

URBAN EXPRESSIONS

Issue: Mar - May 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from cold Melbourne

Widespread flooding and devastating mudslides in Sri Lanka have killed hundreds and displaced more than half a million people. In Bangladesh, approximately 350,000 people were evacuated from low-lying areas ahead of Cyclone Mora's arrival. The fact is that disasters and climate change issues are a multiplier of many other threats. These events cause destabilization often leading to weakening of national institutions, social disruption, and they exacerbate vulnerabilities due to displacement leading to a cycle of poverty.

Last month at the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Cancun, Mexico Silvia Novoa, National Director of World Vision México highlighted these issues in her speech. She called for governments and stakeholders to raise awareness about disaster risk reduction and promote a culture of prevention. As an urban thinker, Silvia shares her sentiments in the snapshot column.

Also last month, I had the privilege to represent World Vision at UN Habitat's Governing Council meeting. The high-level forum, attended by the 58 member states representatives and 650+ delegates focused on critical global issues such as effective implementation of the *New Urban Agenda*, commitment to *Paris Agreement* and financing sustainable urbanization. The *Paris Agreement* sets the goals for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to increase climate resilience at the local level. So while President Trump decided to pull out of this global commitment, it is progressive communities and their governments who need to ensure that climate change remains on the agenda of caring nations.

Also included in this edition are an academic's view on essentials of urban programming for our urban practitioners, a personal reflection on urban initiative in India from Aline, and a list of Urban Thinkers Campuses around the world hosted by UN Habitat partners to progress the *New Urban Agenda*.

Happy reading!

- Joyati Das

DID YOU KNOW?

***70,000 city taxis are being converted to electric power to improve air quality in Beijing** (source: World Automotive Conference)

SNAPSHOT FROM AN URBAN THINKER



- Silvia Novoa

National Director, WV Mexico

World Vision as one of the largest INGOs is present in many urbanizing centres of the world. It is our responsibility to strengthen, connect and articulate the capacities of local and municipal governments for more plural, inclusive and proactive governance. It is our duty to identify the most vulnerable and disaster prone communities who suffer violence, are marginalized and experience inequity. We need to give special consideration to the most vulnerable among the vulnerable which normally are the children, women, elders and disabled people.

- Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, May 2017 - Cancun, Mexico

Have a photo that you would like to share? Email us

PICK OF THE MONTH

Co-producing sustainable cities



In this video, Diane Mitlin from University of Manchester, explores examples of how organized communities have addressed the issue of being denied access to the services they need because of their low social status. They found that developing an approach to scaling up community service delivery in which neighborhood associations design interventions and then co-produce these basic services with the government is an effective modality.



INTER-GENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WITH POLICE FOR A SAFER DELHI

CASE STUDY FROM INDIA

By Aline Rahbany,
Urban Programming Advisor, Center of
Expertise for Urban Programming



In March 2017, I visited Delhi for the first time. It will be a while before I am able to forget the impression this city had on me. I have never ever seen this many people (or vehicles!) in my life before! The city is so vibrant; it amazed me.

I was in Delhi for a workshop bringing together urban practitioners from World Vision India to validate our recently launched Citywide Self-Sustaining Model (link). This is the first workshop held after the sign off of the Model from Global Center leadership. As a Center of Expertise for urban programming, we are now mandated to further test, validate and refine the Model for potential scale up beyond 2017. So the intention of the Delhi visit was to launch this validation process in a National Office that has had significant investments in urban programming in the past and has formally launched My City Initiative, a World Vision India signature program implemented in seven cities aimed at contextually addressing urban poverty and vulnerabilities.

In Delhi, My City Initiative's prioritized theme is Safer City. It was no surprise to know that safety was selected as an issue to be addressed by World Vision office given the reported numbers of crimes and acts of violence affecting children, women and other urban residents in this city. In fact nine out of ten Delhiites claim "to have been victims or witnesses to crimes."^[1]

In order to better understand the context of Delhi and familiarize myself with My City Initiative approach prior to the launch of the workshop, I had a chance to visit a project implemented by World Vision promoting safety of women and girls. The project aims at empowering girls and women to defend themselves in situations where they are attacked or assaulted. World Vision is partnering with Delhi police, Delhi city's education department and a faith based institution to implement this project.

As I was watching more than a hundred girls and women of different ages performing maneuvers they have learned part of this training; I couldn't but apply a critical eye to understand this project with the lens of the Cities for Children framework that the Center of Expertise for urban programming recently launched as part of the Citywide Self-Sustaining Model. I wanted to select each element of the framework and reflect on the possibility of validating its importance through this remarkable urban project.

- The project is an **issue** based one; where the issue is safety of women and girls. While what I was witnessing was one approach applied to address the issue, other sectoral approaches were being employed to contribute to an outcome of a safer Delhi.
- The project has selected a couple of the **strategic pillars** that the Cities for Children framework proposes:
 - **Built environment:** the self-defense training is taking place in a public space managed by a faith based institution. It is a smart entry point to an existing space that is available and unused during



certain times of the day/week.

