Urban stakeholder engagement and coordination

Guidance Note for Humanitarian Practitioners

Stronger Cities Consortium

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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

NRC
NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

World Vision

Preface

The *Stronger Cities Initiative* is a consortium of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and World Vision International (WVI) with technical advice by David Sanderson, University of New South Wales (UNSW) Sydney. The purpose of the initiative is to produce practical field-tested guidance for humanitarian organisations working in urban conflict, displacement, and natural hazard settings.

This guidance note was developed by the IRC. The IRC responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster. Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, the IRC is at work in over 40 countries and 26 US cities helping people to survive, reclaim control of their future, and strengthen their communities.

European Union
Civil Protection and
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Produced by IIED's Human Settlements Group

The Human Settlements Group at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) works to reduce poverty and improve health and housing conditions in the urban centres of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It seeks to combine this with promoting good governance and more ecologically sustainable patterns of urban development and rural-urban linkages.

This paper is part of a series of research pieces produced under the 'Urban Crises Learning Fund' managed by IIED. Funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), the fund aims to build an in-depth understanding of how the humanitarian sector can operate most effectively in urban contexts.

A rapidly urbanising world presents both challenges and opportunities for humanitarian aid approaches. Urban areas often have a greater density of people and diversity of affected populations, stronger civil society, and more developed and complex governance structures, service delivery systems, and market systems. These factors heighten the importance of coordination and collaboration.

Learning from prior urban responses also highlights the potential risks of poor coordination including development of inaccurate targeting strategies, fostering of misconceptions and miscommunication, and even the undermining of municipal and local capacity in the long term.

Despite these challenges, well developed and coordinated urban responses can leverage opportunities – reaching larger numbers of affected people efficiently, drawing upon and improving local response mechanisms, addressing existing inequalities, and contributing to the resilience of the city.

This guidance note provides key principles and considerations for individual organisations to use when making decisions on how to engage and coordinate with local and international actors throughout the programme life-cycle, to ensure effective implementation of the agency's response. It is intended to help improve the communication, collaboration, and coordination of humanitarian agencies with other stakeholders in urban contexts.

Contents

List of figures and tables

Abbreviations and acronyms

ABA	Area-based approach
CBO	Community-based organisation
CBPF	Country-based Pooled Fund
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CSO	Civil society organisation
DFID	Department of International Development, UK
FGD	Focus group discussion
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally displaced person
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key informant interview
LGA	Local government area
LNGO	Local non-governmental organisation
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSA	Non-state actor
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WVI	World Vision International

Introduction

Stakeholder engagement and coordination in urban crises

A rapidly urbanising world presents both challenges and opportunities for humanitarian aid approaches. Conflict and disaster directly impact high population areas, or result in more diffusely displaced populations increasingly settling in urban spaces. Despite the existence of refugee camps in countries bordering the world's conflict zones, today some 60 per cent of the world's refugees live in urban contexts, most of them in the cities of conflict-affected or low-income countries struggling to maintain stability and provide services for their host populations. For example, Lebanon hosts over 1.2 million Syrian refugees largely dispersed throughout cities and towns, while Kenya, home to the world's largest refugee camp, has a substantial displaced population in Nairobi. While coordination can be challenging in any context, urban settings pose particular challenges for humanitarian coordination due to several factors:

- **Greater density and diversity of affected populations**[1] and larger existing social and economic inequalities (Landau *et al*., 2016). Also, populations, especially vulnerable groups or displaced, may be living across a wide geographic area of the city or less visible.

- **More complex and multiple levels of governance**, including service provision, infrastructure and planning processes.

- **Markets featuring a larger concentration of actors**, greater integration, a cash economy and potential larger technology uptake (DFID, 2014).

- **Greater number of stakeholders to coordinate with**, from prominent civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), to informal community leaders and influential groups and institutions, and thriving private sector businesses and influencers.

These factors heighten the importance of coordination and collaboration for implementation in urban settings. Learning from prior urban responses also highlights the potential risks of poor coordination. These include development of inaccurate targeting strategies leading to suboptimal response, fostering of misconceptions and miscommunication which create tensions between responders to the crisis and also potentially within communities, and the undermining of municipal and local capacity in the long term as international response supplants existing mechanisms for meeting the needs of the population (IMPACT and UCLG, 2016: 9).

Coordination is broadly defined as the ways in which an organisation communicates, engages, and partners with local and international stakeholders in an urban setting, including participating in broader inter-agency coordination and response that might be in place at city level.

Good stakeholder engagement and coordination can enable agencies to leverage opportunities for greater scale, to benefit from and support local response mechanisms, to do no harm, and to contribute to the resilience and longer term development of the city.

Despite these challenges, well developed and coordinated urban responses can leverage opportunities – reaching larger numbers of affected people efficiently, drawing upon and improving local response mechanisms, addressing existing inequalities, and contributing to the resilience and longer-term development goals of the city.

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[1] Persons directly or indirectly experiencing the effect of a crisis.

Purpose of this guidance note

This guidance note provides key principles and considerations for individual organisations to use when making decisions on how to engage and coordinate with local and international actors in an urban humanitarian response, to ensure effective implementation of the agency's response. It is intended to help improve the communication, collaboration, and coordination of humanitarian agencies with other stakeholders in urban contexts.

Audience: The guidance note is intended to provide practical guidance for programme managers at an implementation level. It may also serve a useful resource for other decision makers. While each agency or country programme may have its own approach or tools that they apply for stakeholder engagement and coordination, the guidance note aims to establish general considerations for urban responses that may be adapted to a particular local context.

How to use: The guidance note is intended to inform users on decision making on stakeholder engagement and coordination in urban humanitarian response across the programme cycle. The note aids users in identifying who to coordinate with and how across the programme cycle. As the note starts where a stakeholder analysis stops, it will not provide detailed guidance on conducting a stakeholder or context analysis. Annex 2 provides examples of tools that can be used to conduct a stakeholder analysis in urban contexts.

Complementary resources: The guidance note is also intended as a complement to the *Guidance note for improving coordination and responses to urban crises in the humanitarian programme cycle*, which is under development through the IASC and its cluster system, by providing step-by-step advice from the perspective of an individual implementing organisation (IASC, n.d).

Structure of this guidance note

This guidance note provides an overview of the key principles of urban responses and outlines the definitions and considerations for stakeholder engagement and coordination in urban contexts. Following a brief overview of the ongoing discussion on key principles of urban-based interventions, the note reviews each stakeholder that may be present in an urban setting. Each stakeholder is defined in the context of urban coordination decision making, with a discussion of the reasons for engagement and methods for coordination. A companion `pocket reference' is included in Annex 3 to provide a quick reference on key principles and considerations for implementing organisations.

School in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Credit: Kellie Ryan

Key principles of urban responses

There are some common principles to keep in mind for any urban-based responses that are relevant throughout the programme cycle. These are based on emerging research and experience from a variety of urban responses. The emerging principles include:

Understanding the context

- Urban response should **leverage local knowledge whether through key informants or secondary resources,** such as mapping and other available data. Applying this knowledge can help ensure the effectiveness of a response and ensure that assessments are not duplicated.

- It is important to conduct context analyses to understand the local dynamics and capacities (local institutions and client groups, governance structures and local power dynamics, social structures and relationships, and geography) in order to identify suitable entry points and opportunities to leverage the distinct characteristics of the city or town to build resilience and avoid conflict or exacerbate existing inequalities (Meaux and Osofisan, 2016).

An organisation responding should always **consider a response within the variety of local and international stakeholders corresponding to the needs of affected populations**. A thorough stakeholder analysis helps to inform the specific areas that an organisation can add value to existing responders, whether government, NGOs, or the communities themselves (Sanderson and Sitko, 2017).

