Preamble

As the world races into its first urban century, NGOs are confronted with the shifting and expanding dimensions of poverty and inequity across the rural – urban continuum. The ‘urbanisation of poverty’ has presented NGOs with a largely-unexplored territory. While traditionally NGOs have focused their attention on rural areas, mainly because of the assumption that services are easily accessible to urban residents, evidence shows that many poor urban residents are being left behind. It is widely acknowledged that proximity to services does not mean access, and the urban poor continue to be excluded due to political, social or economic factors.

CEO of World Vision Australia, Tim Costello, has stated that, “demographics are running ahead of us here, with an increasing proportion of the world’s poor living in the world’s cities. We need to find effective ways to tell the complex story around our impact.”

The purpose of this paper is to explore the megatrend of urbanisation and its impact on children. The paper affirms World Vision’s commitment to address children’s vulnerability in urban contexts.

The paper seeks to strengthen our organisational efforts to address poverty across the rural-urban continuum and design strategies to support a better coordinated “positive urbanisation process.” Responding to the rising needs in urban areas will take institutional and operational adaptation, and multidisciplinary approaches to evolve from the current siloed methods of operating within a city. To enable this, World Vision has established the Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming (Urban CoE) that provides technical leadership on urban programming for World Vision globally.

This paper is a working draft on developing a rationale for the ‘Cities for Children’ framework that anchors WV approach to addressing children’s well being. ‘Cities for Children’ consists of four inter-related sectoral domains that contribute and promote just and inclusive cities where children thrive, especially the most vulnerable. This paper is a reference document to launch a global consultative process with partners that will encourage dialogue and inform a sustainable ‘Cities for Children’ framework for World Vision.

Joyati Das
Senior Director, Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming
**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APD</td>
<td>Area Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC</td>
<td>Cities for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>Centre of Expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWB</td>
<td>Child Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Development Programme Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>National Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Registered Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Regional Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>Urban Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WV</td>
<td>World Vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. THE URBAN MEGATREND</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. WORLD VISION’S RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action-Learning through Urban Pilot Projects</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. LESSONS FROM THE URBAN PILOT PROJECTS</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban vs. Rural Distinctives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles for NGOs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Vision’s Role in the City</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. INTRODUCTION TO CFC FRAMEWORK</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC Framework Rationale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has this framework been developed?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. DOMAINS OF CHANGE</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. TOWARDS A JUST CITY WHERE CHILDREN THRIVE</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Cities</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. The Urban Megatrend

Introduction

Cities and towns are engines of power and growth - they are seen as positive signs of development and opportunity. This is why in the 21st Century, over half of the global population (3.6 billion people) lives in cities and towns. However, the urbanising world is also leaving a vast proportion of its population behind. It is conservatively estimated that almost one billion people live in slums today and the UN has projected that the slum population could increase to one third of humanity within 30 years.

By 2025 there will be 37 megacities (cities with population more than 10 million).

The total world population is expected to be 67% urban by 2050, compared to 43% in 1990 (UN, 2012).

Figures 1 and 2 below show the proportion of urban population currently living in slums, with the highest region located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Rapid urbanisation poses many challenges. In particular, developing countries are finding it increasingly difficult to adjust to the evolving dynamics and complexity of urban areas. An alarming feature of urban population growth is the high proportion of people living in informal settlements, excluded from the rights of the city. Cities in the developing world gain an average of five million residents every month, and it is estimated that up to 1.1 billion people — one sixth of humanity — live in slums in the cities of the world (UN-HABITAT, 2008).
2. World Vision’s Response to the Urban Megatrend

Urban areas are providing opportunities for growth, and are gateways to larger national, regional and international markets. However, growth opportunities become concentrated in select pockets of the city, creating fragile centres of crime, violence, poor infrastructure, inadequate services, and social, economic and physical exclusion.

These fragile urban pockets are characterised by dense and fragmented neighbourhoods, which, along with the above issues, exacerbate the health, protection and safety risks for residents – especially children. More than one billion children, almost half of the world’s children, live in cities (UNICEF, 2012), and millions of these children live in slum conditions. Children living in slums are highly vulnerable to trafficking, child labour, violence, and living on the streets.

Street children, unregistered children and children of migrants have limited access to adequate food, drinking water, education and medical care. They lack access to basic rights and often live without hope. The most vulnerable children in the city are often difficult to reach, because they are homeless and not registered at school. Many do not have birth certificates. World Vision’s reach must extend to the most vulnerable including street children and those who lack citizenship status.

WV is already present in the world’s most rapidly urbanising countries and regions. However, only an estimated 20-25% of WV’s total investment in Programmes is in urban areas. This investment does not reflect the growing trend toward urbanisation. Furthermore, most of WV’s programming, like many other INGOs, has been essentially designed for stable, cohesive communities - found predominantly in rural contexts.

