World Vision

Stepanavan City Resilience Initiative
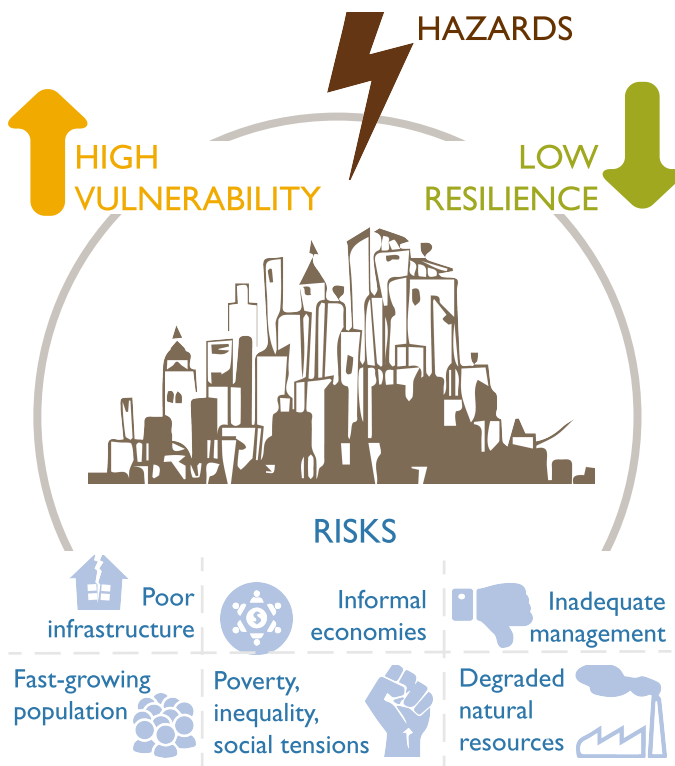# A Case Study from Armenia

Resilience

Urban Learning Hub

THE ISSUE: URBANISATION

The world is rapidly urbanising, with over half of the world's population currently living in urban areas. There are 28 mega-cities worldwide, each with 10 million or more inhabitants, with that figure projected to grow to 41 by 2030.

Consequently, managing urban areas has become one of the most important development challenges of the 21st century (UN DESA, 2014).

Due to fast and often poorly planned growth, cities possess significant drivers of risk such as:

- Fast-growing populations with high densities in hazard-prone locations.
- Informal economies with few safety nets.
- Inadequately managed and highly stressed public resources and services.
- Poorly built infrastructure with a lack of compliance to safe construction codes.
- Poverty, inequality, social tensions and insecurity.
- Degraded natural resources and environmental pollution.

HAZARDS

HIGH VULNERABILITY

LOW RESILIENCE

DISASTERS

RISKS

Poor infrastructure

Informal economies

Inadequate management

Fast-growing population

Poverty, inequality, social tensions

Degraded natural resources

- May disrupt food distribution, water supply, health care, transportation, waste disposal, and communications.
- Can cost between US$250-US$300 billion each year in economic losses.
- Force poor urban households to spend up to 70% of their income to purchase food alone, leaving little money for education, medical and other needs.

A Global Blueprint for Disaster Risk Reduction

To reduce disaster losses and build the resilience of nations and communities, UN member states adopted a 10-year plan in 2005 (the Hyogo Framework for Action, which is now superseded by the Sendai Framework) which aims to substantially reduce disaster risks and losses globally. To strengthen local government action on urban risk and contribute to building disaster-resilient cities, the Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready! campaign was launched in 2010 (UNISDR, 2015).

HFA

Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
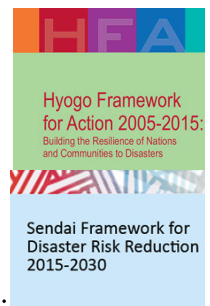
BUILDING URBAN RESILIENCE

WHAT?