Applying an area-based approach

Approaches should **consider the geographic area of the response, taking into account the physical space and entire population of an area**[2] or settlement rather than just a specific targeted population. Where displaced populations exist, assisting both the displaced and the affected host community can reduce tensions and result in a more effective response.

- Responses should seek to **think holistically about achieving outcomes** within an area. This may mean coordinating across sectors within one organisation or working in collaboration with other actors to find synergies to deliver multi-sectoral responses.

- While approaches should consider an area, they should also take into account how that area is related and interconnected with other parts of a city, state, or nation by **applying a multi-scalar understanding of the city**. Therefore coordination may be necessary at multiple levels from area, city, to nation (see Figure 1).

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[2] Area-based approaches (ABAs) have been characterised as being geographically-based in a specific area, engaged in participatory project management methods, and multi-sectoral in nature. For more on ABAs see Parker and Maynard, 2015.

Figure 1: Example of multi-scalar governance structures in Dar es Salaam

National

> The President holds office for five years, renewable once.

> The unicameral National Assembly sits for a maximum term of five years.

> Of 393 seats, 113 are reserved for women.

President
elected

National Assembly
elected

Regional

> Dar es Salaam is one region out of 31.

Regional Commissioner
appointed

Regional Administrative Secretary
appointed

Dar es Salaam City Council
Dar es Salaam Mayor
elected

**Director –
Chief Executive Officer**
appointed

Municipal Council
Municipal Mayor
elected

District

> Since mid-2016, Dar es Salaam has been subdivided into five districts.

Ward Executive Officer
employed

Ward Development Committee
composed of existing positions

Ward

> Prior to the 2016 reorganisation, there were 73 wards in Dar es Salaam.

> Wards contain up to 21,000 people.

Mtaa (Street) Leader
elected

Street
(Village)

Nyumba Kumi (10 Cell) Leader
appointed

Source: IRC, 2017.

Strengthening local systems and resilience

- Approaches should **utilise and where necessary build the capacity of local systems** – from available public and private health services to existing neighbourhood leadership groups working with local government structures, to existing supply chains bringing in goods. This allows a response to contribute to longer-term development goals and strengthen the capacity of local systems[3] to better prepare and respond to crises in the future. `Do No Harm' principles in a city include avoiding weakening local capacity

- Agencies should consider the approach that they will take with each stakeholder and **focus on building relationships**. In the interest of ensuring the continued strength of local mechanisms, an agency's role may shift over time away from direct service provision toward a more consultative and advisory role. Transparency in communication can be key to developing trust (Sanderson and Sitko, 2017).

Accountability to affected populations

- The diversity and interconnectedness of urban populations necessitate an increased focus on **including affected populations' needs, preferences, voices, and participation throughout the programme cycle**.[4] A lack of these mechanisms, or implementing them in only a short term or shallow way, can result in ineffective approaches and a failure to identify key issues. Input of affected populations should be incorporated into programme design, and reporting back on the use of their input provides an opportunity to broaden acceptance of response projects.

LEARNING FROM LESBOS

Lesbos, a Greek island with a population of 86,000 centred in a few main towns, dealt with the arrival by sea of over 550,000 refugees (mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq) in 2015-2016. The IRC outlined lessons learned from their response and coordination efforts. Early engagement with the municipality of Lesbos was key to a successful partnership as it provided mutual benefits, trust, and an entry point to longer-term capacity building and improvement of processes. However, better coordination between formal humanitarian actors and other civil society and volunteer efforts (not part of typical coordination mechanisms) would have helped prioritise efforts and improve the response. A lack of coordination to manage information to both refugees and host communities, particularly in the northern town of Molyvos near many landing sites, led to increased tension. Many of these issues are now being seen in the larger capital city of Athens, which has an entrenched refugee population and inconsistent coordination with municipal and other services.

For the full report, see IRC, 2016b

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[3] For additional information on resilience and systems thinking within urban response, see American Red Cross, 2014, pages 48-74.
[4] See IRC, 2016a.

Stakeholder engagement and coordination

Key challenges in many urban responses include getting a greater number of stakeholders to engage and deciding on an approach with them. Every context varies – for instance, some contexts will have more centralised national governments, while others will be highly decentralised with more decision making at a local level. Some cities will have complex market institutions and supply chains, while others may be dominated by a few key players. This section provides guidance on considering different types of stakeholders that may be important to an urban response. However, a stakeholder analysis and context analysis will be necessary initially to assess the relevance of these actors to the response and prioritise stakeholders with whom to engage.[5]

It is important to remember that urban response can feature a large number of actors, and an agency does not need to coordinate all the time with all of them – some may be most applicable during the assessment phase, national level bodies may be featured in inter-agency or broader coordination mechanisms, and an individual agency's engagement with even key people may be primarily focused on sharing information and regular outreach. Figure 2 is an example of a social network map of the key stakeholders for a project in Sierra Leone demonstrating the range of actors a project might need to engage.

Figure 2: Social network map (Sierra Leone)
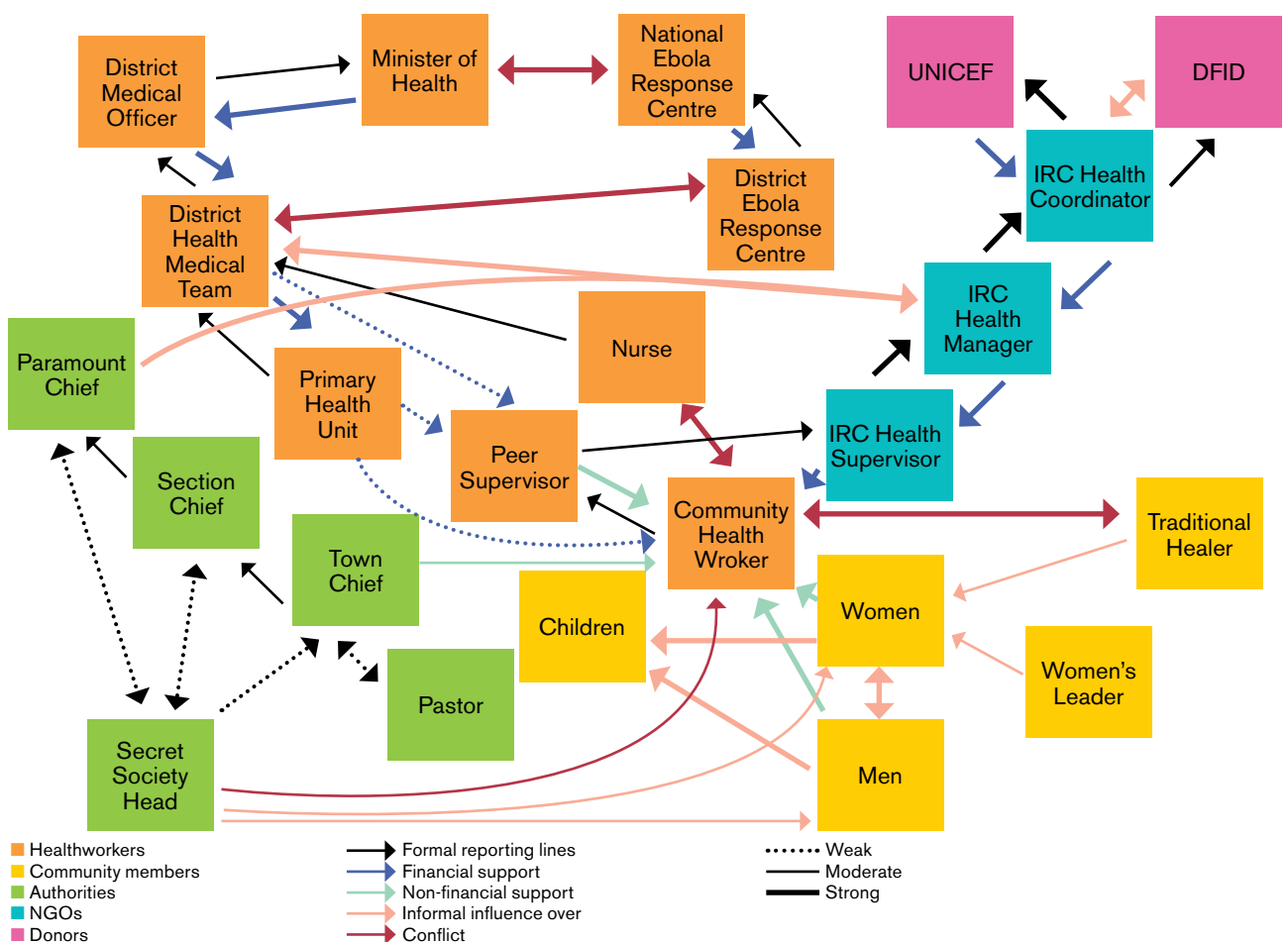
Source: IRC (2016d)

[5] See Annex 2 for examples of tools that can be used for stakeholder analysis and coordination fora mapping. Also, Meaux and Osofisan (2016) includes a list of other stakeholder analysis tools that may be relevant for application in an urban context.