However, World Vision has made substantial investments in urban research and development in the past. Development of an urban programming model commenced in the 1980s with the launch of the ‘Urban Advance’ program, and more recently the research report ‘Keys to the City’, drafted and tabled in 2007, provided a renewed focus on urban issues calling for a launch of a test and pilot phase for innovative urban programmes. In response, World Vision Australia office (WVA) commenced a research and learning program, the Urban Programs Initiative (UPI). Through the UPI, WVA continues to provide support to pilot projects in six countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Lebanon, South Africa, and Bolivia.
Action-learning through Urban Pilot Projects

Since 2008, World Vision’s Urban Centre of Expertise (Urban CoE) has been developing and testing approaches to address child well-being in cities across six pilot countries. Applying an action-research and learning approach, the Urban CoE, is aiming to capture and share ‘knowledge in action’ as it emerges from the six projects. By using this approach, the development process can be thought of as an exploration of a problem, rather than as the implementation of a pre-defined solution. The six urban pilot projects, located in cities of South Africa, Lebanon, India, Indonesia, Cambodia and Bolivia, are contributing to the knowledge of how World Vision should approach complex urban contexts and issues with solutions that demonstrate impact and contribute to just and equitable cities. (please refer to the case studies).

Learnings from these pilots have informed a framework to address child well-being in urban contexts.

3. Lessons from the Urban Pilot Projects

Urban vs. Rural Distinctives

Evidence from our urban programming is highlighting some of the key differences between rural and urban areas. Key findings are emerging from the initial operational research to inform World Vision’s urban programming approach. While the definition of ‘urban’ varies from country to country, there are some common features that characterise poor urban settings including: high rates of change and mobility; informality of resident’s status, housing, and employment; increased exposure to risks and hazards; and high levels of inter-connectedness between residents and neighbourhoods. These complexities of urban contexts can be conceptualised through an understanding of the ‘Three Distinctives’ lens – density, diversity and dynamics.

While density refers to the characterisation of urban areas with high populations in dense housing over relatively small spatial areas, diversity relates to the highly varied nature of the social, ethnic, political, religious and economic groups living in close proximity. The characteristic of dynamics describes how urban environments are fluid, fragmented and changing, featuring high mobility and shifting interactions within fluctuating power relationships. These distinctives represent key characteristics along the rural-urban continuum. This means that although there is no way to pinpoint the boundary where rural becomes urban, the ‘Three Distinctives’ can be used to describe the factors that increase as areas become more urban, from population to infrastructure, services and technology.
It is clear that the opportunities from urban development have not been maximised for all citizens of the city. The rights of the urban poor are limited because they are often considered illegal by their own municipal governments. Their status often excludes them from accessing land tenure, shelter, services and social welfare. They are ignored by governments and the private sector (Stephens, Coupe & Mitlin 2006).

The urban poor face different issues and livelihood challenges in comparison to the rural poor – jostling for space, food and basic services in dense and diverse informal settlements. Often due to mobility, there is limited sense of community to provide a support network.

Urban dynamics must be understood better to inform political and institutional reform. This is imperative to improving the lives of millions of slum dwellers, especially children who are struggling to survive in densely-populated, overcrowded slums. The livelihoods, social welfare, and rights of the poor should be at the centre of any urban development strategy and policy formation to create equitable and sustainable cities. The dynamic nature of urban contexts requires aid actors to think differently in order to have genuine impact through scalable programs.

Roles for NGOs

Given the complexity driven by the ‘Three Distinctives’ in urban contexts, NGOs need to consider the different roles they play as development agents. The table below describes three different ways that World Vision can act to achieve positive change in neighbourhoods and at the city level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENSITY: Urban areas are characterised by high population and dense housing in a relatively small area</th>
<th>Greater number of development actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIVERSITY: Social, ethnic, political and religious and economically diverse groups are now living in close proximity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYNAMICS: Urban environments are fluid and changing, characterised by high mobility and shifting interactions within sometimes rapidly shifting power relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that the opportunities from urban development have not been maximised for all citizens of the city. The rights of the urban poor are limited because they are often considered illegal by their own municipal governments. Their status often excludes them from accessing land tenure, shelter, services and social welfare. They are ignored by governments and the private sector (Stephens, Coupe & Mitlin 2006).

The urban poor face different issues and livelihood challenges in comparison to the rural poor – jostling for space, food and basic services in dense and diverse informal settlements. Often due to mobility, there is limited sense of community to provide a support network.

Urban dynamics must be understood better to inform political and institutional reform. This is imperative to improving the lives of millions of slum dwellers, especially children who are struggling to survive in densely-populated, overcrowded slums. The livelihoods, social welfare, and rights of the poor should be at the centre of any urban development strategy and policy formation to create equitable and sustainable cities. The dynamic nature of urban contexts requires aid actors to think differently in order to have genuine impact through scalable programs.

