Urban Quick Reference Guide

Principles of urban programming

For Field Testing

Guidance for Development Programmes
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World Vision’s Development Programme Approach in urban contexts

As the world’s population becomes increasingly urban, the context of poverty is also shifting from rural to urban areas. Ninety per cent of global population growth over the coming decades is expected to occur in the towns and cities of the developing world.¹ The growth of urbanisation is not simply due to rural-urban migration, but also through the transformation of small towns and villages and natural population growth in cities. Due to this fast pace of urbanisation, the number of people living in slums continues to grow, and is now estimated at around 828 million.²

The majority of people living in the cities of the developing world are children and youth. While cities represent centres of wealth, progress and innovation, they can also be home to poverty, exclusion and extreme inequalities. Children living in urban poverty are at high risk; many surviving in dwellings and living environments that are unfit for habitation.³ Diseases, malnutrition and child mortality rates remain high in slum areas. Despite the higher number of schools in urban areas, social and cultural barriers often hinder access to basic education for children living in slum communities.

Urban poverty presents some unique issues for World Vision (WV) programmes. Population densities and severe pressures on services and space can result in particular vulnerabilities for urban children. These vulnerabilities are made worse since the urban poor are usually excluded from government systems of planning and decision-making.

Urban contexts are often characterised by diverse forms of community and social structures, numerous stakeholders and complexities in coordination, greater frequency in movement of people, and a faster pace of change. These factors bring many different challenges for WV. However, urban contexts also offer significant opportunities to improve the well-being of urban children. Given the potential to coordinate, build and leverage partnerships with multiple urban stakeholders, there is a need to ensure that partnering approaches and tools are contextualised to the urban context.

This – *Urban Quick Reference Guide* - outlines a number of key steps for national offices to consider when responding to urbanisation and in implementing WV’s Development Programme Approach in urban contexts.

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² UN, MDG Report 2011.
## Urban challenges and opportunities for World Vision

The following table highlights some of the common issues that affect urban programmes, and the consequent operational challenges and opportunities for WV.

### Table 1: Urban challenges and opportunities for World Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban programming issue</th>
<th>Challenges and opportunities for World Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobility</strong>: Urban-dwellers move regularly, they may live in informal or illegal settlements and could be evicted at any time.</td>
<td>Child Sponsorship is best suited to stable, settled communities, while more transient groups can be supported through other funding sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of information and relevant data</strong>: data is very hard to find because of high mobility and frequent change in urban poor settlements.</td>
<td>WV’s programme assessments rely heavily on secondary data, but staff can supplement this through conversations with civil society actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity of urban communities</strong>: urban-dwellers may form communities around shared places, interests, cultures, practices or even resistance.</td>
<td>Multiple communities in a single programme focus area require diverse programme approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct benefits are not seen as ‘empowering’</strong>: yet there are vulnerable urban groups on the margins that may need immediate support.</td>
<td>Ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable are met, while building local capacities and encouraging greater responsibility of duty-bearers in service delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion of the poor from city governance</strong>: municipal plans and urban development agendas rarely include the poor.</td>
<td>WV needs to continue supporting and building capacity for effective local-level advocacy in urban Area Development Programmes (ADPs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complexity of actors</strong>: cities are home to a complex variety of organisations, institutions, businesses and individuals, both formal and informal.</td>
<td>Urban contexts present increased opportunities as well as risks when coordinating with different levels of stakeholders and when selecting partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for a rights-based approach, strong collective voice</strong>: to be influential.</td>
<td>WV’s commitment to local-level partnering gives programmes an opportunity to work in more rights-based coalitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fragmented and contested urban communities</strong>: the urban poor may not always be willing to work together, or share the same vision.</td>
<td>Programme staff require specific skill sets including negotiation. They need the ability to dialogue with the ‘dividers’ in a community (for example, street gangs) as well as the ‘connectors’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever-changing and fluid urban communities.</strong></td>
<td>WV’s accountability systems promote a structured, planning approach to project management. Urban contexts require frequent application of the principles of action-learning, reflection, re-assessment and re-evaluation. Planning needs to be flexible and responsive to changes in the local context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Steps for national offices to consider when responding to urbanisation

It is recommended that NOs follow the five steps below when implementing WV’s development programme approach in urban contexts in order to ensure sustainable programme impact and effectiveness:

1. National office should include an urban strategy in its overall strategy

The ‘Basic programming parameters’ (referred to in the Handbook for Development Programmes), include seven inter-linked elements for delivering WV’s development programme approach. Each of these parameters should be defined in relation to a dynamic, complex and volatile urban context. Each national office will need to define their specific geographic areas, target populations, project lifespans, resourcing, governance, accountability and disaster management planning. This will be in response to its national population figures, density of population and country size.

National office urban strategy will ensure resources are allocated to issues and sectors in alignment with its overall strategy and capacity, as well as respond to addressing gaps in-country.