The concept of urban resilience is based on the 'inherent capacity of cities to bounce back or recover from disasters' (Shaw, 2014). World Bank (2015) has identified four components of Urban Resilience: infrastructural, institutional, economic and social.
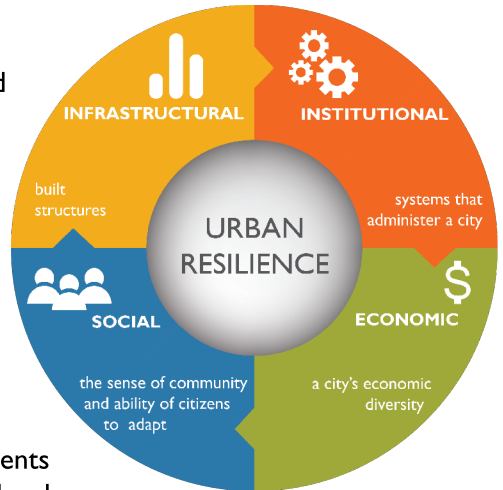
WHY?

• to reduce disaster risks in cities
• to decrease the vulnerability of the urban poor
• to protect urban development investments
• to contribute to resilient systems and local governance to improve the well-being of girls and boys in diverse and rapidly growing urban environments

HOW?

Approaches to Building Urban Resilience

World Vision's (WV) overarching goal is to work with the most vulnerable people to overcome poverty and injustice. For urban programming, WV has developed a 'Cities for Children' framework in alignment with WV's key organisational mandate, our Child Well-Being Aspirations.[1]

The framework highlights key levels of sustainable change by focusing on four essential domains impacting child well-being including: healthy cities, prosperous cities, safer cities, and resilient cities.

Resilient Cities

Goal: To support city dwellers to prepare, respond and adapt to urban crises, hazards and disasters.

Strategies:

• 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.

Aligned Approach: UNISDR Making Cities Resilient.

1 http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/child-well-being-outcomes-and-aspirations
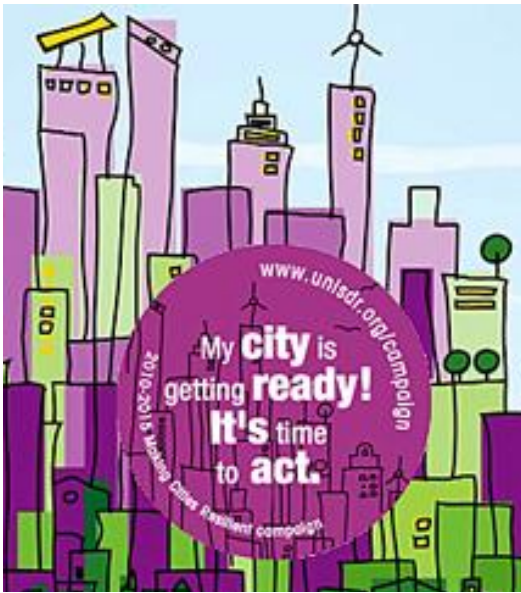
This UNISDR campaign seeks to engage city leaders and local governments to commit to implementing a checklist of Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient together with community residents, the private sector, local and international organisations. There are currently more than 2500 participating cities worldwide and the campaign is recognised as one of the most important initiatives addressing city resilience through: improving local governance in Disaster Risk Reduction planning, increasing community participation and fostering a culture of safety and sustainable urbanisation.

THE CASE OF STEPANAVAN CITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

To encourage the mainstreaming of resilience into urban development plans, World Vision Armenia along with other local and international organisations, proposed that Stepanavan municipality participate in the Making Cities Resilient campaign.

Context

The city of Stepanavan is located in the north-west of Lori Region, Armenia with a population of approximately 17,000. Major hazards include earthquakes, floods, landslides, drought, forest fires and environmental pollution.

Process

Stepanavan city joined the Making Cities Resilient campaign in 2014 and followed guidance from the 'Handbook for local government leaders' in an effort to achieve these milestones from the 'Ten essentials for making cities resilient':

Preparation & Planning

Risk Assessment

Resilience Action Plan

Implementation of Action Plan

Monitoring & Follow Up

World Vision's role in this multi-stakeholder initiative included: training on Disaster Risk Reduction policy, community mobilisation and awareness raising, advocacy on law amendments mandating risk assessments and other tasks outlined in the resilience action plan (see References).

