsewhere. This variance is related to 'C7. Non-permanence' above. Many residents of informal poor urban settlements continue to associate 'home' with their place of origin. This is particularly the case for economic urban migrants who retain strong familial, kinship, cultural, economic (by sending money to families) and land ties. Such residents view their urban living situation as a temporary inconvenience, regardless of the actual length of their residency. In both Phnom Penh and Surabaya even long-term residents (over 10 years) may still regard themselves as temporary residents. This transient mentality can manifest itself in a multitude of negative effects that exacerbate their urban poverty and vulnerability. These effects include sending scarce financial resources back to the extended family at 'home' (even at the expense of children's education or nutrition) or showing a lack of willingness to participate in social-cohesion activities because residents expect to 'move on' soon.

C12. Conflict displacement. Forced displacement due to conflict or natural disasters, and the resulting rapid influxes of displaced persons on existing urban populations, 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, particularly if local administrators and governments lack the resources, capabilities, technical know-how and/or political will to match the growth from an urban-planning perspective.

C13. Post-conflict setbacks. Post-conflict settings are highly volatile, offering innumerable opportunities for both progress and setbacks. Already operating in one of the world's most complex cities, the Beirut pilot project occurred at a time when cross-border migration was so significant that it doubled the city's existing urban population. Through the continuous reflection-evaluation cycles of WV's urban action research methodology, it became clear that even the lessons learned during the pilot project might no longer be applicable in three to five years' time in Beirut. Such a finding highlights the need for real-time mapping, data and reporting if programmes in volatile contexts are to continue to be relevant and successful for beneficiaries.

O6. Networks. Effective communication with partner organisations and the formation of effective working networks are critical for urban programming. Inclusive mapping is essential to develop an operational understanding of the various crosscutting interests, agendas and issues among different community groups in complex urban societies. In the case of the AER/Chiyah neighbourhood in Beirut, numerous dynamic perception divisions existed even within the micro levels of the neighbourhood itself. Moreover, in several pilots it was found that local stakeholders held certain expectations of WV based on its standard operating model (for example, several pilots faced expectations of financial compensation ['sponsorship'] for locals' participation in WV development activities). This points to the need for an effective and consistent communication strategy to clearly articulate goals, approaches and intentions, as well as to manage expectations. Doing so includes communicating a succinct and desirable value proposition for WV's interventions.

Table 4. Details and evidence for 25 characteristics identified through the UPI as critical for consideration in urban programming

| | Issues identified | Evidence of urban issues influencing programming approaches (taken from the individual pilot project meta-review reports) | Frequency |
|---------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| Urban Context | C1. Social risk | 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 vulnerability | Social vulnerability 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 causes are 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 meant for existing residents. (See 'C-1. Social risk'.) | All cities |
| | C6. Micro-politics | Micro-politics can drive disparity of opportunity for households and neighbourhoods. | 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 perceive their environments, resources and vulnerabilities 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 span generations of families, while others have perpetually changing residents. | All cities |
| | 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. | Beirut |
| | 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 (taken from the individual pilot project meta-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 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 fieldwork. | All cities |
| | E4. Sustainable livelihoods | Sustainable-livelihood programming, particularly for the 'youth bulge' of cities, is a priority urban solution. | All cities |
| | E5. Changes beyond control | The chosen issue-based entry points and action areas call for massive, long-term shifts in culture and responsibility which happen external to WV. | Beirut, Kanpur, Siliguri |
| | E6. Clear advocacy strategy | When the project focus was on city-wide advocacy, it was difficult for project 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 can be a barrier to success and requires great sensitivity. | All cities |
| | O2. Niche identification | With so many actors operating within a single urban area, WV 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 | There were some cases where WV, as a well-respected INGO with social, human, financial and political capital, was inadvertently placed into a leading position in its collaboration with local partner organisations and institutions. Unintended dependencies were created with some partners despite the pilots' efforts to encourage partner sustainability and autonomy. However, in other cases partners were enabled and empowered to lead through WV's involvement. | Orlando East, La Paz, Phnom Penh, Kanpur, Siliguri |
| | O5. Imbalance of resources | Partner organisations may not be as visible or well resourced as WV. 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 Learned by Research Themes

In this section an analysis of the meta-lessons learned across the urban contexts and specific lessons from individual urban pilot project sites is discussed in detail. The discussion follows the general guiding themes laid out in the Urban Meta-Review Framework, namely, the urban context, the enabling environment, and the organisational adaptation and capacity.

The Urban Context

Urban culture is defined by the dense and fascinating mosaic of individuals, cultures and sub-cultures; social dynamics; socio-economic strata; politico-historical influences; and normative paradigms. All of these coalesce within a finite geographical space. While this report acknowledges and integrates a nuanced understanding of *urban* into its analysis, a true in-depth representation of the seven urban environments found in the six UPI pilot projects cannot be fully represented here. Instead, this meta-review narrative focuses on the main thematic commonalities found across all six pilots. It proposes improvements to WV's future urban programming and contributes new insights into global urban research and new technical and programming innovations to the international development sector. While it is necessary to understand the context-specific causes and effects of poverty, the research initiative uncovered a myriad of common thematic issues faced by urban residents as a direct result of their poverty, as well as a range of contributing factors increasing their vulnerability to urban poverty.



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

The dense, diverse and dynamic nature of urban environments continuously triggers new challenges and opportunities for relevant urban programming. Practitioners will need to ensure that the initial gap analysis and risk mapping are conducted accurately and comprehensively to support effective design and implementation. It is highly recommended that shorter cycles of assessment, reflection and application be conducted regularly, so that the project can continue to meet the real-time needs of poor urban communities.

Obstacles to urban programming are not always of a general 'urban' nature. At times, specificities of a particular urban setting – the 'DNA' of the city – can generate challenges. Some specific examples emerging from the pilot projects included the following:

- fractured city planning in La Paz due to a highly charged and competitive political culture and to hesitation of social and political figureheads to engage with one another
- the dysfunctional and highly political context of Soweto in Orlando East, engendered by its legacy as an international symbol of poverty and oppression during Apartheid times and exacerbated by unbalanced employment supply and demand
- dissent and distrust in Beirut – a symptom of decades of socio-religious conflict, with social healing constantly interrupted by further upheaval
- cultural tolerance for child labour in Kanpur, particularly for poor families who encourage children to contribute to family income because they lack access to a quality school system and see no viable alternative to address adult unemployment

- demand for cheap child labour and illegal issues, such as the sex trade, in Siliguri, a known transit point for human trafficking, which is heightened by India's porous borders
- low community participation in Cambodia due to the recent and ongoing culture of fear resulting from historical and political issues
- under-representation of Madurese children in the school system in Surabaya, given the chronic and historical marginalisation against their ethnic group.