For resources and suggested processes related to developing urban strategy, please refer to the Urban Learning Network on wvcentral: https://www.wvcentral.org/cop/pe/urban

Table 2. Scope of a national office urban strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement level</th>
<th>Possible activity areas</th>
<th>Potential partners</th>
<th>Supporting material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local slum or settlement</td>
<td>– Child-focused activities&lt;br&gt;– Household needs&lt;br&gt;– Child Sponsorship in settled families.</td>
<td>– Community members&lt;br&gt;– CBOs&lt;br&gt;– Local service providers&lt;br&gt;– Local businesses.</td>
<td>– WV Programme Design documents, CBO plans, service provider contracts or agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality or District</td>
<td>– Contribution to local development plans&lt;br&gt;– Combined resources and activities with local NGOs.</td>
<td>– Municipal leaders&lt;br&gt;– Local officials&lt;br&gt;– Private enterprises&lt;br&gt;– Local NGOs.</td>
<td>– WV Programme Design&lt;br&gt;– Municipal/District development plans, business plans, NGO plans or strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City or metropolitan Area</td>
<td>– Improving city systems and services&lt;br&gt;– Pro-poor regulatory frameworks&lt;br&gt;– Fair land-use, planning and zoning practices&lt;br&gt;– NGO coalitions and advocacy networks.</td>
<td>– Mayor’s office&lt;br&gt;– Development authorities&lt;br&gt;– Utilities and city service providers&lt;br&gt;– Planning agencies&lt;br&gt;– Civil society actors&lt;br&gt;– Research institutions&lt;br&gt;– Multilateral bodies.</td>
<td>– WV urban strategy, city development plans, service provider contracts or agreements, civil society documents (like campaign materials or publications) and research materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>– Access to legal systems&lt;br&gt;– Building INGO advocacy networks and coalitions&lt;br&gt;– Pro-poor economic development.</td>
<td>– National government and ministries&lt;br&gt;– Business councils&lt;br&gt;– International NGOs&lt;br&gt;– Legal institutions&lt;br&gt;– Multilateral bodies.</td>
<td>– WV national strategy, national government plans, legal decrees and legislation, constitutional commitments and more.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 does not imply that the scope of urban strategy is for World Vision staff or programmes to address all possible activity areas and engage all partners. It simply demonstrates how local, municipal, city and national-level action can be combined to achieve depth and impact in urban programmes.

2. Economies of scale in cities: macro and micro level approach

Defining target areas in the city to maximise policy influence

Cities are large geographic areas often with dense population pockets that continue to grow. In order to be influential in cities, WV programmes need to have depth and impact. As the Handbook explains, WV development programmes need to take a systemic view of the factors that affect child well-being and children’s rights.

It is proposed that national offices focus on establishing multiple programmes within one municipality (for economy of scale) to provide a significant basis for advocating and influencing both at city-level and national-level. While the primary focus area of a programme is considered to be the local target communities, evidence of micro level impact from multiple programmes can inform macro-level policy change.

The aim of this ‘economies of scale’ approach is to enable simultaneous investment in several ADPs in a chosen municipality, ward or sub-district, to help build and sustain a positive environment for children in that area. Once duty bearers and local groups take the lead in addressing the issues of this particular area, an option for WV is to then scale-down and move to a neighbouring area that needs attention and has a high concentration of urban poverty. This concentration of resources is a more sustainable way of creating impact at a macro-level, as programmes strengthen existing local governance systems and structures. This targeted approach, combining resources is an operational and strategic opportunity for national and support offices to work together to bring sustainable change and impact.

Box 1. Indonesia urban pilot case study (see Appendix 2)

A combined macro/micro approach was used by one of the urban pilots in Indonesia. The project began by engaging with a wide range of groups from around the city of Surabaya and within the target sub-district identified by the local government.

Initial discussion with municipal authorities prior to the assessment process helped World Vision understand the municipal plan for the future. From the start of assessment the team helped to establish a Surabaya-wide Urban Working Group (UWG). The assessment process thus reached a wider audience and the process was open to valuable, multi-stakeholder input. The UWG was able to support the project in developing a stronger understanding of macro urban issues, and provided support in gaining access to communities. This was particularly helpful when conducting household discussions, because the level of trust developed, gave community members confidence when speaking with interviewers.
3. Categorise communities according to their migration and mobility status

Many urban poor are highly mobile – both in terms of physical movement (such as seasonal migration or frequent relocation within a city) and economic mobility (moving up and down the ‘ladder of poverty’). Within any given slum or urban settlement, individuals and families can be categorised according to their likely migration and mobility status. Some will be **stable**, others will be **transient**, with further sub-sets of **predictable minority** groups. These categories of people are likely to be distributed across an urban area, rather than clustered together at a certain site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Programme parameters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Stable** | – Have lived in the area for many years, or for several generations  
– Unlikely to move (for child sponsorship, less than 5% migration)  
– Long-term and/or regular employment  
– Established social/community connections  
– Greater degree of control or autonomy over personal circumstances. | – Families better suited for Child Sponsorship  
– Focus on children and youth as these will provide a stable core for programming and sponsorship opportunities. |
| **Transient** | – Significant human movement (for child sponsorship, more than 5% migration)  
– Unpredictable economic or family situations, very little or no control over circumstances | – High instability  
– Longer-term child well-being aspirations are displaced by shorter-term needs |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable Group</th>
<th>Transient Group</th>
<th>Predictable Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless or squatters, orphans, street children</td>
<td>Recent migrants without local language or social connections</td>
<td>More fundamental immediate needs such as food, shelter and protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td>At risk and highly vulnerable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some degree of economic security and control over family situation</td>
<td>Some movement or seasonal migration (predictable)</td>
<td>Short/medium-term stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renters or those in short-term living arrangements</td>
<td>Seasonal migrants</td>
<td>Potential for sponsorship with appropriate risk management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary or short-term employed</td>
<td>Unemployed, homeless, street children</td>
<td>Linkages with rural areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Stable and transient groups in urban contexts**