- **knowledge building:** while the initiative clearly improves knowledge and skills of girls and women to be able to defend themselves; what interested me was the knowledge built at the level of the city units (Police Unit, Education Department) on the issues of urban violence in the city due to their direct engagement with the city residents. This knowledge can enable city authorities to have informed planning for policy and programs.
- The project has also used a couple of the **enablers of change** identified in the Cities for Children framework with the most interesting one being:
 - **Partnerships:** World Vision plays a strategic facilitator and convener in this project; it brings together different actors that have joint interest in addressing one issue. Partnerships are formed with government bodies, faith organizations and schools in order to reach a bigger scale at the city level.
- A **citywide approach** was adopted where the project started with a small group of girls in one neighborhood and then expanded to reach a larger number of girls and women from different parts of the city. The citywide scale was achieved through a request of the Department of Education to implement the self-defense training in 485 schools across the city.

Finally, one of the most intriguing aspects of this initiative is the transformation in the attitudes of women and girls who are participating in this project. . What started off as a project addressing girls only, has now become an initiative targeting women of all ages. It was very touching to see a grandmother, with her grandchild in her arms, participating in the self-defense training. The most fascinating part was that she was able to influence her five daughters in law to join her. This is a remarkable change in attitudes across generations. [\[1\] source](#)



"Countries and communities everywhere are facing pressures that are being exacerbated by megatrends – like population growth, rapid and many times chaotic urbanization, food insecurity, water scarcity, massive movements of population and migration... the list can go on and on. But one overriding megatrend is far and away at the top of that list – climate change. I want my grandchildren to inherit a healthy world, free of conflict and suffering – and a healthy planet, rooted in low-carbon sustainable solutions."

- António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

WHAT'S HAPPENING

* Joyati Das represented WV at the Expert group meeting in New York to support the development of global action plan to implement the New Urban Agenda and represented civil society at the High Level Dialogue last month at UN Habitat's Governing Council meeting.

She said: "the conversation now is about developing a coherent, succinct message inviting all existing and potential partners to mobilize people, ideas, solutions that contribute to the realization of urban SDG no.11. We need collective ownership of all groups to come together and institutionalize a comprehensive, inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy with a concrete action plan to implement the New Urban Agenda."



* Aline Rahbany moderated a panel discussion and a working session on the topic of: "Strengthening social cohesion as a key component of local economic development" the second annual meeting of the Center of Mediterranean Integration (CMI), held in Beirut in May. The event was in partnership with GIZ, the World Bank, UN-Habitat Lebanon and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG-MENA). During the event, a Compendium of best practices for hosting refugees was launched.



RESOURCES

*Read Pamela Sitko's article in Citiscope: "*Humanitarian response is getting a major urban overhaul*"

*Igarape Institute has just released its interactive 2016 annual report; including the publication "*Making Cities Safer: Citizen Security Innovation from Latin America*" and the data visualization platform mapping Fragile Cities.

QUESTIONS FROM THE MEMBERS

Q: Is social cohesion possible between neighborhoods? What are effective approaches in building social cohesion in urban settings?

- *Nisreen Abou Mrad, Program Development and Quality Assurance Manager, World Vision Lebanon*

A: Social cohesion is identified as one of the strategic pillars of our Cities for Children Framework. It is a pre-requisite for programming in any city, as it directly addresses social tensions and builds bridges between diverse groups sharing same geographical boundaries. According to WV's research, social cohesion is defined as the nature and set of relationships between individuals and groups and between those groups and the institutions that govern them in a particular environment. The particular urban environment could be the neighborhood, an agglomeration of neighborhoods, a municipality or even a city.

Approaches that have been considered to improve social cohesion between diverse groups have been related to (1) expanding livelihood opportunities to decrease tension cause by job competition, (2) ensuring access to education to children from diverse backgrounds as schools can be stable, safe and neutral institutions that foster relationship building, and (3) strengthening local governments and civil society to mitigate potential conflict and promote dialogue. Other approaches specific to informal urban environments have also included neighborhood upgrading.

Got a question? Email us at urban_programming@wvi.org

FROM AN URBAN EXPERT

40% of global growth in the next 10 years will come from cities in emerging contexts. Those are the same cities faced with risks such as violence and conflict, migration, and climate change. In this video, John de Boer, formerly a Senior Policy Adviser with the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, presents a new data visualization tracking risks in over 2,100 cities.



CALENDAR

Urban Thinkers Campuses:

June 1-30

Rethinking the cities: City and property social role - *Bella Horizonte, Brazil*

July 7

Geneva City Lab on Safer Cities (North America Regional hub of City Labs) - *Geneva, Switzerland*

July 8-9

Road Map for Implementation of New Urban Agenda: Involvement of Multi-Stakeholders in Development Process - *Dhaka, Bangladesh*

Aug 28-30

A City We Need: Inclusive City, Inclusive Prosperity - Building a city that leaves no one behind- *Toronto, Canada*

Visit this page to know more about these events, including an Urban Thinkers Campus near you.

MEET THE TEAM

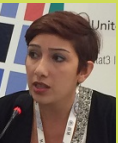
Joyati Das

Senior Director



Aline Rahbany

Urban Programming Advisor



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