# Shelter and Settlements Response in Urban Emergencies

This document was prepared by Sophie Grimaud and Leah Campbell, with the support of Ryan Delafosse, Harriette Purchas, Tom Corsellis and participants in the January 2016 RedR Shelter in Urban Emergencies Training Pilot.

## INTRODUCTION

On the 12-14 January 2016, RedR held a pilot of the Shelter in Urban Emergencies course, delivered as part of RedR's 'Ready to Respond' programme, funded by Lloyd's Charities Trust. The course was developed for shelter practitioners with limited urban experience and addresses the social, legal, institutional and technical aspects of urban shelter response and related crosscutting issues.

This document, produced jointly between ALNAP and RedR with contributions from Shelter Centre, captures the key messages, lessons and experiences of both course facilitators and participants on the topic of shelter in urban emergency response, offering case studies and references to further readings that were discussed in the pilot course.

## 1. UNDERSTANDING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

### 1.1 Defining and understanding 'urban'

### Key lessons

- Urbanisation occurs rapidly, especially for medium and small sized cities.

- Defining the urban environment is difficult – rather than using a single definition it may be more helpful to look at the characteristics of an environment (social, geographic, architectural, economic, institutional and demographic) and consider the impact of these in a given settlement or geographic area.

- While it is important for humanitarians to recognise the different types of urban areas, the focus should be on understanding and adapting to the complexity of urban systems, rather than attempting to define and categorise.

- Understanding the power dynamics and influence of different stakeholders is essential to intervening in complex urban systems.

- Stakeholder analysis is important to understand the prevalence and characteristics of varying shelter typologies that affected populations may adopt (such as rental support, collective centres, etc.). It also ensures a good awareness and consideration of gender-based violence and other crosscutting issues.

- As urban areas grow, so do slums – in many areas slums account for up to a third of the urban population. Slums frequently accommodate more vulnerable displaced populations, with no family ties or financial capital with which to seek alternatives. Slums are often located on land vulnerable to hazards, with insecure tenure. Slums are also difficult to define, and may be more easily understood as a list of features, such as lack of basic services, substandard housing, overcrowding, insecure tenure, social exclusion, etc. (for more on this see UN Habitat, 2003).

- Populations often move between urban and rural areas, or within an urban area. Those who arrived most recently, whether displaced or pre-disaster migrants, often have the greatest ties between them.

## Further reading

Responding to Urban Disasters: Learning from Previous Relief and Recovery Operations, ALNAP November 2012 http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7772

Ready to Respond: Skills Gaps for Responding to Humanitarian Crises in Urban Settings in the WASH and Shelter Sectors, RedR, 2013 (for definitions of city, peri-urban, slum etc.) http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19239

*Shelter Report, Build Hope : Housing Cities after a disaster*, 2012, Habitat for Humanity : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/8714

Learning from the City: British Red Cross Urban Learning Project Scoping Study, British Red Cross, 2012: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7954

*Urban Shelter Guidelines*, Shelter Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2010: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21017

*The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*, UN Habitat, 2003: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6645

## 1.2 Targeting in urban shelter response

### Key lessons

- Targeting is a challenge in urban areas for various reasons, including non-geographic communities, greater fluidity and movement, difficulty differentiating between IDPs/ refugees or affected population/chronically poor, population not knowing one another, etc.

- Humanitarians need to understand the characteristics of a crisis and of all affected/relevant stakeholders, especially the affected and host populations, to know which targeting methods to use. They also need to understand the different phases of a crisis in order to react appropriately.

- Displacement/non-displacement, IDPs and refugee issues pose particular challenges for urban shelter response as populations move and intertwine.

- To support effective targeting, information holders and representatives must be identified beyond traditional community leaders commonly found in rural contexts.