Individual humanitarian agencies should participate and encourage participation of other key stakeholders in existing inter-agency/inter-cluster and specific coordination mechanisms at city-level, if established. This avoids duplications and fills gaps in a coordinated and integrated manner with other humanitarian stakeholders responding to the same urban crisis.

In order for agencies to effectively coordinate and engage with stakeholders, they must focus on building trust. In all interactions with stakeholders, an agency should tailor its approach to align with the motivations and interests of the stakeholder with whom it wants to build a relationship. This is often done on a personal level in both formal and informal settings throughout a response. As an agency seeks to build trust with these actors, it is useful to consider the following:

- **Who and why**: Which stakeholders are most critical to the success of your agency's response? What do you seek to gain from this relationship? Which principles of urban response inform coordination with this stakeholder?

- **When and how**: When and how often is it most advantageous to engage with the stakeholder? What are the fora in which you can engage with these stakeholders? What are the interests of the stakeholder? How can you ensure your approach to coordination takes this into account?

All urban contexts are different, but the styles of engagement – `inform', `engage', and `consult' – are useful to prioritise and categorise stakeholders.[6] A stakeholder analysis allows the project manager to understand who the key stakeholders are and decide on the best methods of engagement. Figure 3 shows an example of a tool used during a stakeholder analysis process to organise stakeholders and decide on the approach for engagement, based on the stakeholder's level of influence to affect an interest in the outcomes the organisation aims to achieve. The figure serves as an illustration of how a programme manager might organise and prioritise stakeholders within an urban context, but should not be considered prescriptive, as each context will differ.

Figure 3: Illustrative example of approaches for different stakeholders

High	**KEEP SATISFIED** *Inform + Consult* • eg national government bodies involved in urban planning • eg national government with NGO approval authority • eg private sector associations	**WORK TOGETHER** *Inform + Consult + Engage* • eg affected populations • eg inter-agency technical working groups and donors • eg local NGOs working in similar areas • eg sub-national and local government offices with decision-making capability and capacity needs
Stakeholder influence	**INFORMAL COORDINATION** *Inform* • eg academia • eg religious leaders	**SHOW CONSIDERATION** *Inform + Consult* • eg traditional community leaders • eg international actors working in similar areas • eg CBOs
Low		**High**

Stakeholder interest

Source: Based on an adapted version of the Influence Map. For more information see ODI, 2009.

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[6] This note will use the terms `inform', `consult', and `engage' throughout to refer to different stakeholder engagement approaches.

Methods of engagement and coordination will vary, depending on an agency's goals and their urgency, and on the timing of both its intervention and that of the stakeholder's work. Different forms of engagement include:

- A **bilateral relationship** with in-person or mobile communication, which can be formalised with regular check-ins or be more ad hoc and informal. Looking for common ground, understanding who the person or organisation is accountable to and what they are trying to achieve, and establishing clear action points can help navigate these relationships.

- A **brokered relationship**, where at first an agency might rely on contacts to connect with the key stakeholder. This might include local civil society actors connecting an agency to community leaders, or government officials helping to mediate the agency's communication, or tribal leaders helping negotiate access with an armed group.

- **Key informant interviews (KIIs) or focus group discussions (FGDs)** to more formally capture assessment, monitoring, and evaluation information. Establishing a solid methodology, having a good notetaker, or recording discussions where possible, can ensure an agency captures analysable and actionable data. It is also important to share overall findings and next steps with programme clients and other stakeholders.

- **Inter-agency cluster or working group meetings (eg national, city, area)** to align interventions with the actions of other organisations, share information on approaches, assessments, and learning to a broader group that may feature different levels of officials. Even with participation in formal coordination, it may still be useful to have a more in-depth bilateral relationship with other technical or programmatic contacts within the same stakeholder organisation. It is important to internally discuss the time and resources needed to contribute within these fora and have support/sign-off on the agency representative's participation.

- Other **working groups or information sharing bodies**, including NGO coordination or representation groups, programme stakeholder boards, and online communities for information sharing. These can be mechanisms that provide more feedback at the implementation level, provide opportunities for accountability and discussing best practice, and to share contextual information.

- **Mobile technology platforms**, such as Service.Info,[7] Refugee.Info,[8] RefugeeAidApp,[9] or ActivityInfo,[10] can help to coordinate the delivery of services or provide a mobile channel for communication with, and accountability to, affected populations.

- **Informal mechanisms**, such as client WhatsApp groups or connections via professional or social networks. While it is best to not rely on informal communication, it is also important to look for non-traditional ways of sharing information more broadly.

Note that the following stakeholder list is not exhaustive and an agency should consider what additional groups may apply to the context.

COORDINATING WITH DIFFICULT STAKEHOLDERS

Coordination may be required with individuals or entities that are seeking to block, divert, or capture assistance for particular groups. These may include local gangs or other armed groups, corrupt officials, or influential individuals within an organisation that is generally supportive of an agency's work. Identifying and planning for these potential spoilers may not always be possible, but it is important to consider them as key stakeholders when developing a coordination strategy.

Difficult stakeholders are often critical to the success of a humanitarian programme, as they can control access to key groups and individuals, or use influence to erode support for an agency's programme. When identified and properly engaged, they can provide access to and influence among groups and populations that would otherwise not be reached. They also can facilitate programme planning and implementation by providing resources and materials. Appropriately coordinating with these stakeholders can be the difference between success and failure, depending on how an agency approaches them from the beginning.

The most effective way to manage these stakeholders is by identifying them during a stakeholder mapping process and deciding on the best style of engagement with them. If they are identified after implementation begins, they should not be ignored – actively coordinate with them.

[7] https://serviceinfo.rescue.org/app/
[8] www.refugee.info/
[9] http://refugeeaidapp.com/
[10] https://about.activityinfo.org/

Affected populations

WHO	Urban settings often consist of populations from a variety of socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Affected populations may include clients/beneficiaries directly benefitting from a programme (displaced and host population), or other host community members living in the area affected by a disaster or crisis.
WHY	Each of these population groups will have different interests, perspectives, and needs that must be addressed by a response project. It is important for individual agencies to understand these different points of view and incorporate them into the project design.
WHEN	It is important to coordinate with affected populations throughout the programme cycle. Many humanitarian organisations engage these groups early on, incorporating them into needs assessments and context analyses, but fail to maintain a level of engagement or explain the use of monitoring data and programme adjustments. Evaluation findings should be shared with clients and their feedback to the findings integrated into final reports.
HOW	• Through context and stakeholder analysis, establishing an understanding of the various social groups that may be present in the area of your work, how they relate to each other, and their interest. • Holding focus groups and interviews during context analysis and needs assessment, ensuring inclusion of both displaced and host community members. • Inputting into targeting methodology and testing. • Engaging in feedback mechanisms and feedback and monitoring loops. • Participation in evaluation and lessons learned from approaches. • Leveraging technology platforms to facilitate low-cost two-way communication in assessment, implementation, and monitoring.

