

URBAN EXPRESSIONS

Issue: October 2017

FAREWELL FROM OUR URBAN LEADER

As I say my farewell to World Vision after 16 years of service, two events related to my urban portfolio hold special place in my heart. The first one was a prospect that emerged during my negotiations with senior directors at UN Habitat in 2013. I advocated hard for the inclusion of children's voices at the agency's signature global urban events and then designed the historic first Children's Assembly that took place at the World Urban Forum (WUF) held in Colombia, 2014. Its success was replicated in *Habitat III*, the UN's signature global urban conference held every 20 years and promises to be the norm in future global urban conferences hosted by UN Habitat. See highlights [here](#) and [here](#).

With more than two decades of International Development experience in the areas of human and child rights as well as sustainable urban development, I am grateful to have several chances through WV to invest my efforts in advocating and lobbying for children's well-being, especially the most vulnerable across several global platforms. It was an honor to represent our organization and lead a delegation of thinkers and practitioners to the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador last October. My speech included a call for children's genuine participation and young people to be recognized as a key resource and agents of change in all decision-making processes involving cities. See my call for action to UN member states at Habitat 3. See my [call for action to UN Member States](#) at Habitat 3.

My second proud moment relates to completion of documenting the lessons of our global urban action research and learning initiative that represents practitioners from all regions whose hard work and critical thinking contributed to our flagship report called "[Making Sense of the City: Developing Evidence through Action Research and Learning](#)". This is a capstone of the work of the Center of Expertise on Urban Programming and all the WV offices with which we partnered. Many thanks to World Vision Australia for their initial investment in urban research in 2008 and for the opportunity to learn together with field offices!

It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with amazing minds and experienced professionals across this large and complex organization, and strengthen development theory, frameworks, and models with adaptations as well as contribute to global policy dialogue critical for achieving inclusive and sustainable cities. A special thanks and gratitude to a friend and my manager, Mark Lorey without whose thoughtful guidance, insight, support and encouragement, our team would not have been able to achieve the ambitious urban journey embraced by the Partnership in 2013. With absolute delight, I am now handing over to my very capable and enthusiastic team member, Aline Rahbany who, fresh out of college, joined our urban pilot program based out of Beirut in 2009. With these two deep thinkers and advocates leading urban ministry, I believe the "Keys to the city" is in good hands.

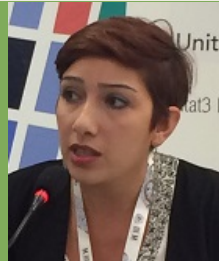
I will continue to defend children's rights, promote their inclusion and campaign for young people's right to basic well-being and livable urban environments. Our paths, God willing, will cross and I look forward to a new era of engagement with you all.

Joyati Das



EDITORIAL

by Aline Rahbany



Dear colleagues,

In my first editorial for this newsletter, I would like to start by welcoming everyone to a new Fiscal Year full of new adventures and opportunities. It is hard to say goodbye to a leader like Joyati whose investment in and passion for WV's urban ministry had been remarkable. Yet, I am looking forward to working with like-minded colleagues, eager to see WV's work targeting effectively and impact-fully the most vulnerable children in urban contexts, in FY18.

Four strategic priorities emerge for the urban ministry this year, as a natural continuation to the work we have been doing in the past years. The Citywide Self-Sustaining Model will continue to be socialized with interested NOs and evidence on its application will be collected. Collaboration with GC teams will continue to ensure adaptation of WV programming to urban contexts. External engagement will continue to be focused on Most Vulnerable Children in urban areas. A new focus of urban programming will be on the inclusion of an urban lens in the WV Fragile Contexts Expansion process; expanding the view on what fragility consists of; outside the situation of wars and conflicts and looking specifically at the well-being of the Most Vulnerable Children living in urban hotspots of fragile environments.

As we embark on this journey, it is critical to emphasize the importance of collaboration and joint investment of resources, especially in times of revenue challenges. I look forward to working with new and old colleagues to live out our calling and contribute to "life in all its fullness" for children in urban contexts.

FROM AN URBAN EXPERT



Robbert Muggah on protecting cities with rapid urbanization from falling into fragility

Violence worldwide is declining, but in the crowded southern cities of the planet such as Aleppo, Bamako and Caracas, violence is accelerating because of drug trade, mass unemployment and civil discontent. Security researcher Robbert Muggah turns our attention to these fast-growing "fragile cities," where infrastructure is weak and government often inefficient. It shows us the four great risks we run and proposes a solution to change course.