Roles for NGOs

Given the complexity driven by the ‘Three Distinctives’ in urban contexts, NGOs need to consider the different roles they play as development agents. The table below describes three different ways that World Vision can act to achieve positive change in neighbourhoods and at the city level.
World Vision’s approach in the cities needs to explore and include all three dimensions of development to respond to the needs and gaps in the city. This process will ensure that the urban poor are benefiting from targeted initiatives to respond to immediate as well as long-term needs in order to have sustained impact.

**World Vision’s role in a city**

The research findings highlighted several possible roles, under three broad categories, for World Vision in the urban context:

- WV as an **active partner**, activating or contributing to partnerships, networks and coalitions to address urban issues and innovation;
- WV as an **advocate** to influence governments and their policy agenda; and
- WV as a **community facilitator** to mobilise resources and support for self-determination.

| Direct Development          | • Medical supplies  
|                            | • Nutrition – food parcels  
|                            | • Youth Centre facilities  
|                            | • Resources for schools and youth centres  |
| Social Development          | • Establish self-help groups, credit schemes, savings groups  
|                            | • Issue-based education training: health, protection  
|                            | • Community capacity-building (e.g. leadership training)  |
| Institutional Development   | • Municipal planning and accountability  
|                            | • Community-led advocacy and policy influence  
|                            | • Organisational capacity-building (e.g. CBOs)  |

Table 1. Development roles for World Vision

---

**World Vision’s roles in urban areas**

- **AS A PARTNER**
  - Developing a shared agenda and vision;
  - Working together with partners to maximise program impact;
  - Contributing to the cause of a network or coalition seeking justice for the urban poor.

- **AS AN ADVOCATE**
  - Working with government towards long term solutions;
  - Influencing governments to recognise the urban poor as citizens; and
  - Empowering communities to have a voice and advocate for themselves.

- **AS A COMMUNITY FACILITATOR**
  - Creating hope for change;
  - Strengthening relationships and trust;
  - Building capacity to engage with government; and
  - Promoting opportunities for improved income generation.

---

Figure 3. World Vision’s roles in urban areas
4. Introduction to CFC Framework

The ‘Cities for Children’ Framework

World Vision’s primary goal for program interventions across all contexts is the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable. While we have a proven track record of addressing child well-being through community development in rural contexts, there is a need to continue addressing child well-being across the rural-urban continuum.

The Urban CoE has developed the ‘Cities for Children’ (CFC) framework in alignment with World Vision’s organisational framework (Child Well-Being Aspirations) that guides all programming. The CFC framework provides a multi-disciplinary, integrated model for contributing to Child Well-Being Outcomes in urban contexts, in collaboration with partners. It highlights key levers of sustainable change by focusing on four essential areas impacting child well-being: Healthy Cities, Prosperous Cities, Safer Cities, and Resilient Cities. Central to the realisation of these domains is the inclusion of the most vulnerable children and communities in order to contribute to Just Cities.

The CFC framework is informed by a rights-based approach to ensure equity, access, and genuine participation to contribute to the future of the cities that children want to live in. Furthermore, it is informed by Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which refers to ‘the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.’ Children living in urban poverty remain especially vulnerable to human rights violations with slum environments associated with negative health, social, economic, environmental and educational outcomes.
CFC Framework Rationale

- To apply World Vision’s child well-being lens in urban contexts, enhance social inclusion, and participation of the most vulnerable
- To prioritise, apply and adapt World Vision’s sectoral strategies relevant to addressing specific urban issues
- To develop partnerships with external agencies to scale up programming impact. To engage with urban stakeholders and decision-makers in order to advocate and influence policy change
- To ensure a city-wide programming approach, starting from the neighbourhood and connecting to city governance systems to drive city-wide change with and through partners
- To apply a top-down, bottom-up programming approach to influence pro-poor policies

There are three streams that need to be brought together to realise citywide development:

1. A formal (top-down) citywide process
2. Coordinated (bottom-up) community participation
3. Project implementation with various partners
How has this framework been developed?

Each domain is informed by and aligned with tested cities frameworks designed by various UN agencies, including UN-HABITAT, WHO, UNISDR, World Bank and UNICEF. The essentials are informed by evidence based internal and external practices, approaches, tools, and indicators. The CFC framework is aligned with World Vision’s global sectoral and thematic strategies.

Each of these domains will be considered across the three dimensions of (a) strategic city planning, (b) community engagement, (c) project implementation with partners.