Credit: Ezra Millstein

International actors and donors

WHO	UN bodies, international humanitarian organisations, existing development institutions (eg World Bank etc.), or donors (eg DFID, USAID, etc.) focused on more discrete projects or long-term goals. In nearly all crisis contexts, there will already be existing international actors with a presence in-country, although their current capacity may vary. New actors will arrive as part of a surge to address the needs of the affected population.
WHY	Individual agencies have specific objectives, missions, and funding sources that guide the ways in which they engage during humanitarian crises. However, cooperation with other agencies and coordination mechanisms, as well as local institutions, is necessary in order to ensure all need is met and to avoid duplication of resources and programming. In certain contexts, UN agencies or donors may also be key to engage in collective advocacy or influencing of other stakeholders.
WHEN	Individual agencies play an important role in the initial stages of an urban crisis, as they are often on the ground before system-level inter-agency coordination mechanisms are established. Any initial assessments that an individual agency may conduct are vital to an early understanding of the context and scope of the crisis. Individual agencies can also be some of the first points of contact with existing local and municipal coordination mechanisms. As implementation progresses, it is important to participate in formal mechanisms to share information, encourage best practices, and avoid duplication. However, in many settings the resources needed for sustained engagement can be difficult to maintain – opportunities may exist for NGO coordination bodies to represent key points to inter-agency bodies, or more targeted technical coordination through specific working groups and information sharing may be necessary.
HOW	• Formal inter-agency coordination mechanisms at the sector- or city-levels, such as cluster or working group meetings, online information portals or other available assessment and context analysis, and shared data collection mechanisms. Other organisations may have agency-specific assessments that are shared through coordination mechanisms such as working groups and the cluster system. For more protracted crises, some organisations also may be involved in multi-agency, multi-sectoral assessments that feed directly into response plans and funding appeals through the cluster system.
	• Joint funding opportunities. In protracted crises, a cluster system will be established through which any project must be coordinated with the appropriate sector cluster. This ensures that the direct beneficiaries of the project are not duplicated and that resources are distributed appropriately according to need. Funding can be accessed by individual agencies as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process. Pooled funding mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) are useful funding mechanisms managed by OCHA and coordinated in responses where a cluster system is established.
	• Consortia approaches to programming and proposals for funding. Groups may include both international and local institutions joining together on a technical or geographic approach. There is often a high level of competition among international agencies for limited donor funding in humanitarian responses. This can often be addressed by approaching agencies based on common interest in supporting affected communities, as well as presenting consortia approaches to the response that pools resources and increases competitiveness.
	• Bilateral consultations with individual organisations – both leadership and key technical or area- based contacts. Informal coordination at the area level (eg community, ward, and municipality) may be necessary in some contexts. Often in a large city, there may be multiple organisations working in the same area that may benefit from an informal coordination body for organisations working solely in that area.

National government

WHO	National government actors can include formal planning offices, disaster management bodies, or specific ministries or departments designated to coordinate government crisis response and work with the international system, as well as technical bodies providing existing services.
WHY	The national government is generally responsible for setting the overall strategy for response; however this may vary depending on the level of centralisation of the government. Many humanitarian responses do not sufficiently map out or understand national decision-making bodies and actors, which can result in the creation of parallel systems and a lost opportunity to build resilience and the capacity of national systems to respond to current and future crises. In addition, many national line ministries will have strategic plans, policies, and processes that may be important to consider in planning a response.
WHEN	Existing institutions and bodies within the country are often an ideal starting point for understanding the context and scope of the crisis. National and sub-national coordination mechanisms, such as civil protection agencies or disaster management structures, are often the most reliable sources of data from which to draw initial analysis of the city. Programme design should fit into national response plans, and in some contexts requires more specific approvals or integration.
HOW	• Many national-level institutions can be engaged at an inter-agency level, where in many cases they share overall responsibility for response or an element of it in collaboration with UN coordination bodies. • In cases where it has not been possible to align with national systems, there may be additional groups or mechanisms convened by the government. Stakeholder analysis may identify additional specific institutions relevant to an agency's programme. • Bilateral or coordinated engagement to facilitate and seek permission for activities.

From Response to Resilience: Amman Urban Practitioner Workshop. Credit: Samer Saliba

LEARNING FROM MAIDUGURI

From 2012 to mid-2015, the majority of the local government areas (LGAs) in Borno State in Nigeria were cut off from civilian and humanitarian access as a result of fighting between Boko Haram and the Nigerian military. The city of Maiduguri bore the largest burden of support to those displaced by the conflict, housing over 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), with more than 88 per cent residing outside of camps. This influx exacerbated vulnerabilities that existed in the city, including weak capacities of local governments, limited access to services, destroyed infrastructure as a result of the conflict, and high youth unemployment. By late 2015, a stream of over 100 NGOs began work in the city, many of which were new to the context and unfamiliar with the local and national stakeholders.

In the midst of the complex response to the crisis, perceptions of humanitarian aid and who was or was not responding complicated delivery. As humanitarian responders, INGOs focused their engagement directly with the affected population, community leaders and inter-agency coordination mechanisms. Many organisations had little to no engagement with local government structures and primarily only sought permissions from the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). For example, one INGO's head of office noted that they had never met a government official in a bilateral meeting. INGOs often only informed NEMA and SEMA during formal inter-agency meetings but rarely engaged outside of these meetings.

There grew rampant rumours and speculation by the government of the intentions of INGOs, leading the governor of Borno State to declare that INGOs were only "using the name of Borno to make money and enrich themselves". The government viewed INGOs with suspicion and saw them as competing for funds, focusing only on assessments rather than providing support, and having little accountability to the affected populations. On the other hand, INGOs criticised the government for corruption or abuse, but often failed to take into account the capacity limitations the institutions faced. This dynamic ultimately led to increased scrutiny of INGO activities as trust began to erode, slowing down the delivery of services to affected populations

In 2017, INGOs began to more actively and consistently engage local government stakeholders at inter-agency and bilateral levels. This effort resulted in more positive relationships, better information sharing between international and local actors, and improvement in the operational environment. In urban humanitarian responses such as Maiduguri, local government engagement (eg inter-agency/bi-lateral coordination meetings, joint assessments, joint site visits of programmes, or consultations in programme design) will not only help to dispel misperceptions and avoid pitfalls of inactive engagement, but also positively strengthen local ownership of the response and build local capacity to respond in the future.

Sources: IRC (2016c); IOM (2016); ICiR (2017)