Successful, sustainable, long-term urban development and poverty-reduction activities must not only address the universal urban challenges but also target the prevalent issues and root causes specific to each urban context. Therefore, a holistic intervention is generally both urban specific and contextually issue based. The knowledge derived from this first meta-review cycle recommends three non-negotiable components that must be included in any successful issue-based urban approach:

- **Child and adolescent protection:** Limited opportunities for disadvantaged young people and their families, such as migrant groups, almost always lead to violence and a breakdown of security.
- **Primary/secondary education:** Giving children access to education and keeping them learning longer reduce the cycle of low opportunity that affects many disadvantaged families.
- **Livelihoods:** High unemployment promotes child labour and is a major contributor to intergroup and intergenerational discrimination and exploitative conditions.

This meta-review report consolidates the research findings and provides a more detailed analysis of the lessons emerging from the operational research and implementation experience of the UPI pilot projects. The findings are framed in terms of the three dimensions that constitute the urban context: (1) social-cultural diversity, (2) mobility and dynamism, and (3) levels and causes of urban poverty.

Lessons on Socio-Cultural Diversity

In zones of high socio-cultural diversity – for example, where multiple communities or identity groups reside within a single geographical area – experiences, perspectives, vulnerabilities and opportunities can differ widely from group to group. A defining characteristic of the Beirut pilot project is the social and political power accorded with political and religious allegiances, based on physical (often overlapping and ambiguous) territorial boundaries. Therefore, not only did the shifting boundaries reflect fluctuating renegotiations of inter-community power dynamics, the lived experience of each resident was also greatly influenced by the social group and territory to which the person belonged. Once again, proximity does not mean access. In the Beirut context access was largely dependent on social and informal affiliations framed around political-religious allegiances.

Such urban diversity becomes programmatically challenging as early as the initial baseline assessment and design phase. Compared to the generally more homogenous communities in rural settings, it is more difficult to create inclusive structures for community consultation and project planning if social cohesion levels in the target communities are low. For example, in the Surabaya pilot the social fragmentation and cultural mistrust between the original Javanese inhabitants and the later Madurese labour migrants led to various degrees of social marginalisation that effectively excluded the Madurese from community participation. Despite the pilot's efforts to build an inclusive participatory structure, it was largely unsuccessful in ensuring adequate levels of Madurese participation, despite identifying them as the most marginalised and vulnerable (and therefore most important beneficiary) group. Conversely, the La Paz pilot intentionally selected target neighbourhoods with high concentrations of the marginalised Aymara ethnic group. Once again, however, inclusive programming was difficult. The pilot took care to ensure that the pro-discrimination strategy for the Aymara did not exclude all other community members and, therefore, did not increase social distrust or disunity amongst diverse social groups.

It would be inaccurate to describe any city as ‘lacking’ or ‘low’ in cultural diversity. However, Phnom Penh and Orlando East showed significantly lower diversity among cultural or religious groups. This did not lessen levels of social dissent and inequity, and it does not preclude other forms of diversity (for example, Phnom Penh was found to have low cultural-religious diversity but high and influential political-economic diversity). As with urban contexts more generally, the newly arrived poor urban migrants (rural-urban in Phnom Penh, transnational labour migrants in Orlando East) were the most vulnerable and the most likely to end up in exploitative jobs, substandard housing and subject to violence and ostracism. This may have contributed to the difficulty pilot projects faced in terms of mobilising these marginalised target communities. In Phnom Penh, residents at risk of forced eviction were surprisingly passive about their future, 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 within living memory, and residents appeared to take the approach of ‘keeping one’s 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 and a driver of its context. Their interrelationships are complex.

Conclusion: Diversity is not a driver of poverty – marginalisation is. Where one group is under-represented in the community, the resulting discrepancies of opportunity and service provision have a negative impact on their ability to escape urban poverty. While cohesion and inclusion are appropriate reactive goals to protect children living in these contexts, a more active option is to focus on improving the availability and access of opportunities (in particular, job creation for parents and school leavers). This allows individuals to act for their own empowerment. Such an approach is not only the more sustainable option, but it has the potential to decrease the level of comparative or competitive attitudes present within the community and consequently strengthen social cohesion. Promoting inclusive collective action, therefore, is key to making city systems stronger and sustainable.

Lessons on Mobility and Dynamism

Inter-city and intra-city mobility was found to be prevalent in most of the six pilot projects. Such fluidity produces numerous direct and indirect factors characterising the ‘urban’ environment, as well as posing new hurdles and opportunities for development programming. Some of the programmatically important mobility and dynamism factors highlighted by this meta-review include heightened vulnerability for transient urban migrants, their rural-urban linkages, shortened project timeframes and urgency for regular data collection.

Heightened Vulnerabilities

According to the operational research derived from this UPI research initiative, highly transient and new urban migrants are among the most vulnerable social groups within the urban poor. This is particularly the case for their children. In order to understand the vulnerability associated with mobility and dynamism, we must view accessible household resources as key determinants to child well-being during urban mobility. Regardless of inter-city or intra-city mobility, the risks associated with urban migration are directly related to the household’s existing levels of poverty. Risks for children are heightened when the household moves to a community with existing tensions, high levels of crime or violence, or disputes over sharing limited community assets. This was a major cause for concern among communities facing eviction, who, upon eviction, would be forced to downgrade living conditions and move to more fragile urban settings. Often the most vulnerable in any city are the forced arrivals (for instance, Syrian refugees in Beirut), who bring scarce household resources and are most likely to settle, at least in the short term, in informal housing or illegal slum areas.

Rural-Urban Linkages

Frequent moves (particularly moves of short distances to other parts of the city) were often done in an easy and rapid and fairly spontaneous process. Most chose to relocate for better employment opportunities or to ‘move up’ from transient slum living, while others downsized to more affordable housing leases in underserved or undesirable urban zones due to lack of economic progress. At times, urban transience, particularly for urban migrants, is due to the

strong lingering emotional or economic connection to their rural ‘homes’ at the expense of their connection to their immediate urban neighbourhoods. This was evident in both Surabaya and Phnom Penh, where transient urban migrants perceived their current life as an economic necessity rather than a choice, often sending portions of their income back ‘home’ at the expense of their current quality of life and the well-being of their children. This research-derived insight calls for greater understanding of rural-urban linkages in city programmes.

Shortened Project Timeframes

Highly mobile residents tended to have limited interest in contributing or developing shared community resources because they were unlikely to remain to experience the benefits. The UPI timeframe of three to five years, though considerably shorter than WV’s usual ADP of 10–15 years, was still too lengthy a period to persuade temporary communities to participate in community activities. In response to this challenge the La Paz evaluation forwarded a suggestion to formulate portable mobile benefits to keep up with population mobility rather than focusing only on outputs relevant to a geographic neighbourhood.