By categorising urban populations into stable, transient, and predictable minority groups, local-level staff in urban programmes can:

- work with partners to design programmes that reach the most vulnerable
- determine if child sponsorship is feasible and sustainable in the selected area.

### 4. Funding implications and applying child sponsorship in urban areas

While a mix of programming approaches is recommended to reach diverse groups within a single programme, child sponsorship can still be applied. Within an urban slum or settlement, local-level staff need to identify the appropriate ‘stable’ families, which are better suited for sponsorship. The sponsored children and families become the core of the programme, while activities targeting ‘the most vulnerable’ (who may be more transient) are anchored to this core funding. When a more

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4 Please see *Sponsorship Feasibility & Risk Management Tool* which outlines the community characteristics required for sponsorship.
significant intervention to support transient groups is required, these activities could be supplemented with different funding sources.

Where Child Sponsorship is not feasible in an urban area due to very high levels of mobility, other funding options may need to be considered. The flow diagram below (Figure 3) will help in deciding whether or not sponsorship is feasible (use this in conjunction with the Sponsorship Feasibility and Risk tool).

In urban areas with very high levels of mobility and change, planning long-term development projects will be challenging. In these areas, it is recommended that programme funding should be highly flexible in terms of:

- **Timeframes** – projects may need to include a combination of activities that are planned on a monthly, semi-annual and annual basis. Plans are regularly revised and updated. As a result, changes to multi-year budgets may result. When relevant, shorter timeframes for project budgets should be designed to allow for regular updating according to the needs of the project.
- **Application** – funds may need to be used for a variety of purposes including direct support to community members, capacity-building, hiring short-term staff or consultancies, research and data collection, advocacy and more.
- **Allocation** – short-term projects in very poor urban areas may require a small amount of budget for ‘unplanned activities’ in order to respond to emerging opportunities and support the development of partnerships. Support offices should set aside funding for such purposes and it is important that finance teams in national offices understand the rationale for this type of funding allocation.

**Figure 3. Flow diagram for selecting urban registered children (RC)**

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- Is the population stable or transient?
  - Stable
  - Transient
    - Is the population movement restricted to a **predictable minority** in the population (e.g. seasonal migrants)? Is it possible to predict which families are likely to move?
      - Yes
        - Is the stable population of the proposed target group sufficient to support proposed RC numbers?
          - Yes: Sponsorship funding may be suitable subject to other factors
          - No: Sponsorship funding is not suitable. Seek alternate funding
      - No
        - Is the proposed target group population (for RC selection) stable?
          - Yes
            - Note: the specific target group may be more subject to movement
          - No
            - Is the population stable or transient?
              - Stable
              - Transient

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**World Vision’s Guidance for Development Programmes**

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5. Staffing structure and roles in urban programmes

Recognising that urban work requires a focused skill set and knowledge, the Integrated Competency Development (ICD) resources and the Urban Core Competency Framework document\(^5\) should be used to guide WV offices in making staffing decisions for urban programmes.

Depending on the focus of specific WV urban programmes or strategies, some competencies may be more relevant than others. The following is a summary of core competencies which are critical to the effectiveness of urban programmes.

### Table 4. Critical urban staff competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban staff competencies</th>
<th>Skill description</th>
<th>Why needed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro and micro level Influence</td>
<td>The ability to understand an ever-changing city level landscape and an awareness of how local action is affected by city-wide systems, structures and changes. Experience in engaging in dialogue at the macro level.</td>
<td>Urban environments are politicised and the systems and structures are highly inter-dependent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political astuteness</td>
<td>The ability to recognise the motives, agenda and behaviours of different political actors and to form appropriate responses; allowing them to engage in advocacy and dialogue with political players.</td>
<td>Urban environments are often dynamic centres of power relationships and politics. Child well-being issues in urban settings are often influenced by the political environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility in management and development approach</td>
<td>An ability to adapt quickly and respond to new information or changing circumstances; to consider new approaches and trial different ways of programming and management.</td>
<td>The diverse and dynamic nature of the urban environment reflects the need for WV to adapt and respond to frequent changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and knowledge management</td>
<td>The ability to source relevant information, identify key trends and understand their implications upon the programme; together with the effective documentation, processing and exchange of information.</td>
<td>Complexity of urban issues and the rapid nature of change occurring in the urban environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendices

1. Urban Core Competencies Framework
2. Site Selection Guidelines
3. Urban Risk Assessment Tool
4. Readiness Self-Assessment Tool

\(^5\) See appendices for full document