Sub-national and local government

WHO	Sub-national governments are state, regional, or provincial levels of government, often sitting immediately below the national government level. Local government often includes municipal, city, county, or ward government institutions.
WHY	Sub-national and local governments may be responsible for coordination of implementation, depending on the level of centralisation of the government and existing capacity (eg decision making, funding, etc.). Regardless, local authorities and organisations are important to involve in project design. Local authorities are vital in getting the project approved and ensuring that it has the support necessary to achieve its objectives. Local institutions often have existing plans for their area, with which an organisation should align their response. Also, as with any project, it is important to invest in preparedness, knowledge, and capacity transfer to local authorities and organisations to increase resilience. Emerging best practice advocates an approach focused on aligning with sub-national institutional interests (eg, reducing vulnerability of existing populations, decreasing resource burden from newly displaced populations, ensuring long-term recovery), particularly when working with displaced populations. In a variety of crises, it is important to note that state and local institutions used to providing services for their constituents are forced to handle an influx of the displaced. In these circumstances, integrating persons of concern into existing systems at a local level can be more effective than only advocating for more direct policy and legal changes (Landau *et al.*, 2016).
WHEN	Sub-national and local governments should be engaged from the beginning of a response. This includes coordinating for any initial needs assessments, during project design, and collaborating on project implementation. It is important to understand the local government power structures and to abide by these when engaging with governments. Keeping long-term recovery and reconstruction in mind during engagement at the project design stage will ensure greater alignment with institutional interests and greater buy-in.
HOW	• Hold a bilateral or coordinated introductory meeting with the municipality to establish the relationship and seek permission for activities. Key things that should be covered early in engagement should include transparency on humanitarian principles and ways of working, such as hiring/recruitment procedures, restrictions on funding, how funding works, reporting processes, and other relevant considerations for your context. • Engage in existing coordination mechanisms within the government, or ensure the inclusion of local government participation in coordination bodies that are set up within an area. • Engage in local government planning processes or support existing development plans to align interventions and consider programmes that may benefit both host and displaced communities. • Liaise with existing service providers, such as government-led healthcare providers (it is important to note that in many cases there will be mixed public-private services, including financial services) These can provide entry points to leverage and build the capacity of existing systems. • Contribute to local government capacity building.[11] Activities may include inviting local government to technical trainings, conducting joint site visits or assessments in partnership with local government, mentoring, or facilitating interaction and network building between local government and other stakeholders (eg government, civil society, etc.).

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[11] There are a number of emerging new approaches to assessing capacity and engaging with local government by humanitarian actors. A few notable examples include Oxfam's (2017) Working Paper on *Assessing Local Authorities in Protracted Displacement Crises* and Mercy Corp's *The Role of Municipalities in the Syria Refugee Crisis* resources at www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/role-municipalities-syria-refugee-crisis

Urban planning institutions

WHO	In an urban context, there will be existing city and/or area level planning bodies and mechanisms. Urban planning institutions may include specific government planning offices, coalitions of executive level ministries or departments at a national level, international private planning firms or NGOS that are commissioned by donors (eg, UN-Habitat, USAID, etc.), or key groups of development and academic partners working to support the government. They may also be found at a more local level in neighbourhood planning commissions and state and local government offices.
WHY	These are the institutions that are responsible for how the city will recover and develop following the initial crisis response. It is not only important to engage with these institutions to ensure a project receives the support it needs to be successful, but is also important to bridge the humanitarian and development gap. Integrating the project into the future development plans of the city will ensure that it contributes to future development and is not a stand-alone response project that does little to strengthen future resilience.
WHEN	Planning responsibilities and actual decision-making power are often undefined in many contexts. Stakeholder analysis can help identify the technical and decision-making players. Urban planning institutions or key actors with planning authority can be useful sources of information during assessment and provide key perspectives while also helping define project planning and design elements. Capacity building of urban planning bodies may occur through inter-agency approaches or recovery specific projects.
HOW	• Bilateral sharing of information and assessments with urban planning institutions that are often lacking data. This helps to facilitate the voices of populations affected by crisis and disaster and ensure their needs and preferences are met within urban planning. • Collaborating with these institutions during project design allows for a two-way exchange of knowledge and expertise. These institutions may also be able to advise on programme design decisions and spatial risks. • During implementation, monitoring and continued outreach can ensure that efforts are integrated into local plans.

IRC and Greater Amman Municipality refugee assessment. Credit: Samer Saliba

Private sector

WHO	Private sector actors include financial institutions (banks, microfinance institutions, mobile money providers), large national businesses and small local vendors, associations such as a chamber of commerce, or informal groups of leading economic actors in an area, as well as training and educational institutions (although these may be also state or civil society run). The private sector can include both the formal sector (established companies that are taxed and officially monitored by the government) and the informal sector (not formally monitored or taxed, but very common in many developing economies). It can also include utilities that are often private-public partnerships in many countries.
WHY	The private sector can provide both financial and logistical resources for humanitarian response projects. The private sector is a key stakeholder with which to consult, given its knowledge of the existing context and interest in business continuity post-crisis. This is an often untapped resource that is vital to the sustainability of a project and can provide much-needed financial and human resources. Many private sector actors have an interest in responding to a crisis or other entrenched social or economic issues, as they affect their community and systems needed for business success.
WHEN	The private sector will be most useful when mobilising resources for a project and during its implementation.
HOW	• Look for common goals (eg recovery of market systems, availability of goods, a trained and ready workforce) in deciding how to coordinate. • Facilitate humanitarian principle knowledge transfer during interactions with private sector entities. • Advocate for inclusion of private sector participation in coordination bodies. • Participate in local economic fora, such as those coordinated by the chambers of commerce, local economic development offices, business incubators, and others. Facilitate the creation of private sector foras, information sharing and mentorship outlets. • Draw up memoranda of understanding (MoUs) or contracts with specific businesses – agreements with vendors or input supplies for voucher programmes, strategic partnerships for skill acquisition through training, apprenticeship or job placement, contracts for specific services, or goods in the supply chain.

Maiduguri, Nigeria. Credit: Andrew Meaux

Community leaders

WHO	Influential community members can include religious leaders, elders with traditional decision- making/ dispute settlement authority, active youth leaders, and others. It is important to note that a `community' may or may not be the same as the administrative boundaries defined by the government in the target country, thus these leaders will often have roles and authority beyond official administrative boundaries.
WHY	Working within areas already defined or understood as a neighbourhood, settlement, or other self-contained location helps agencies understand needs specific to particular groups of people. Furthermore, it allows agencies to tap into existing mechanisms for coordination and avoids some of the pitfalls associated with community tension by allowing the agency to utilise existing dispute resolution bodies and other methods for community consultation. Community leaders are interested in working with outside actors when a project will benefit their community, and they will gain and retain respect for the community members.
WHEN	These stakeholders are vital to conducting a needs assessment and in ensuring an agency's programme is understood and accepted. They can support client targeting, communication and feedback loops.
HOW	• Unless a programme is targeting a very specific group, engage a variety of local leaders for the affected population to ensure not only one group of a limited number of people are directing assistance. • Analyse the power dynamics of the community and its leaders to understand which leaders are representatives of which groups. • Analyse how existing structures may exacerbate inequalities and vulnerability, particularly of women if they are left out of consultative and decision-making bodies. • Hold focus groups and interviews during assessment. • Participate in feedback mechanisms and programme boards. • Participate in information dissemination on programme goals, targeting and monitoring. • Carry out additional programme monitoring to assess security and other community risks and vulnerabilities.

Civil society, local NGOs, community-based organisations and non-state actors

WHO	These groups may be called by different names, or represent informal civil society or neighbourhood groups: • Civil society organisations (CSOs) – the term is often used for official organisations and non-profits with a clear presence, but is sometimes used to mean more informal groups and associations. • Local non-governmental organisations (LNGOs) – typically meaning non-profit organisations that have some sustained presence in a specific area. • Community-based organisations (CBOs) – smaller non-profits or informal groups serving a specific community or audience within that community; these may be formal and receiving official sources of funds or more informal and community-supported. Can mean smaller or informal groups working within an area or community, such as neighbourhood associations, churches or mosques providing assistance, etc. • Non-state actors (NSAs) – organisations with sufficient power to influence and cause a change even though they do not belong to any established institution of a country. These can sometimes include armed groups with high levels of influence and power that must be considered and consulted when implementing projects.
WHY	Civil society groups and non-profits are a key constituency with which to engage to ensure that knowledge and capacity transfer occurs and the long-term sustainability of the project and resilience of the city are strengthened. Stakeholder and partner mapping can help identify potential deeper engagement such as sustained partnership, but at a minimum, humanitarian organisations should coordinate with local civil society. Although many implementing organisations can prefer direct delivery of assistance, it is important to build the capacity of local civil society to improve preparedness and resilience and also to leverage their voice and knowledge about their communities to improve effectiveness of response. It is important to engage NSAs and armed groups to ensure support, permission to work, and to mitigate any potential conflict later.
WHEN	Civil society can be engaged throughout the programme cycle and often presents a more natural partnership or forum for discussion than some government bodies, due to common approaches and goals. All NSAs should be considered at the moment an agency begins the assessment and planning stages of a project.
HOW	• Encourage inclusion of and participation by civil society groups and non-profits in broader inter-agency coordination. • Key informant interviews during assessment and learning. • Provide support in establishing key government and other contacts. • Build partnerships for programme implementation and delivery. • Transfer ownership of programme activities as recovery continues.