Urgency of Regular and Accurate Data Collection

Strategically, 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 appropriately identified. The most vulnerable communities are constantly moving or being pushed into under-served, unsafe or undesirable areas of the city. Several project teams found it challenging to track trends of population movements and changing vulnerability, particularly given the programming shift from a highly localised programming approach (the traditional WV geographically based programming) to a municipal advocacy approach focusing on building ‘soft’ infrastructure. However, scale-up aspirations are important. They negate some of the challenges associated with impromptu mobility by diffusing programmatic impact and benefits beyond a single geographically confined urban zone to a city-wide reach. The evaluations concluded that the pilots needed more time and stronger data in order to plan a coherent city-wide programming strategy and to bring about effective widespread change.

Conflict Zones

Beirut stands out from the other five urban pilots because of its proximity and relationship with one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises in recent times, the Syrian conflict. Since the start of the conflict in 2011 refugees have been steadily settling legally in the AER neighbourhood, often assisted by government and non-government organisations. Yet long-established local communities are not being consulted in these settlement processes, including how best to accommodate the new arrivals. This is exacerbated by the fact that the neighbourhood already struggles to cope with shortages of liveable accommodations, widespread unemployment, political coercion and factional violence. The rapid influx of new, often desperate, arrivals has become a convenient scapegoat for existing residents in their frustration with their living situation. Even as the UPI pilot project measured initial successes for internal cohesion and recognition of valid diversities, new barriers of nationalism against the displaced Syrian population were emerging. Therefore, many social initiatives and projects in Lebanon, including World Vision’s, needed to respond quickly to the rise in risks of social fragmentation in order to lessen the belief that Syrian immigrants were being favoured with services and opportunities at the expense of long-term residents.

Conclusion: A dynamic and mobile city with highly transient populations is not necessarily a negative phenomenon if the benefits outweigh the inconveniences. In practical terms, high-mobility cities are more difficult to understand, predict and work within, particularly within WV’s long-term, geographically based sponsorship model. As such, data collection and regular rapid assessment through local networked partnerships can be mutually beneficial. In terms of programming, alternative project models can be established with a shorter-term focus and designed to actively assist the most vulnerable new arrivals. ‘Portable benefits’ can help encourage ongoing involvement of community members, wherever they live. Such portable benefits could include residency information about the city, access to leadership

development, engagement avenues with city decision-makers and networks, in-depth training on citizenship rights, and training on the planning and budgeting processes of the city to strengthen urban governance processes and pro-poor policies. As such, development actors and NGOs have important value as knowledge assets for local decision-makers. By value of their grassroots presence in target communities, development organisations are able to provide primary data to support more inclusive and accurate policymaking and pro-poor interventions. As an example, the Surabaya pilot team was essential in providing the right forms of primary data to support city planning in terms of a city-wide child friendly initiative. In tandem to this value, development organisations also have a role as knowledge distributors in linking local actors, institutions and vulnerable communities to higher levels of governance processes by building more accessible channels of information that ultimately support their own empowerment.

Lessons on Levels and Causes of Urban Poverty

In all six pilot projects under review, despite variations in contextual issues, the driving force of urban poverty was almost always due to a lack of adequate, stable and well-paid employment. Subsistence farming in the rural communities has transformed into ‘subsistence working’ in the urban environment. Income derived from subsistence working often does not sufficiently cover a household’s costs of rent, food, electricity and clothing at the higher urban prices. In the pilots, limited parental earning capacity had a strong correlation with, for instance, child labour and trafficking in Kanpur and Siliguri, school dropouts in Orlando East, factionalism in Beirut, marginalisation in Surabaya and housing security in Phnom Penh.

The reliance on a cash-based informal economy does not allow the urban poor to plan for the long term. These vulnerable communities live in an inconsistent, fluctuating, dynamic world of rising food prices, rent increases and informal payment for basic services, with little capacity to mitigate and absorb these long- and short-term shocks.

Urban centres rely on their labour force in order to prosper. For instance, the ports of Surabaya and the manufacturing bases of Kanpur and Phnom Penh rely heavily on their informal labour markets and vulnerable informal labour workers. However, access to opportunities is highly disparate within and between cities. In addition, while it is not unusual to see higher wages in urban areas, the migrant working poor often send money to family back in rural areas (particularly 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.

In the urban setting various barriers contribute to keeping the poor in poverty, such as discrimination, political corruption or low-income expectations of marginalised groups. This has the further effect of complicating the pilots’ ability to adapt the standard WV model designed for rural settings to improve economic conditions in urban environments. For example, in Kanpur widespread tolerance and perception of child labour as a valid financial contribution to reducing overall household vulnerability, particularly in the absence of quality schooling as a viable alternative, handicapped the pilot project’s anti-child-labour activities.

Traditionally, WV 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 were generally limited. However, WV’s experience in microcredit, self-help groups and vocational training has been helpful in the urban context for transitioning subsistence workers into legitimate small-business owners. Despite the fundamental necessity for creating economic sustainability for poor subsistence workers, the meta-review showed that rules for success in small business did not apply across all urban contexts. For instance, in Surabaya and Kanpur, owning a microbusiness (for example, a shop or street stall) proved to be more sustainable and successful if it provided more than one product or service. The problem is that such an improvement, even on a micro-enterprise level, proved expensive for stall owners to initiate, though results suggest the investment is worthwhile. Conversely, a study of small businesses in Soweto⁸ found ‘relatively high mortality rates’ for micro-enterprises – just under 40 per cent of businesses survived over four years,

8 University of South Africa’s Bureau of Market Research. 2009. *Small Business Success and Failure in Soweto: A Longitudinal Analysis (2007–2008)*.

with those remaining usually doing so by downsizing their original plans in order to recoup losses. The economic environment in these three pilot case studies was clearly not conducive to microbusiness productivity, and this limitation is likely to produce further downstream negative consequences for the urban poor, including being unable to sustain household income needs or limiting the creation of jobs at the micro level.

Economic causes are not the only factor contributing to urban poverty and vulnerability. 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. Risk are not confined to low-income households. Domestic violence and street violence affect a broad sector of society in poorly functioning neighbourhoods or cities, particularly where criminal and abusive behaviour is entrenched and where police enforcement is inadequate or mistrusted. At the city level a municipal government incorporating social and disaster risk planning into its services and infrastructure can have profound effect in increasing resilience to these symptoms of poverty, particularly for children. Such a dimension is discussed in 'The Enabling Environment' below.

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. WV must continue to improve its ability to work effectively with small enterprises. On the other hand, supporting and building medium- and large-scale employment opportunities will require partnerships with other urban actors, including corporations, government and labour-focused INGOs. In the meantime, physical and psychological safety for children is an urgent social programming issue for urban settings in order to enact transformational change to future generations. Of utmost importance is the need for a quality and accessible education system, as this can not only produce increased opportunities for children throughout their life cycle but also contribute to protection, participation and empowerment goals.