SNAPSHOT FROM AN URBAN THINKER



ENABLING CITIZEN VOICE AND ACTION IN URBAN CONTEXTS

Written Besinati Mpepo, World Vision's Technical Director for Social Accountability

I was fortunate to join a group of World Vision Social Accountability Practitioners from Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, DRC, Rwanda and Burundi at a recent round table on Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) in Urban contexts held in Kampala, Uganda. The round table was a collaboration between the Urban Programming and Social Accountability Teams (represented by Sue Cant - Social Accountability Adviser and myself). The objective of the workshop was listening and learning with practitioners and experts in the room about operating in diverse urban contexts, complex issues and governance systems and our engagement opportunities to impact the lives of most vulnerable children. There was no doubt that what we initially thought was an opportunity to draw lessons for the future, was actually a need to learn for now. Our context has been changing, with some previous WV 'rural' program areas increasingly reflecting characteristics of urbanization. In addition, unacceptable numbers of vulnerable children are now living in challenging urban contexts and without access of some of the important services that CVA has traditionally helped to improve. The clock is ticking and the workshop was timely – we needed to stop, look around us, and thanks to Joyati Das (Senior Director for Urban Programming) and Shipra Suri (Urban Planner with the UN), better understand the dynamism of diverse urban contexts, specific vulnerabilities and together with the Practitioners understand the opportunities to adapt our approach to better meet the needs of marginalized children in these contexts. It will have to be business unusual.

The rich learnings from this workshop will be pulled together into a knowledge paper that will aid our journey forward. I am excited to see where we get to. Hope you are too.

THANK YOU, JOYATI

Mark Lorey - Partnership Leader, Transformational Development and Ministry Strategy



Dear colleagues,

It is with both regret and deep appreciation that I share the news that we will soon be bidding farewell to Joyati Das. At the end of this week, she will bring her role to a close as Senior Director of WVI's Center for Expertise on Urban Programming.

Joyati has provided remarkable leadership during her 16 years with World Vision. She joined to lead WV Australia's domestic work with Aboriginal communities. She later played key roles in WV's response to the Asia Tsunami, then returned to WV Australia to establish and lead the 5-year Urban Programmes Initiative. Based on the success of this initiative in working with 6 NOs to pilot innovative urban approaches to urban programming, WVA and WVI agreed that this should evolve into a new Center of Expertise on Urban Programming within WVI. Over the past 5 years, Joyati has led the CoE's work with partner NOs and SOs to develop and test urban programming models and tools, including the emerging citywide, self-sustaining model for urban ministry. Both Joyati and I are grateful to all the NOs and SOs that have collaborated with the CoE to advance WV's urban innovation and learning.

Rooted in learning from the field, this work informed WV's global strategy development process. Joyati has also very effectively positioned WV as a leader in global urban forums, actively advocating for the well-being and rights of the most vulnerable children in urban areas. Among other roles, she served as elected co-chair of the Children and Youth constituent group in last year's Habitat III conference: a once-in-a-decade event that developed and launched the first global urban framework, the New Urban Agenda, based on the SDGs.

Joyati has been considering a change for some time, in light of health and extended family considerations. Following on from WV's global strategy and GC budget challenges, we agreed this was the right time to make a transition. We are very grateful that Aline Rahbany has agreed to continue serving as Urban Programming Advisor to provide a point of leadership for WV's global urban work. Aline will report to me in this capacity and will remain based in her home city of Beirut. In line with Our Promise 2030, her priorities will include working with a few NOs that are seeking support to document and share their innovative urban models; collaborating with GC teams on adaptation of WV's programming for urban contexts, with emphasis on fragile urban contexts; and carefully prioritized global external engagement in support of the most vulnerable children in urban areas. Joyati has been working closely with Aline for quite some time to prepare for this transition. Feel free to contact Aline and me if you would like to discuss potential collaboration in FY18 and beyond.

I know many WV colleagues share my appreciation for Joyati's insight, energy, drive, and dynamism as a leader. We will surely miss her. Please join me in thanking and praying for Joyati as she prepares for a new season in her life.