Academia

WHO		Academic institutions can include government or private learning institutions, or simply departments or key researchers within these institutions.
WHY		These institutions and individuals provide locally-sourced research and context analysis resources that are directly applicable to assessment and project design needs. Academic institutions may have more in-depth existing secondary resources and data to inform programme assessment and context analysis.
WHEN		Successful partnerships with academia need clearly defined goals, data collection and analysis mechanisms early on. Established international academic partnerships may aid in mapping and identifying stronger or more applicable local academic resources.
HOW		• Key informant interviews during assessment. • Support in a review of secondary data, research and learning partnerships. • Joint research opportunities for monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

LEARNING FROM LEBANON

Although some implementing agencies had a smaller presence in Lebanon before the Syrian conflict, most organisations either began, scaled up, or shifted programming at the onset of the refugee crisis. Entering the seventh year of the civil war in Syria, over 1.2 million refugees are spread throughout the country of 4.5 million, mainly in our around towns and cities. Organisations in host countries such as Lebanon have needed to adjust as needs on the ground, political realities, formal coordination systems, and funding have all remained in a state of flux. In addition to lessons learned for broader inter-agency coordination, there are several learning points for individual organisations:

(1) Due to Lebanon's weaker national government, many implementing agencies liaised closely with individual municipalities in urbanised areas, which have some decision-making power despite often lacking resources. Lebanon is a densely populated and small country, meaning main cities and towns and their relevant stakeholders are easily reachable (even in areas considered more remote). Earlier joint coordination – rather than numerous organisations individually approaching similar stakeholders – and sharing of information could have resulted in more effective programming.

(2) Political complexities, inter-agency planning, and funding mechanisms often have made addressing the longer-term nature and multi-faceted needs of the crisis difficult. However, many organisations were unprepared to shift from emergency programming and basic needs to more medium-term solutions. Coordinating with local planning structures, incorporating beneficiary voices into approaches and looking at programming across different sectors can signal the need for this shift earlier in an ongoing refugee crisis.

(3) The cost and staff time needed for coordination were often not considered, or difficult to include in budgets. With a shifting burden of input into local, national, inter-agency and NGO coordination mechanisms, agencies working throughout a protracted crisis need to internally prioritise and set expectations for engagement.

Source: Author's experience in Lebanon and lessons learned outlined in RAND, 2016.

Urban coordination decision making

Guiding questions for stakeholders across the programme cycle

This section provides practical questions to guide stakeholder engagement and coordination. It includes guiding questions relevant for each type of stakeholder across the programme cycle.

Table 1: Guiding questions for stakeholders along the programme cycle

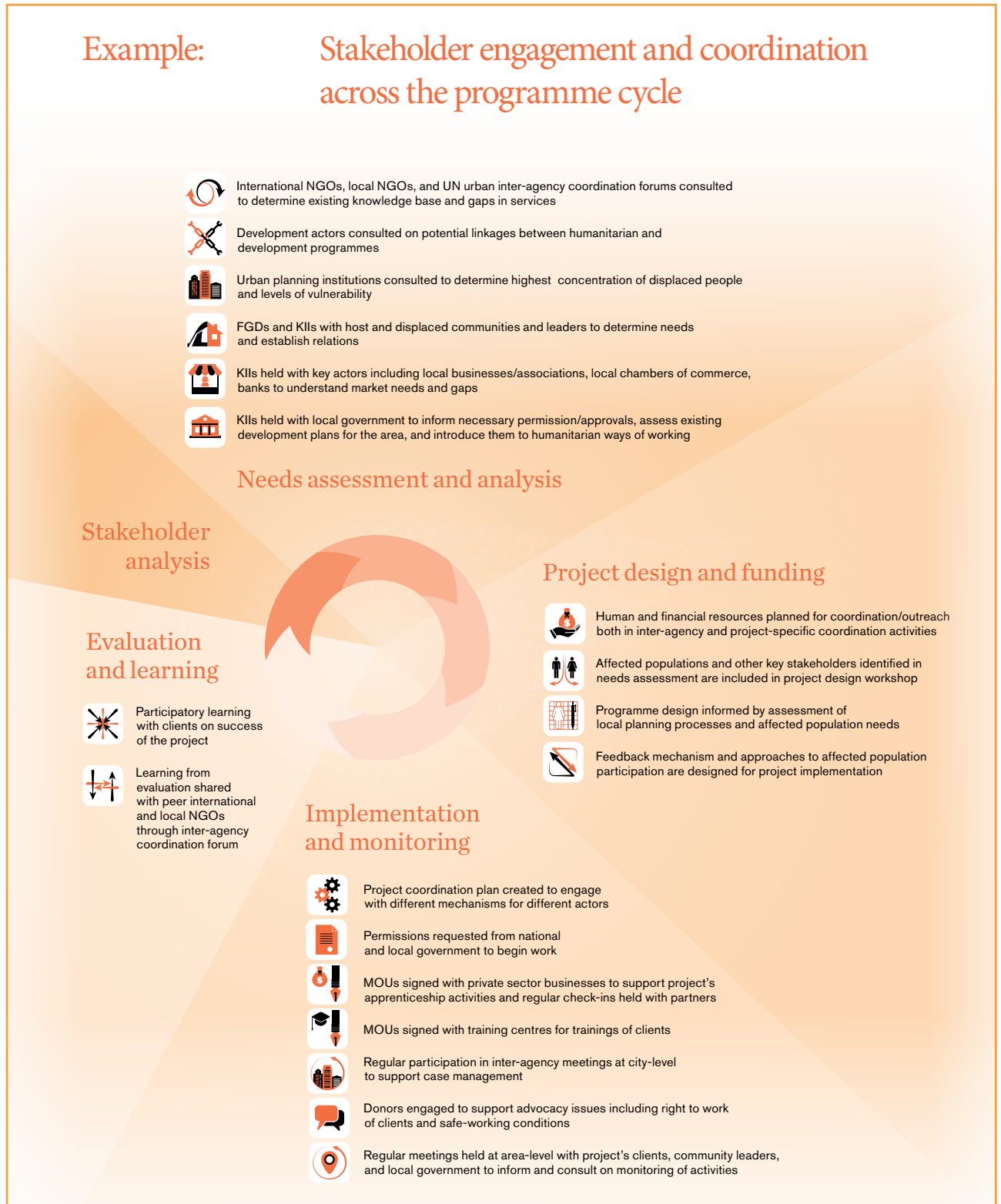| STAKEHOLDER	NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS	PROJECT DESIGN AND FUNDING	IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	EVALUATION AND LEARNING
Affected populations	Are you directly engaging with a variety of community groups, including women and youth? Have you consulted affected populations on how the crisis has affected community needs (ethnic, age, religious, disabled, elderly) in a particular area? How can you leverage the local capacities to ensure participation and contributions of the affected population?	Have you ensured that affected populations have actively contributed to the programme design (approaches, targeting, modalities of delivery, etc.)? Have you ensured the design is responsive and culturally-appropriate to clients? How does the intervention support affected populations as first responders?	Are you regularly capturing feedback of communities? Do you have mechanisms for reporting back of use of this information?	Was your programme participatory and accountable to the affected populations? Is your evaluation reaching all groups in the area? Are there mechanisms to share programme learning with affected populations?
International actors and donors	What secondary data exists (eg. existing assessment)? What are the remaining gaps in knowledge? Have you considered partnering on an assessment to avoid duplication of resources? What are donor funding priorities as related to needs and gaps identified?	Are there inter-agency funding mechanisms or pools that are accessible? Have you completed a stakeholder/ actor mapping and partnership strategy? Are other international partners necessary to help you achieve your outcomes or consortia required by donor? What is the level of flexibility and adaptability of the donor? What type of influence does the donor have and how should they be engaged in advocacy?	Do you have buy-in within your organisation to contribute resources to outreach and participation in coordination mechanisms? Can you delegate participation in area based or technical specific meetings to other team members? Are you ensuring information from your agency, partners, and beneficiaries is being fed into inter-agency approaches? Are there any donor restrictions on who you can engage with?	Have you shared learning or evaluation results with coordinating bodies or applicable online portals? What is the donor preference for internal/ external evaluation? Are their existing joint evaluation processes donor want programmes to join?