The Enabling Environment

All six urban pilot projects reiterated the importance of understanding WV's role within a larger network of urban actors and influences through which productive collaboration can have profound impact on poverty reduction and development. Contributing to the development of an effective enabling environment will require advocacy, negotiation and innovation, but this process is never straightforward. Operating effectively in the complex multi-actor urban environment may require WV to

- identify and expose the niche where under-representation is restricting the enablers of change, as in Phnom Penh
- act as a connector to increase the reach and scope of different agencies and bodies through united action, as in La Paz
- step in at the right point to continue or strengthen an existing initiative, as in Surabaya
- 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.

A key lesson from the six urban pilot case studies explores the changing roles of NGOs operating in urban environments and accentuates the importance of taking such insights into account when developing WV's operational strategy. In order for WV to operate strategically in the complicated and replete urban development landscape, the UPI guided its pilot projects to integrate 'soft' development principles into its programme design and implementation through building core 'soft' infrastructure, such as developing partnerships, engaging in advocacy, facilitating existing resources, and capacity building amongst local players. WV learned that it needs to play multiple strategic roles that will allow the organisation to collaborate with partners and fill in various gaps within this dense architecture of actors and initiatives. The UPI global research initiative recommends that the new roles in the urban environment will require an equally specialised clear articulation of WV's value proposition at different tiers of the city. WV should seek to collaborate with local dynamics and undertake various new strategic roles that have already found success in the urban pilot projects, including facilitator, partnership broker, catalyser and enabler (supporting and partnering with other organisations and community groups).

Lessons on Partnering, Networks and Connections

The research produced by this first phase of the global UPI challenged existing modalities of programme development and raised similar questions to those emerging from the wider literature and ongoing discourse about the changing role of NGOs in complex environments. This includes revising partnering approaches in the context of multiple dynamic organisations, community groups, government agencies and private enterprises concentrated in the urban setting.

One of the critical recommendations emerging from the operational research was the need for WV to form strategic partnerships across different tiers of the city with various decision-makers, while ensuring the participatory inclusion of community representatives. The partnering approach provides significant opportunities for combining the resources, knowledge and expertise of various existing actors and organisations that individually lack the capacity required to enact forward development momentum. In the city, partnering networks can be a starting point to forming multiple formal partnerships according to the issues and needs of the city programmes. In fact, the network approach is the preferred method for many organisations wanting to collaborate with others when goals and interests happen to intersect and align. (For example, the Platform of Partners in La Paz united cohesively around child well-being as a common issue.)

The ability of NGOs to offer development solutions in the future will not depend only 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

WV encouraged partner networks to form in many of its pilot projects. The project team worked to build sustainability, effectiveness, and wider scope and impact into network activities, and to support network members in increasing their own capacity and knowledge. As such, perhaps WV's most significant achievement in these pilots was having successfully built trust as a strategic facilitator amongst diverse communities and local organisations, as well as having facilitated productive relationships between them and mistrusted local authorities (particularly in cities of high corruption, such as Orlando East). Another key benefit of partnering was overcoming the challenge of poor data in the face of dynamism, where, for instance, local organisations in Phnom Penh jointly participated in data sharing and monitoring processes.

Individual pilot evaluation reports concluded that different levels of success were achieved when working through partners. In view of this, all pilots produced a set of partnering recommendations based on the cross-pollinated collection of lessons learned. For example, planning upcoming phases in partnership with willing and well-resourced community organisations is crucial. Several pilots also recommended making resources (financial and human) available to partner NGOs during the transition and exit phases of the project, and even potentially after the official project's conclusion with ongoing symbolic WV commitment. By doing so, responsibilities and capacities could be transferred to local actors, and these organisations would be better equipped and empowered to lead the future phases of advocacy and community engagement for long-term sustained impact.

Nevertheless, the 'soft' development approach should take care not to neglect ongoing grassroots efforts. Rather, the two should work in tandem to each other's efforts for a more integrated and wider-reaching project impact. Understanding and working with communities is core to WV's modus operandi in over 90 countries around the world, and its extensive experience in community programming is often cited as still relevant, necessary and valued in urban programming. WV's experience in urban settings has demonstrated that local partners often held the first-hand knowledge on contextual issues in a dynamic and changing environment; hence local partnering and institutional strengthening were fundamental to success and sustainability of programmes.

At times, it was challenging to ensure the effective coordination and time management required to navigate the dense web of urban actors in order to forge such strategic partnerships and facilitate city-wide networks of partners. There is clear potential and opportunities involved in activating and mobilising existing local resources, such as social capital,

A key strategy for inclusion and empowerment was to focus on building the capacity of these partners and local institutions rather than focusing solely on community empowerment.

volunteerism, human resources and finances. To do so, however, requires project staff to develop the necessary 'soft' skills appropriate for the urban context, including advocacy, political diplomacy and relationship development with policymakers. Cities are inherently political places. Multiple tiers of government as well as informal leaders are constantly vying for support, attention and resources from international NGOs. Corruption is frequently a major issue in cities, and the pilot project locations were no

exception. At the same time, the value of political authorities as key drivers of change is unquestioned. For example, the city mayors of both La Paz and Surabaya emerged as important stakeholders to connect and influence wider policy shifts. Therefore, it is essential for WV staff to be able to engage these complex stakeholders effectively and to empower other local actors to do the same in a sustained manner.

WV's experiences in the pilot projects often showed its ability to create productive and supportive partnerships. However, the centrality of its role and its extensive social, human and financial capital can bring about issues of long-term sustainability, thus complicating its ability to execute a successful exit strategy. For example, partners in the Phnom Penh advocacy project saw WV as filling a vital gap in civil society capacity to negotiate on land tenure, simply through its consistency in raising the issue. WV project leaders considered this only partial success, however, because such a strategy, in the short timeframe, could not adequately produce 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 was not sufficient time for any members to develop the capacity or resources required to lead with the same focus. At the time of evaluation it seemed absolutely necessary for WV to continue its city-level advocacy on the issue.

Similarly, in Surabaya, WV introduced child friendly village advocacy because it was a gap in the existing development landscape that WV deemed was a strategic and appropriate 'entry point' in which to work. However, WV was initially the only actor working towards this goal locally, and, as such, did not have a wide selection of community partners with whom to collaborate strategically. Over time, and as a result of the project, interest and capacity to develop child friendly villages/cities have certainly increased in the wider community. Despite this, local ownership remains low, because most meta-review respondents continue to consider the progress made in terms of a WV goal rather than a home-grown aspiration.

On the other hand, the major success of the La Paz project was WV's role in facilitating various partner and community networks. This has brought measurable cohesion and unity to dispersed urban actors within the project's scope and timeframe. Youth networks were instrumental in attaining and empowering children and youth voices directly into local power structures. In order to increase the long-term potential of these partner networks, the pilot evaluation recommended a strategy for scaling up the partner and community networks to connect in a city-wide model. This runs directly contrary to the 'arithmetic' scale-up approach, which involves WV leading the implementation of a full project structure at wider scaled-up levels. Rather, WV might act as a short-term financial partner in supporting partner networks in the transitional period when partners become increasingly capable of implementing priority programmes directly.