Results

Early Indicators of Success

As the initiative is only one year into a multi-year process, it is too early to formally measure impacts, however, these early indicators of success have been observed:

- Efficient progress made on mobilising stakeholders, training on resilience concepts, conducting disaster risk assessments, and developing a multi-year resilience action plan.
- Institutionalising resilience through: formalising Community Resilience Teams, linking to national structures and mechanisms (e.g. Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform), capitalising on existing local capacities and integrating the resilience action plan into the four-year city development plan.
- Timely completion of micro-projects within the resilience action plan including: energy-efficient lighting for the city, tree planting, kindergarten refurbishment with solar heating and insulated windows.
- Strong collaboration by government, United Nations, non-government and community organisations, and the private sector including funding contribution and technical expertise.
- Nomination by UNISDR for role model city status.
- Amendment of a law of local government to include disaster risk assessments under the responsibilities of the local authority.

Key Challenges

Community accountability: Information outreach to city residents and participatory processes where community could be involved in consultation, decision-making and providing feedback were limited.

Partnerships: Information and knowledge management between partners was at times lacking and coordination between different departments of the municipality and government was slow.

Governance: Because the governance structure changes from regional to local level, it made partnerships between organisations (public and private) that work across the local, district and national levels challenging.

THE WAY FORWARD
World Vision's Value-add to Making Cities Resilient

As a partner in urban resilience building, World Vision brings unique skills to the campaign:

- World Vision has existing relationships and trust established with the community and local stakeholders from an ongoing community development presence. We work as an effective community facilitator, mobilising resources, people and support for self-determination.
- World Vision has a well-established participatory approach, ensuring citizen involvement in programme assessment and planning while applying community accountability principles.
- With a child-focused mandate, World Vision can encourage the needs, rights and perspectives of children and make sure they are included in all stages of the city resilience building process.
- As an advocate, WV can influence governments and their policy agenda by using local-level advocacy approaches such as Citizen Voice in Action and hold city leaders to account.
- Experience in Community-based Disaster Risk Management means that World Vision has extensive tools and practices for risk-sensitive programming including: risk assessment methodologies, DRR toolkit, Community Resilience Modules.
- WV's action learning from urban pilot projects has informed the Cities for Children Framework, a multi-disciplinary integrated approach to addressing child well-being in urban contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the experience of Stepanavan and aim to inform more effective support to the campaign by World Vision national offices:

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Multi-stakeholder approach enhances sustainability of Disaster Risk Reduction actions.	Decentralisation of DRR responsibility and processes enables more thorough attention to be paid at local level and builds local-level ownership and capacities.	Practical DRR actions included into mandated routine operations improves institutional capacities and systemisation of DRR actions.	Community-level capacity building is essential for strengthening disaster risk management at local levels.	Effective information dissemination and awareness raising is important in establishing a shared understanding of resilience (purpose, benefit, process).	Participatory governance principles build local ownership, enhance sustainability and create a positive attitude of disaster preparedness.	Use of a local-level advocacy approach increases the uptake of resilience initiatives by local authorities.

For more details on the Stepanavan Lessons Learned and specific guidance on how World Vision national offices can support the Making Cities Resilient campaign, see the Resources section.

ENDORSEMENT

World Vision MEER endorses this approach and encourages World Vision national offices and other civil society actors to participate in the Making Cities Resilient campaign.

RESOURCES

These resources can assist offices in applying urban risk reduction principles and resilience building:

'Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation' (principles for urban contexts p.104 – p.110).

World Vision Middle East, Eastern Europe Region, City Resilience in Stepanavan, Armenia Lessons Learned Report, 2015 (find under DLI at http://wvie.org/).

'World Vision Urban Disaster Management Toolkit'.

World Vision Resilience and Livelihood guidance notes for urban contexts (internal).

'World Vision Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Framework'.

'World Vision Urban Centre of Expertise Cities for Children Framework'.

'World Vision Asia Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Toolkit'.

'World Vision Guidance on Citizen Voice and Action for Resilience and Livelihoods Programming'.

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ALNAP (2015), 'Responding to Urban Disasters', http://www.alnap.org/resource/7772# Armenia National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform, http://www.arnap.am/.

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Shaw, R (2014), 'Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Framework: Assessing urban resilience in World Vision project sites in Bangladesh, Indonesia and China'.

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'Stepanavan City Resilience Plan of Action 2014-2016' http://www.unisdr.org/files/38708_stepanavancityresilineceactionplan.pdf.

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UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2014), 'World Urbanisation Prospects'.

UNISDR (2010), 'The 10 Essentials for Making Cities Resilient', http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/toolkit/essentials.

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