STAKEHOLDER	NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS	PROJECT DESIGN AND FUNDING	IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	EVALUATION AND LEARNING
National government	What existing disaster/crisis management plans exist, and are they applicable to the current crisis? Have you analysed the national government structure and identified what bodies will influence your work? What permissions are necessary to start a new programme?	Are any official approvals needed for your programme? Have you otherwise established buy-in for your programme and where it will work? Are there existing streams of funding via the national government and how are they working/what are they supporting?	Are national government bodies integrated into broader inter-agency coordination? What additional outreach from your organisation is necessary to keep national bodies relevant to your work informed? What opportunities for capacity building exist?	Does your evaluation include assessment of future integration of activities into national planning and service delivery?
Sub-national and local government	Have you identified the structure of local government and mapped out who your key connections are? Have you assessed current local services, what has been disrupted or strained?	Are any official approvals needed for your programme? Does your programme fill a gap in local service delivery, and have buy-in of local officials? Does your programme contribute to existing local development plans? Have you considered opportunities for your programme to strengthen local government?	Do you have risk mitigation strategies to troubleshoot any implementation issues? What opportunities for capacity building exist?	Does your evaluation include assessment of future integration of activities into local planning and service delivery?
Urban planning institutions	Is there existing information on the capacities of service provision in the area (infrastructure)? Are there existing neighbourhood or master plans for the city? Is there information on geographic risks for different parts of the city? Is there information on the history of the area and how the crisis may have altered the area?	Can these institutions provide necessary support in project design to ensure it contributes to long-term planning? How can the humanitarian response support the long-term plans of the city? Engage on approaches to shelter, especially in contexts of informal settlements?	Are you collaborating with urban planners to identify effective approaches and ensure continued alignment with long-term planning? Technical role in monitoring of programmes and alignment with long-term plans?	Are you learning with urban planners on population needs and effective approaches for lessons learned and recommendations for future programmes? Has the intervention supported the planning of the city? Can they inform the evaluation of the programme?

STAKEHOLDER	NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS	PROJECT DESIGN AND FUNDING	IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	EVALUATION AND LEARNING
Private sector	What does the existing market system look like, and what aspects has the crisis impacted?	What MoUs or agreements are necessary for your programme? How does your programme coordinate with local market actors? Are there opportunities for private sector financial support?	Do your approaches include transfers of humanitarian principles or information to private sector partners?	Does your evaluation include private sector feedback and analyse market impact?
Community leaders	Are you directly speaking with a variety of community leaders, including women and youth?	Have you received community feedback on approaches and targeting?	Do you have regular outreach set up to ensure continued buy-in, and open communication to constantly monitor community context?	Have you shared evaluation results and received feedback from community leaders?
LNGOs, CBOs, CSOs, and NSAs	Have you mapped out civil society efforts in your area of intervention and spoken with these organisations? How could influential NSAs affect implementation and how should they be engaged?	Have you received feedback on approaches and targeting? Have you analysed how local partners can be incorporated into service delivery early on and financially supported?	Are local civil society voices included in broader inter-agency coordination?	Are you sharing information with local civil society on lessons learned, best practice and potential next steps in recovery?
Academia	Is there additional secondary data from academic institutions, or key researchers to speak to?	Will early partnership with academic researchers ensure a stronger evaluation? Have you committed resources for data collection and analysis?	Are academic voices included in broader inter-agency coordination?	Are you sharing information with academics on population needs and effective approaches? Does an academic partnership improve the rigor of your evaluation, and is it possible (feasibility and resources)?

Coordination across the programme cycle in practice

Figure 4 below provides an illustrative example of how stakeholder engagement and coordination looks in practice across the program cycle. This example is based on a case study of a livelihoods program in East Africa providing support to refugees living in a major city. While each context will be different, the graphic helps to illustrate how the different considerations of who to coordinate with and how come together.

Figure 4: Example of stakeholder engagement and coordination across the programme cycle

Example: Stakeholder engagement and coordination across the programme cycle

Needs assessment and analysis

- International NGOs, local NGOs, and UN urban inter-agency coordination forums consulted to determine existing knowledge base and gaps in services
- Development actors consulted on potential linkages between humanitarian and development programmes
- Urban planning institutions consulted to determine highest concentration of displaced people and levels of vulnerability
- FGDs and KIIs with host and displaced communities and leaders to determine needs and establish relations
- KIIs held with key actors including local businesses/associations, local chambers of commerce, banks to understand market needs and gaps
- KIIs held with local government to inform necessary permission/approvals, assess existing development plans for the area, and introduce them to humanitarian ways of working

Stakeholder analysis

Evaluation and learning

- Participatory learning with clients on success of the project
- Learning from evaluation shared with peer international and local NGOs through inter-agency coordination forum

Project design and funding

- Human and financial resources planned for coordination/outreach both in inter-agency and project-specific coordination activities
- Affected populations and other key stakeholders identified in needs assessment are included in project design workshop
- Programme design informed by assessment of local planning processes and affected population needs
- Feedback mechanism and approaches to affected population participation are designed for project implementation

Implementation and monitoring

- Project coordination plan created to engage with different mechanisms for different actors
- Permissions requested from national and local government to begin work
- MOUs signed with private sector businesses to support project's apprenticeship activities and regular check-ins held with partners
- MOUs signed with training centres for trainings of clients
- Regular participation in inter-agency meetings at city-level to support case management
- Donors engaged to support advocacy issues including right to work of clients and safe-working conditions
- Regular meetings held at area-level with project's clients, community leaders, and local government to inform and consult on monitoring of activities

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Annexes

Annex 1: Guidance note development methodology

The authors employed the following methods to develop this guidance note:

1. Literature review of 23 urban responses and coordination best practice documents.

2. Five urban stakeholder analyses completed as part of the urban context analyses by the IRC in Bangkok (Thailand), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Amman (Jordan), Maiduguri (Nigeria) and Juba (South Sudan). These analyses helped to inform the typology of important stakeholders along with the guiding questions for decision making across the programme life cycle. They reflected a range of geographic contexts along with types of crises and coordination fora.

3. A stakeholder analysis and urban planning workshop was held in Nairobi (Kenya) to test the guidance note's content with a country programme in the start-up of a new urban programme.

4. The guidance note was vetted and validated in a workshop with nine humanitarian response global specialists and country programme staff from six organisations – including the IRC, Habitat for Humanity, Impact Initiatives, Catholic Relief Services, ALNAP, and World Vision South Sudan – with varying specialties from assessment and implementation to emergency response, recovery, and development.