In Beirut, the unprecedented influx of populations displaced by the Syrian conflict has rapidly changed the demographic of response resources and humanitarian agencies. The Beirut pilot, therefore, provides an extreme version of a lesser urban dynamic: Actors and partnerships change to match changes in populations and fluctuations in demographics. It also shows the volatility of urban actors and the potential for missed opportunities unless the partner landscape is assessed regularly. Therefore, as noted and recommended by several of the pilot projects, increasing regular reflection and landscape analysis – potentially annually – is crucial to ensure project relevancy and effectiveness. This directly supports the underlying principles of the UPI and its innovative action research methodology – that flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness and relevancy are crucial to effective and sustainable urban programming.

Conclusion

Understanding existing urban actors and institutions is vital to understanding a city. Having clear goals for building the skills and capacities of local partners and actors proved to be a better operational strategy than implementing the reforms directly. In many cases, despite its attempts to build the capacity of its local partners towards independence, autonomy and sustainability, WV found itself in the leading role in its collaboration with partners due to its global branding. This issue needs to be considered while designing programmes and building sustainability.

Transition Challenges in Orlando East

In Orlando East, South Africa partners and project participants appeared to respond favourably to WV's approach, reviewing it as well organised, targeted, and creating a favourable environment to encourage mutually beneficial partnerships between community and local government. Evaluation responses reiterated a high level of trust between WV and participants, including a strong respect for WV's apolitical negotiating role. Against the backdrop of weak and distrustful relationships between communities and government institutions, this represented an important achievement for WV in terms of overall project potential. Its work in facilitating and guiding discussions as a broker of relationships gradually encouraged both sides to overcome barriers to communication and trust.

However, the operational research strongly suggests future urban programming should consider capacity building of civil society groups within the entry project in any urban context.



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

Lessons on Governments, Power Structures and Accountability

For an organisation like WV, working with local and municipal authorities to improve opportunities for children is core to every phase of its urban programming approach. Ensuring equitable access to the benefits of city life is a primary function of urban development, and this access is likely to be predicated on a shift in the volume and balance of government services.

Already, the urban pilots can celebrate many strong government relationships. For example, WV now enjoys the full support of the mayor of Pegirian, Surabaya, to create a child friendly city; has had success in establishing previously non-existent connections between citizens and local government in Orlando East; and has been invited to collaborative planning processes to advise the governments of Beirut, Kanpur and Siliguri. These relationships

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

were also important action learning opportunities in assisting project teams to develop operational insights on the nature of urban governance and place themselves more strategically to assist policy change. At times, however, strong relationships relied on strong personal relationships with individual political figures. While this may be a reflection of the informal governance dynamics of a particular urban context (such as Beirut), such relationships are in fact highly vulnerable to the fluid political dynamics of the urban environment, where frequent changes to political leadership can have immediate positive or negative impact. Some pilot projects faced the issue of needing to rebuild government relationships with new incumbents, as in the case of Phnom Penh. One recommendation made by this meta-review cycle looks at the need for WV to build and formalise relationships with official *institutions* rather than align with any one political figure.

Phnom Penh: ‘Soft’ Advocacy in a ‘Hard’ City

Phnom Penh is a difficult urban environment due to its political history. Yet the experiences resulting from WV’s strategic single-issue approach have largely been positive. Therefore, the Phnom Penh pilot project has great potential in being applied as an urban case study for other urban governance projects.

WV’s visibility, reputation and value as an international development agency was an advantage in developing partnerships with global and local actors in regards to land tenure projects. The pilot team focused efforts on ensuring certainty and accountability of government announcements and actions for inclusive policy development.

The Phnom Penh evaluation concluded that WV’s work related to advocacy with municipal and national government was one of its main contributions to addressing inequity and promoting pro-poor policy in relation to the issue of security of tenure.



Communities empowered to advocate for their rights.

Despite strong government relationships, every pilot project raised the weakness of its current *technical* ability to work effectively with government. Staff commented that urban governments worked differently from rural governments, so experience gained through rural collaborations was not always applicable to the more politicised goals of public servants in urban centres. Moreover, the pilot teams were not always comfortable when pushed into soft and politicised advocacy roles, such as negotiator, analyst or political advisor. This revealed a significant capacity gap for WV in working with urban government stakeholders, as most of its local partners also lacked these skills.

Unfortunately, resolving the capacity shortfall for ‘soft’ development skills 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 monitor through tangible indicators. Whether a rights-based approach or what was described in the case of Kanpur and Phnom Penh as ‘enlightened self-interest’, staff need to develop quickly an attractive value proposition for political figures, so that mutually beneficial goals can be set out early. The Surabaya pilot provides an excellent case study for scaling up to city levels through mutual collaboration with government partners. By engaging and promoting the existing government initiatives of the child friendly village/city concept, WV was able to consolidate mutual interest alignment with its government partners at multiple levels. The municipal authorities were impressed by the model WV helped promote in Pegirian and have signalled an intention to implement similar consultative improvements on a city-wide scale.

Conclusion: Traditional models of community development programming do not accommodate the type of volume or complexity in government engagement necessary to achieve child well-being goals in the urban atmosphere. Thus, careful analysis and relationship building are needed at multiple levels of the urban governance structure. If different levels of government begin to prioritise issues harmoniously, then change and local ownership will follow quickly. Local governments, who are the primary implementer of social services, will need the most support, particularly from sector experts such as those in urban planning and innovation. For the development community, new skills are also required to function effectively in urban environments, particularly ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ advocacy skills, urban-specific technical expertise, and the ability to monitor and evaluate the productivity of relationships with government and power structures.

Organisational Context and Capacity: Key Observations

The six UPI pilot projects provided an opportunity to introduce innovations and investigate further development to the familiar operating structure of WV’s ADP model. The pilot projects experimented with far shorter timeframes (4–5 years instead of the traditional 10–15), and all transitioned from large-scale programming to a strategic focus on a single urgent issue affecting vulnerable urban children (while still retaining a nuanced programmatic understanding of holistic multi-sectoral development needs). WV national offices respective to the pilot projects were sympathetic to the UPI’s learning goals and were also open to learning themselves about organisational process and providing regular transparent feedback throughout the pilot projects’ implementation.

WV learned, as a result of the UPI’s exploratory action-research methodology and responsive programmatic adaptation, that many of the standardised elements of the ADP model sat awkwardly against the core needs for speed and responsiveness in urban programming. The project timeframes and monitoring requirements began to resemble emergency relief procedures rather than standard community-development procedures. This was particularly stark during rapid situational assessments, emergency data collection, or consideration of the push-pull factors of areas outside the geographic focus of the project. Project feedback indicated that the single-issue focus was welcomed for its simplicity and consolidation by staff, partners and governments, but some communities exhibited less engagement than expected.