With gratitude,

Mark

RESOURCES

IIED Stronger Cities initiative: [Tools and guidance notes for urban response](#)

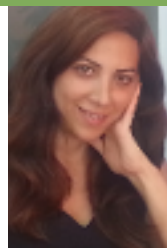
ISDR Making Cities Resilient: [10 essentials animated videos](#)

A special report from the International Committee of the Red Cross: [I saw my city die.](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Seven Families, Seven Journeys

[An interactive story of urban life in India.](#) Recently published by WV US; the story is a special feature on urbanization and migration and their impact on the well-being of children and their families.



CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN URBAN CONTEXTS

Written by Maya Assaf, Associate Director for Conflict Sensitivity

In any given country, conflict dynamics are influenced by contextual factors, including socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Phenomena like poverty, severe economic inequality and concentrations of population in urban areas can all put pressures on social institutions and the state, given the little possibility for any immediate solution^[1].

Context analyses have been key processes for World Vision in various contexts, including urban and fragile ones. IPACS “*Integrating Peace Building and Conflict Sensitivity*” has often been used as a tool to better understand context and conflict dynamics. IPACS provides a community level analysis of a particular context, with a specific focus on how projects interact with local tensions. It generates recommendations for projects to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts. IPACS analysis runs over several days through Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with community members, as well as with aid staff. Trained IPACS assessors analyze and validate the data, and write a report with applications for the project^[2]. While there haven’t been major adaptations to the use of the tool in urban contexts, a few common issues (sources of tensions) have emerged from IPACS assessments conducted in urban areas in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Jordan:

- **Issues of land tenure:** Underprivileged newly urban displaced are often excluded from formal systems of security of land tenure. This often causes tensions with original urban residents and local authorities, considering land is a resource that is high in demand. NGOs (including World Vision) tend to respond to the needs of the new urban displaced without considering implications on host communities. Designing programming in urban communities will need to consider factors like the macro-context, understanding the pre-existing socio-economic situation and inclusive programming focused on social cohesion. Integrating peace building in existing programming is also critical. In a resource-competitive environment, NGOs are often not aware what to do to promote an equal distribution of resources. This will require working closely with local governments, focusing on local-level advocacy and working with urban specialists to find programming solutions that are realistic and sustainable.
- **A high proportion of the population is unemployed or underemployed:** For many of the newly urban displaced, it is very difficult to find a job. This often results in the use of negative coping mechanisms (theft, crime, illegal activity) as means to survive, particularly in large cities. This is another source of tension between them and existing urban residents who are able to make ends meet, and also local authorities who see them as a threat to their environment. When trying to integrate peace building programming to deal with such issues, NGOs tend to focus solely on finding employment for youth who are part of gangs and resorting to crime/illegal activities within their communities. This is where NGOs fail; instead they need to look at the holistic needs of youth (psycho-social, educational, etc.) and to empower them to feel accepted in their communities.
- **Presence of unregistered migrants and/displaced persons/refugees:** Because urban areas have mixed identities, migrants, displaced persons, and refugees (who have fled war or famine) find themselves more inclined to live in the city. Tensions arise when those populations compete with local communities over local resources and public services. For this reason, it is paramount to focus on social cohesion approaches to programming. This can be done through integration of conflict sensitivity and peace building in ongoing programs. In addition to the above, it is worth noting that cities, slums and informal settlements are dynamic and constantly changing and various levels (from the household level to the overall city level). These changes may disrupt project plans, force community members to move or change their priorities, and they may also change the local political or business environment. They may also cause or ease tensions between different communities over time.

For this reason, it is important to conduct continuous context analyses in those areas to allow us to be more adaptive in our approaches to programming in urban contexts. If we do not, we might miss the chance of being responsive to the real-time needs of urban communities in our areas of work.

^[1] USAID Conflict Assessment Framework, Version 2.0. p. 17 ^[2] World Vision Conflict Sensitivity 1-pager

CITYWIDE SELF-SUSTAINING MODEL HIGHLIGHT

Following the first validation workshop of the [Citywide Self-Sustaining Model](#) in Delhi early 2017, last June, WV Mexico hosted the second workshop in Mexico City. The National Office was selected as a partner to support learning and validation in recognition of its urban program's strategic directive and the keenness of the leadership to promote innovation in urban contexts.

Is your NO interested in urban innovation? Would you like to be part of a process on learning and validation of the Citywide Self-Sustaining Model? Contact us! (details below)



WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER?

Contact [Aline Rahbany](#), Urban Programming Advisor. Visit our [external website](#).