5. Final drafts of the guidance note were additionally shared with two urban specialists for their feedback.

Annex 2: Examples of stakeholder analysis and coordination fora mapping tools

Tool 1: Illustrative Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Name of actor	Sector	Basic role	Level of operation (national, regional, community)	Benefit of coordination	Risk of not coordinating	Importance of coordination per phase [rank from most (3) to least important (1)]		
						Design	Implementation	Evaluation

Tool 2: Stakeholder Analysis Tool from Urban Context Analysis Toolkit[12]

Name of actor	Type of actor (eg ministry, donor, UN agency, community group, INGO, LNGO)	Basic Role	Level of operation (national, regional, community)	Potential influence on affected population (brief – 10–15 words)	Type of Influence (positive, negative or mixed)	Importance to future programmes (how critical is the actor to the success of future programmes)	How might the implementing organisation engage with the actor? (at what stage of the project and in what context, with what capacity)	Why might the actor engage with the implementing organisation? (what interest or incentive would they have/need)

Tool 3: Coordination Fora Mapping

Coordination structure/body	Level of operation (national, regional, community)	Composition/ participants	Frequency of meetings/ coordination events	Mandate/topics of coordination	Strengths	Weaknesses

12 This tool comes from the Urban Context Analysis Toolkit (IRC, 2017). The entire toolkit and guidance note are available at: http://pubs.iied.org/10819IIED/

Annex 3: Urban stakeholder engagement and coordination: A quick reference for humanitarian practitioners

Urban stakeholder engagement and coordination

A quick reference for humanitarian practitioners

Why are urban areas different?

Markets and private sector have a larger influence and greater number of actors

Greater density and diversity of affected populations

More complex and multiple levels of governance

Greater number of stakeholders to coordinate from local government and civil society to international organisations and donor agencies
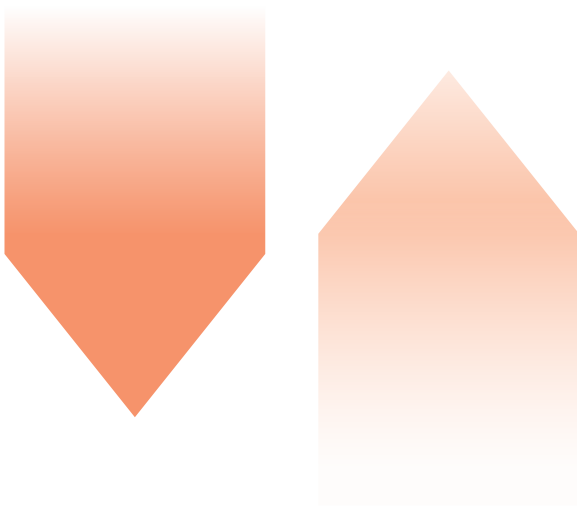
What is coordination?

Coordination is broadly defined as the ways in which an organisation communicates, engages, and partners with local and international stakeholders in an urban setting, including participating in broader inter-agency coordination and response that might be in place at city level. Good stakeholder engagement and coordination can enable agencies to leverage opportunities for greater scale, to benefit from and support local response mechanisms, to do no harm, and to contribute to the resilience and longer term development of the city.

Practical decision-making steps

1 **Conduct stakeholder analysis**
examining the levels of influence and interest of each stakeholder and the existing forums for coordination.

While each context will be different, below are common stakeholders and forums to consider:

Stakeholders

- Affected populations
- Community leaders
- Civil society:
    - local non-governmental organisations
    - community-based organisations
    - non-state armed actors
- International actors and donors
- National government, sub-national and local government
- Urban planning institutions
- Private sector
- Academia

Existing forums

- National, city, and area-level inter-agency groups
- Local government-led meetings
- Community meetings
- Existing client feedback mechanisms

What are the principles I should keep in mind?

Understanding the context

- Leverage local knowledge
- Conduct context analysis to understand the distinct characteristics of the city
- Conduct stakeholder analysis and consider your response with the variety of actors responding

Applying an area-based approach

- Consider entire population of a geographic area
- Look at achieving multiple outcomes
- Consider interconnectedness of city (block, community, municipality, city, state, etc.)

Strengthening local systems and resilience

- Utilise and build capacity of local systems
- Consider stakeholder approach and build trust

Accountability to affected populations

- Include population needs, preferences, participation and ensure two-way feedback mechanisms

2 Establish a coordination plan
leveraging highly influential and interested stakeholders, while mitigating harmful actors.

3 Identify key relationships and partnerships, formalising as necessary to establish how you will coordinate

Coordinate with stakeholders across the programme cycle based on their levels of influence and interest.

Factors to consider when prioritising stakeholders may include:

- ☑ Authority or influence over permissions
- ☑ National or local actors responsible for providing services
- ☑ Peer organisation to coordinate activities with
- ☑ Influence among community members
- ☑ Resources to contribute
- ☑ Knowledge to contribute
- ☑ Accountability to affected populations

Use the following forums and strategies:

- ☑ Formal Inter-agency cluster or working group meetings at national or city-level
- ☑ Formal (MoUs, subgrants, contract) or informal bilateral relationship (regular meetings)
- ☑ Joint partnerships in consortia, coordinating on proposals, and funding appeals
- ☑ Brokered relationship in which one stakeholder facilitates coordination between two actors
- ☑ Client feedback mechanisms
- ☑ Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs)
- ☑ Mobile technology platforms to facilitate communication with and accountability to affected populations

Example: **Stakeholder engagement and coordination across the programme cycle**

International NGOs, local NGOs, and UN urban inter-agency coordination forums consulted to determine existing knowledge base and gaps in services

Development actors consulted on potential linkages between humanitarian and development programmes

Urban planning institutions consulted to determine highest concentration of displaced people and levels of vulnerability

FGDs and KIIs with host and displaced communities and leaders to determine needs and establish relations

KIIs held with key actors including local businesses/associations, local chambers of commerce, banks to understand market needs and gaps

KIIs held with local government to inform necessary permission/approvals, assess existing development plans for the area, and introduce them to humanitarian ways of working

Needs assessment and analysis

Stakeholder analysis

Project design and funding

Human and financial resources planned for coordination/outreach both in inter-agency and project-specific coordination activities

Affected populations and other key stakeholders identified in needs assessment are included in project design workshop

Programme design informed by assessment of local planning processes and affected population needs

Feedback mechanism and approaches to affected population participation are designed for project implementation

Evaluation and learning

Participatory learning with clients on success of the project

Learning from evaluation shared with peer international and local NGOs through inter-agency coordination forum

Implementation and monitoring

Project coordination plan created to engage with different mechanisms for different actors

Permissions requested from national and local government to begin work

MOUs signed with private sector businesses to support project's apprenticeship activities and regular check-ins held with partners

MOUs signed with training centres for trainings of clients

Regular participation in inter-agency meetings at city-level to support case management

Donors engaged to support advocacy issues including right to work of clients and safe-working conditions

Regular meetings held at area-level with project's clients, community leaders, and local government to inform and consult on monitoring of activities

This document provides a quick reference guidance on urban stakeholder engagement and coordination. It was developed by the **Stronger Cities Initiative** with support from UK aid and EU humanitarian aid.

For more information see the **full guidance note** at **http://pubs.iied.org/10821IIED/**

Knowledge
Products

A rapidly urbanising world presents both challenges and opportunities for humanitarian aid approaches. Urban areas often have a greater density of people and diversity of affected populations, stronger civil society, and more developed and complex governance structures, service delivery systems, and market systems. These factors heighten the importance of coordination and collaboration.

Learning from prior urban responses also highlights the potential risks of poor coordination including development of inaccurate targeting strategies, fostering of misconceptions and miscommunication, and even the undermining of municipal and local capacity in the long term.

Despite these challenges, well developed and coordinated urban responses can leverage opportunities – reaching larger numbers of affected people efficiently, drawing upon and improving local response mechanisms, addressing existing inequalities, and contributing to the resilience of the city.

This guidance note provides key principles and considerations for individual organisations to use when making decisions on how to engage and coordinate with local and international actors throughout the programme life-cycle, to ensure effective implementation of the agency's response. It is intended to help improve the communication, collaboration, and coordination of humanitarian agencies with other stakeholders in urban contexts.