Organisational Adaptations

Areas for organisational adaptation within the WV Global Partnership continue to help improve its capacity and effectiveness in urban contexts. Many of these adaptations are currently being explored or are undergoing implementation. A full report on organisational considerations stemming from the UPI has been prepared as an internal learning document.⁹ The four main areas for further work and research, however, are (1) learning to take a city-wide approach, (2) identifying strategies to strengthening and sustaining accountable action, (3) adapting technical capacity and (4) measuring progress and celebrating success.

Learning to Take a City-wide Approach

Few urban actors currently base their programme interventions and activities on a city-wide vision for transformational change and development. The six UPI projects have individually noted the urgent need to consolidate and streamline collaborative efforts with government partners based on a city-wide aspirational goal. The scoping of the city vision and strategy clarifies long-term levels of engagement with city structures. While individual projects start and conclude, the projects’ influence and partnerships created will become embedded in city systems and processes. This will give WV an 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. Such a step is essential in ensuring that the invisible poor and vulnerable urban groups are included and benefit from collective action and impact. The city-wide design and vision represent an important avenue for WV to scale up its interventions and broaden sustainable impact with and through partners.

⁹ In the interests of space and relevance to an external audience, the report is not included here.

Identifying Strategies to Strengthen and Sustain Accountable Action

All six pilot projects faced challenges of sustainable transition with regard to WV's eventual exit. This was due in part to using the systems and guidelines associated with WV's more slow-moving model of community development, but also to the significant time resources needed to develop a comprehensive working understanding of the urban environment (to understand the context, select the best possible local partners, identify significant capacity-building requirements, and address changing relationships with individuals within government positions). During the final phase-out stage of the projects WV almost always found itself to be a central figure in civil society networks. Concern was expressed by partners in all pilot projects regarding the long-term viability of efforts without World attendance and technical support, particularly for advocacy activities. To address this, WV could become more agile and responsive in an urban context by turning its focus primarily to building the capacity of local actors as future project leaders, particularly in terms of advocacy and social accountability development work.

Adapting Technical Capacity

WV staff raised issues of human resources and staff capacity in each of the individual pilot project meta-reviews. The skills, competencies and technical knowledge held by WV programme staff were not always suited to the needs of an urban project. It also proved difficult to recruit new team members because 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 technical skills in rural environments and the need to become negotiators and advocates for effective urban impact. Even for staff who were used to the government-liaison role in rural programming, the complexity of the urban environment was noted – local governments were often multi-layered, and community organisations and NGOs concentrated in one frequently worked disparately on individual agendas. Therefore, strategic positioning is a paramount organisational consideration, including developing an attractive and succinct value proposition for WV's interventions to the existing development actors. WV also needs to build – within its own teams as well as externally with partners – a wider range of urban expertise, including town planning, influencing advocacy and policy, research and data collection, social accountability, partnership brokering and environmental services.

Measuring Progress, Celebrating Success

All WV staff traditionally operating in rural areas needed to undergo some adaptation in order to work with urban communities. The target population was in many cases geographically scattered and mobile. Staff were required to react far more rapidly to these moving and dynamic contexts and populations. There were instances where incoming staff transfers struggled to learn the specific contextual histories, specificities and city 'DNA', particularly when dealing with difficult, personally upsetting or dangerous situations. Staff also highlighted the inflexibility of WV's existing organisational systems and structures in operating in the urban environment, particularly in terms of budgetary-reporting requirements and static-evaluation indicators. For example, some researchers reported low staff morale upon conclusion of the projects because the mismatch between fluid intangible outcomes and static tangible output targets had convinced staff they had not done enough. This was a common challenge for projects in which the main activities were 'soft' in nature, such as facilitation, coordination and advocacy. Therefore, flexibility, adaptation and innovation on project parameters are vital. This includes developing alternative methods for monitoring and evaluation to capture more realistically project progress and impact (for example, in terms of policy influence, community empowerment and strengthening of civil society).

Part 5: Recommendations from the Urban Programmes Initiative

The WV Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and the City-wide Operating Framework emerged as a direct result of the research and experiential evidence produced from UPI’s first programmatic phase. Learning from the lessons derived from the six pilot projects across seven urban contexts in South Africa, Cambodia, India, Bolivia, Indonesia and Lebanon, WV, led by the Urban CoE, initiated the development of these two guiding frameworks in order to, first, improve WV’s future urban programming, and second, contribute new insights to global urban research and new technical and programming innovations to the international development community.

Both of these conceptual outcome frameworks are in their nascent stages of development. They will be further explored, implemented, tested, refined and evaluated in WV’s next learning phase in new urban learning sites across its field offices globally.

Cities for Children (Programming) Framework

Anchored in various existing international and WV guiding principles for children’s rights and urban programming,¹⁰ the Cities for Children (Programming) Framework provides a multidisciplinary, integrated model for contributing to child well-being outcomes in urban contexts. Its development was heavily informed by the lessons and knowledge derived from the first programmatic phase of the global research UPI, particularly in the initiative’s improved understanding of the diverse, complex, dynamic, and multidimensional nature of urban poverty. The framework highlights key levers of sustainable change by focusing on four interrelated development domains affecting child well-being in cities: (1) health (healthy cities), (2) economic opportunity (prosperous cities), (3) safety and protection (safer cities) and (4) environmental resilience (resilient cities) (see Figure 7). Underpinning and central to all four domains is a fifth enabling domain and factor of advocacy for wider policy change and impact (just cities). Each of these five domains highlights specific principles relevant for its sector and also outlines essential single-issue entry points, targeted goals, evidence-based strategies, tools and indicators with a view to contributing to a wider holistic approach to transformational development and addressing child well-being in urban environments.

The Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and each of its domains have been designed to be operationalised using the City-wide Operating Framework (also developed by the Urban CoE). This was done in order to ensure that community-level success will have the possibility for an effective and simultaneous scale-up to city-level policy change in order to effect city-wide transformational impact.

Figure 7. WV’s Cities for Children (Programming) Framework



¹⁰ The framework is anchored in the principles of World Vision’s *Child Well-Being Aspirations and Outcomes* 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 (Programming) Framework seeks to represent World Vision’s future intention to design city-wide holistic urban programmes.

These domains of change are presented in more detail in Table 5 to demonstrate alignment with WV’s aspirational goals and to the recently launched Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 8).

Table 5. WV’s Cities for Children (Programming) Framework alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

| Domains of change | Thematic objectives | WV’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 in preparing for, responding to and adapting 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 equity in the city, ensuring the voices of children, their families and their 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?

The Cities for Children (Programming) Framework is essential for effective development programming and poverty-reduction activities in urban settings. It enables multiple WV entities to develop urban-specific strategies, technical approaches and programmes, as well as having the flexibility to adapt, respond and remain relevant to unique, complex and dynamic urban contexts. The framework allows practitioners and thought leaders to

- promote the significance and relevance of child well-being outcomes in fragile pockets of the city
- adapt and apply WV multi-sectoral strategies in urban contexts
- develop partnerships with other agencies to address specific issues and scale-up interventions in the city
- enhance the assessment, design and impact of urban programmes
- succinctly advocate 'Cities for Children' with urban stakeholders and decision-makers.