The Cities for Children framework and component domains will be finalised through the following process:

- Multi-disciplinary working groups coordinated by the CoE for Urban Programming (including urban practitioners, technical advisors and subject matter experts)
- Field testing of strategies, tools and indicators in urban pilot projects and learning sites
- Validation and feedback gathered via the Urban Community of Practice
- Endorsement from World Vision sectoral and thematic leaders
- Review and input from representatives of external organisations, including permission to use content from industry frameworks

5. Domains of Change

There are four proposed domains of change that contribute to Just Cities for children. A Just City is one where all voices and needs are considered and included. Ideally, this is characterised by partnerships and collaboration between communities, civil society, private interests and government - which holds ultimate responsibility.

World Vision is exploring strategies within each domain that work to ensure a just environment for all children, their families and the communities they live in.

The following table outlines the proposed goals and strategies for each domain in the Cities for Children framework.
### CITIES FOR CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ALIGNED WITH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **HEALTHY** | To contribute to healthy urban environments where children thrive | • Adequate nutrition and food security  
• Equity of access to quality health services including water, sanitation and waste management  
• Behaviour change through healthy practices and health promotion | WHO Healthy Cities |
| **SAFER** | To ensure that children and their families live in a safe and protected environment, free from violence and harm | • Developing local crime prevention strategies in local planning  
• Increasing access to humanitarian protection  
• Increasing awareness of Safety strategies implemented through stakeholders of the city  
• Strengthening community cohesion | UN-Habitat Safer Cities |
| **RESILIENT** | To support city-dwellers to prepare, respond and adapt to urban crises, hazards and disasters | • Building resilience into urban planning approaches, including climate change adaptation and shelter reconstruction  
• Strengthen community capacity to rebound from shocks and stresses, e.g. livelihoods  
• Enhance resourcefulness, knowledge networks and education on resilience | UNISDR Resilient Cities |
| **PROSPEROUS** | To create an enabling environment for urban livelihoods by enhancing pro-poor employment, local assets and productivity | • Identify opportunities to grow small-medium scale businesses  
• Develop models for income generation around shared services (e.g. water and sanitation facilities)  
• Increased access to markets for the urban poor  
• Greater inclusion in local value chain processes | UN-Habitat Prosperous Cities |
6. Towards a Just City Where Children Thrive

Just Cities

Just Cities are achieved through the promotion of participation, inclusion and equity among urban residents – with a focus on children and the most vulnerable populations. The facilitating factor of each of the ‘Cities for Children’ domains is Just Cities.

Seeking justice and equity underpins the whole framework and provides the foundation to realise World Vision’s child-well being aspirations and goals.

• Participation and Inclusion

UN-Habitat describes four interlinked dimensions of equality – social, political, economic and cultural. Inclusive cities are those that are able to provide all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic status, all of these dimensions effectively (see Figure 13). The achievement of the four dimensions of equality guarantees inclusiveness for the population, giving them the ‘right to the city.’ The fundamental principles of the ‘right to the city’ are: the indivisibility of human rights; non-discrimination and inclusion; giving priority to vulnerable and marginalised groups; and gender equality.

UN-Habitat lists five levers of inclusiveness that are needed to integrate the urban poor into mainstream urban life:

• Improve the quality of life, especially for the urban poor;
• Invest in human capital formation;
• Foster sustained economic opportunities;
• Enhance political inclusion; and
• Promote cultural inclusion.

Participation and inclusion are essential to empowerment. Children especially have the right to have their views heard and considered. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the vital role that children have in helping to keep themselves and their communities safe.

• Equity

The urban poor suffer inadequate and inequitable access to resources, services and facilities. Equity-focused approaches are therefore essential to realising their rights. UNICEF suggests five requirements needed for equitable development, with priority given to directing solutions to the most disadvantaged children:
CITIES FOR CHILDREN
Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming

- Improve understanding of the scale and nature of urban poverty and exclusion affecting children.

- Identify and remove the barriers to inclusion.

- A sharp focus on the particular needs and priorities of children in urban contexts.

- Policy and practice must promote partnership between the urban poor and government at all levels.

- Everyone must work together to achieve results for children.

These recommendations affirm World Vision’s commitment to:

- Understanding urban contexts through city-wide assessments,

- Defining and responding to the most vulnerable in urban areas,

- Implementing child-focused urban programming, and

- Working through partnerships to achieve sustained child well-being outcomes.
REFERENCES


UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2012), Making Cities Resilient, UNISDR.


The Centre of Expertise (COE) for Urban Programming

World Vision International has established a centre of research and knowledge management to contribute to sustainable and just cities for children.

Hosted by World Vision Australia, Urban CoE is a global network of practitioners and specialists who are committed to addressing child well-being in urban contexts, especially the most vulnerable.

World Vision is scaling up urban programming globally, with new urban ‘learning sites’ being established in multiple regions. Learning sites will apply the lessons from the pilot phase, and scale up a range of tested urban models.

For more information please contact:

Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming

World Vision International

Email: urban_programing@wvi.org

Phone: +61(3) 9287 2750

Web: www.wvi.org/urban