Furthermore, one of the key operating principles in WV's Cities for Children (Programming) Framework is that children are empowered to play a central role as active agents for change in creating cities where they, their peers, their families and their communities can thrive. WV 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). The Cities for Children (Programming) Framework thus integrates both research and evidence-informed programming strategies and essential WV child well-being aspirations into a consolidated multidimensional guiding tool to improve existing development interventions in urban areas.

City-wide Operating Framework

In order to guide the operationalisation of the Cities for Children (Programming) Framework, the Urban CoE developed a three-stream application process known as the City-wide Operating Framework. This guiding framework is also heavily informed by the research and experiential lessons of effective implementation developed through the first programmatic phase of the UPI and its six pilot initiatives.

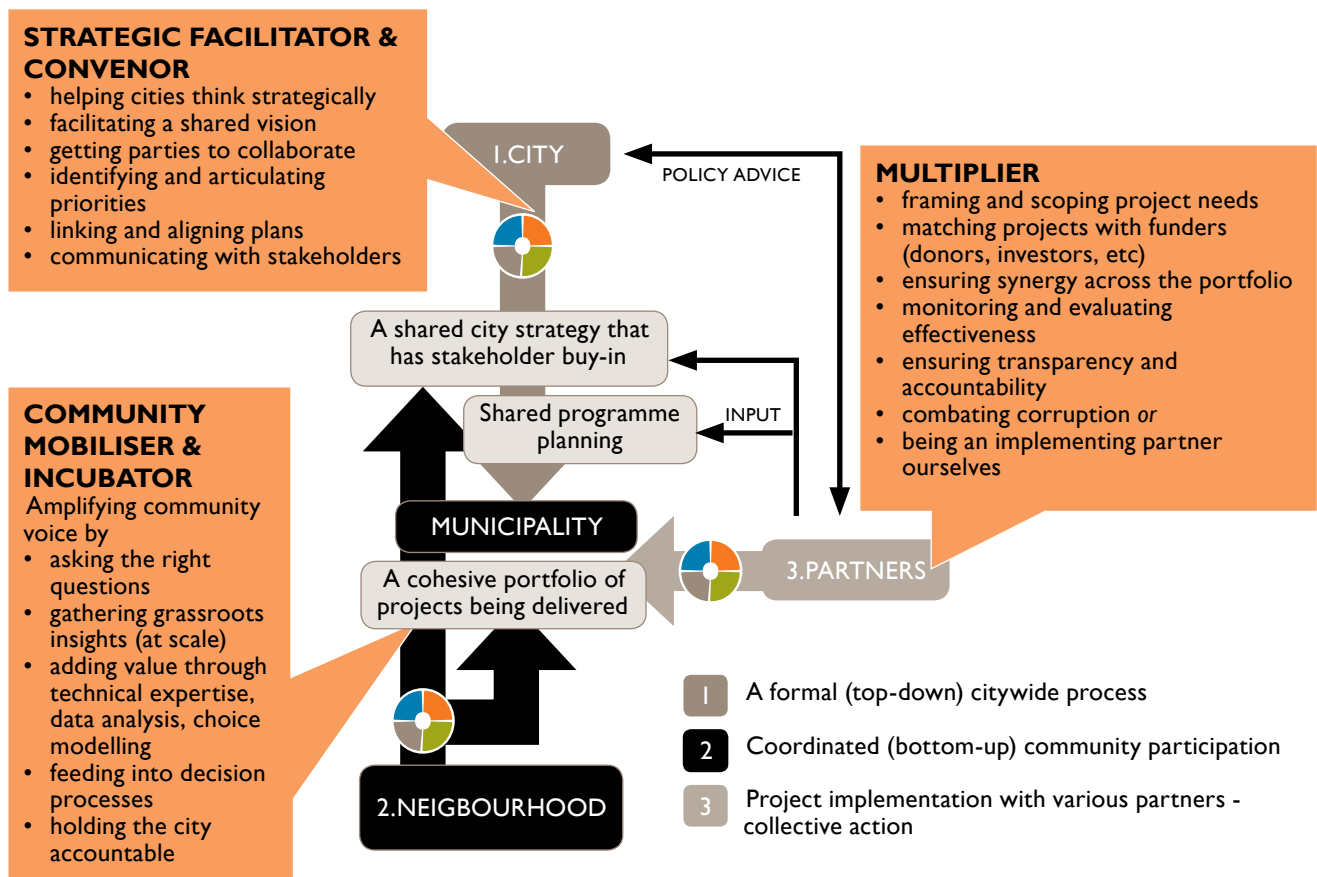
In light of the sheer scope and complexity of the urban environment, long-term, sustainable, effective and inclusive transformations necessarily demand a scale-up of programmatic impact to the city level. In every pilot project heavy importance was accorded to the need to build 'soft' infrastructure in the pursuit of large-scale transformational impact, namely, partnering and networking with local actors and governance structures, facilitation and capacity building of local resources, and advocacy for intentional policy influence. This is supported by general successful pilot experiences of WV in various 'soft' roles, including facilitation, mobilisation and brokering.

Urban programmes need to be designed to act intentionally at all levels of the city, including the neighbourhood, municipal, and city levels. The City-wide Operating Framework seeks to ensure that the implementation of urban development activities equips actors, institutions and communities at the various levels of society with the capacity to drive sustained momentum for change and development. Interventions at the neighbourhood level act to influence the transformation of urban policy to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable urban poor are met and that their experiences are given voice and influence at the city level in municipal policymaking, city planning and budgeting processes. This is mobilised through innovative and productive partnerships to encourage the processes of co-design and co-management with participatory inclusion of the private sector, communities, government and other civil society actors. The City-wide Operating Framework advocates for simultaneous movements to capitalise on the diverse opportunities and resources present in the complex urban environment, including (1) a formal (top down) city-wide process through advocacy and policy influence; (2) a coordinated (bottom up) process of grassroots mobilisation and community participation; and (3) an NGO partnership component to support, administer and coordinate both project implementation and policy scale-up.

Within this dynamic and multi-streamed operational framework WV can play a number of roles (some simultaneously) in order to catalyse and contribute to the success of city-wide transformation. Examples of these roles include strategic facilitator, programme broker/monitor and community mobiliser/catalyser.

The City-wide Operating Framework is represented visually in Figure 9.

Figure 9. The City-wide Operating Framework for implementing WV's Cities for Children (Programming) Framework



The Neighbourhood Level

It is at the neighbourhood level that local and international non-governmental organisations have traditionally engaged with community actors and have operated with the most success. It is also at this level that local or community-based organisations are considered to have the most potential for impact and effective communication with the community beneficiaries. Operating at the neighbourhood level will see urban stakeholders engage in activities such as

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

The Municipal Level

At the municipal level WV works closely with urban stakeholders within local councils, identifying fragile pockets and vulnerable groups of the city, highlighting the gaps in service provision to the most vulnerable, and advocating for 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 other capacities for private service providers and linking them to marginalised communities.

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

- 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 of network performance and required maintenance
- facilitating meaningful communication and linkages amongst communities and service providers.

The City Level

To enable significant change in service delivery, international, national and local development actors will need to influence city-planning processes. Strategic conversations at the city level will assist in ensuring the necessary political support to guide the direction of policy development and to maintain 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, at this level development practitioners can assist promoting the urban agenda through

- 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 productively with media bodies
- improving high-level policy development capacity.

Conclusion

Based on the research and experiential evidence produced by the global Urban Programmes Initiative, using its signature action research methodology, approach and framework (which focuses on relevant, adaptive, responsive and exploratory learning and contextualised programming), WV has been able to learn important lessons about the urban environment. Urban centres, such as cities, are fluctuating spatial configurations with high (though uneven) human density, mobility, opportunity, diversity, connectivity and varying configurations of affiliations and relationships. This fluidity creates a complex web of relationships amongst the innumerable urban actors and stakeholders, as well as dense and rapidly shifting social dynamics and power structures. Child well-being is accordingly affected with greater intensity by dynamic and complex combinations of health, crime, employment, politics, transport, education and technology factors. The UPI research strongly supports the need for development actors to invest in regular assessment and mapping of local governance structures and power relationships and to apply adaptive, responsive and relevant development strategies both to contextualise programming activities to local issues and respond to the changing dynamics of the city throughout the project's lifecycle.

Moreover, the pilot project experience illustrates that trying to tackle multiple issues in a complex and dynamic environment can lead to staff becoming overwhelmed with multiple priority areas and goals. Launching a large-scale, multi-sectoral programme, similar to the traditional WV approach in rural areas, is particularly difficult to manage in an urban environment, where dynamics and structures are complex and fluid. Instead, contextualising the project to concentrate on a single-issue entry point to influence change more generally (an issue-based approach) encourages more direct, responsive and productive collaboration with communities and local actors committed to that issue. Scaling up programmes to municipal/city-wide levels through the issue-based approach that address the uniqueness of the context is far more likely to effect long-term, sustainable and wide-spread impact.

Another key lesson derived from the UPI is the need for WV to establish strong partnerships in urban contexts for long-term impact and sustained change. The research initiative challenged existing modalities of development programming in order to understand and work successfully with the multiple organisations, community groups, government agencies and private enterprises already concentrated in the same urban settings. It was found that WV's flexibility in playing various strategic roles, as needed, within the dense urban partnership networks was particularly effective for delivering holistic, sustainable and widespread urban development and urban poverty reduction. Through diverse roles the pilot projects were able to establish trust with local actors and strengthen community networks. To facilitate effective scale-up of interventions, partnerships were once again critical. By combining and coordinating knowledge, skills and resources with city-wide partners, the pilots were able to achieve much more with less, particularly demonstrating the ability to advocate for and enact city-wide impact through policy change. At this stage it is essential that WV programmes are issue-focused and able to articulate succinctly their value proposition to all stakeholders throughout the city.

In terms of the flexibility of internal organisational processes to adapt to the distinct urban settings, the UPI concluded that current WV models will require further adaptations (for example, long-term planning and flexible resource allocation processes) in order to remain relevant in city programmes and in the development of meaningful partnerships. Development is always political in the city context. Staff will need to develop better contextual understanding of the specific fluctuations and risks present within urban environments (such as changing political leadership) and develop appropriate risk-mitigation strategies to address these urban challenges.

An important outcome produced by this first programmatic phase of the UPI was the development of two initial guiding frameworks: the Cities for Children (Programming) Framework and the City-wide Operating Framework. WV, led by the Urban CoE, aims not only to improve the organisation's future urban programming but also to contribute new insights to global urban research and new technical and programming innovations to the international development sector. Guided by established international concepts and reference documents, the WV Cities for Children (Programming) Framework is a research-informed, multi-dimensional urban development framework aimed at assisting the international development community to approach urban development in a holistic, effective and sustainable way.

In addition, the UPI recognises the simultaneous need to scale up community-level initiatives through an intentional policy approach in order to achieve integrated, sustainable and long-term city-wide impact. This has been captured in the development of the WV City-wide Operating Framework, which acts as the operational mechanism to guide the scale-up of the Cities for Children dimensions through all levels of the city. Both these frameworks have been designed to guide WV's issue-based approach, symbiotically and simultaneously, by flexibly determining the pertinent issues and opportunities in each urban setting and adapting programming accordingly. In each case there is a strong priority on building 'soft' infrastructure through partnerships, advocacy, facilitation and capacity building. These two guiding frameworks will be consolidated into a single self-sustaining city-wide model. The development of this city-wide model is in its nascent stages and will be the main focus for testing, refinement and action research development in WV's next learning phase in new urban learning sites across its field offices globally.

On a final note, this first programmatic phase of the UPI has testified to the success of the Urban CoE to contribute to global expertise in urban research and urban technical programming. Recognised by this first meta-review cycle, the UPI and WV Urban CoE's signature urban programming approach has demonstrated the importance of employing an exploratory learning strategy that is flexible, responsive, relevant and adaptable to local conditions and issues. This meta-review report concludes that such an approach illustrates the potential to bring about the necessary, effective, long-term, wide-spreading and sustainable change to urban environments that will achieve inclusive, just and equitable cities where children really 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 bring 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 four 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 programming priorities should focus on disaggregated data, building social networks, mitigating the social risk for seasonal migrants and ensuring inclusive quality governance.

WV: In 2008, WV 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 WV’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 in ‘Habitat for Humanity and Urban Issues: The Forum’ 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. Case studies presented 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 (HFH 2008). Since then, Habitat for Humanity has increased its focus on urban housing solutions, 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 humanmade 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 most rapid transformation from rural to urban and bears in numerical terms much of the burden of urban poverty. For instance, the 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 Asian Development Bank (ADB) began to implement its Strategy2020, 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 in 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, and 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 WV, 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 humanmade disasters are heightened in a poorly planned city, and the urban poor bear the brunt of this reality (World Vision 2013). UNISDR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) coordinates the Resilient Cities campaign to reduce the risk of disaster 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 to hazard mapping, maintenance and protection of positive environmental assets. The list of participating cities – available on the 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 seven.

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, lists 16 core thematic investments for urban improvements, including safety, housing, gender, resilience, governance, among 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).

WHO/Healthy Cities: As a primary stakeholder in four out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),¹¹ the World Health Organization (WHO) is a vital strategic actor for responding to urban health challenges. WHO 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).

¹¹ MDG 4 (child survival), MDG 5 (maternal survival) and MDG 6 (combating disease), plus a significant portfolio in nutrition as part of MDG 1 (eradicating hunger).

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