### Case study examples

**Informal Data Sources:** During the conflict response in Ukraine mid-2014, UNHCR found that traditional data collection methods used to guide targeting were not appropriate in large cities where IDPs had dispersed. They recognised the need for more innovative approaches to be combined with traditional ones. Together with the Shelter Cluster, UNHCR began using Babushkas, older women who have a community leader role, to identify early on where changes were occurring in neighbourhoods, and subsequently identify newly arrived IDPs. This informal information source was instrumental in identifying areas for UNHCR to later carry out more formal identification and targeting approaches. Similar approaches have been used in Central African Republic, where taxi drivers have been used effectively to identify and map affected communities.

### Further reading

What are the practices to identify and prioritize vulnerable populations affected by urban humanitarian emergencies?: A systematic review protocol, Ronak Patel, Laura Phelps, David Sanderson and Jami King, 2016: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22444

*IDPs in protracted displacement : Is local integration a solution ? Report from the Second Expert Seminar on Protracted Internal Displacement, 19-20 January 2011,Geneva* Brookings, IDMC, NRC http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22782

*Collective Centre Guidelines*, CCCM Cluster, 2010 : http://www.urban-response.org/ resource/22784

## 1.3 Communicating urban shelter response

### Key lessons

- In an urban environment, the large number of diverse schedules and competing messages requires humanitarians to use different communication methods and adapt messages to the targeted audience. Communication should be two-way, with specific attention given to engaging affected and host communities.

- In an urban context, people are more likely to have access to technology, however those with technology may not be representative: care should be taken to develop communication with those who may be more vulnerable and do not have access to technology. Whilst TV and radio are still relevant mediums, the rise of social media is an important trend with a growing number of people having phones and access to the Internet.

- A good communication strategy requires a good understanding of the local context (see section 1.1 above). This includes understanding how affected people communicated before the crisis, who communicates with who and at what level, who may be marginalised and what method will reach them, and whether people will understand and remember the message communicated.

- Information, education and communication materials exist, including some which have been adapted to urban contexts, but these are not always accessed and used when communicating with urban populations

### Case study example

Hotlines and phone calls can be effective communication tools in urban environments, however there is a risk of confusion if these are not properly coordinated. One example from Ukraine highlights this challenge. Many hotlines were established, resulting in confusion around messages shared with affected communities and information gathered. Without a coordinated information management system, crucial information was unavailable to inform the response. In Lebanon, by contrast, UNHCR centralised refugee data in a unique database, with phones and hotlines streamlined in one process, resulting in an easier to use system.

### Further reading

*Communicating Better Building*, Practical Action, 2010 : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6792

*Independent Evaluation of the Ushahidi Haiti Project*, Morrow, N., Mock, N., Papendieck, A. and N. Kocmich, April 2011: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6000

## 2. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### 2.1 Shelter and settlements as a multi-sectoral issue

### Key lessons

- The large number of stakeholders involved in complex urban environments means good coordination is vital.

- A focus on settlements provides a spatial framework, which supports an integrated response design. This approach, based on a socio-economically defined space, shifts the focus from the household to neighbourhoods and communities. This change in unit of analysis is particularly useful given the density and scale of urban areas.

- Settlement programming should be addressed in a multi-sectoral way, reflecting the multi-faceted character of the context. It should also be transitional, linking relief and development, and accountable to the local population and governance.

- Shelter and settlements issues are crosscutting: they are linked to livelihoods, protection, GBV prevention, WASH, DRR, early recovery and other key issues. Finding ways to integrate shelter and settlements issues with other sectors in a defined geographic area holds potential for an improved, more holistic response.

- Shelter and settlement are recovery and economic development tools. Shelter is a platform for both survival and economic recovery: even modest forms of shelter can jump-start and re-engage affected populations in the incremental, longer-term process of housing development.

- Humanitarians need a solid understanding of the local context, including the population's links and customs regarding land rights and ownership, as well as existing processes, which can be linked (such as rental arrangements and conflict resolution).

### Case study example

**Neighbourhood Approach:** In 2013, in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Plan International adopted a neighbourhood approach to address the multi-sectoral needs of the densely urban population. Plan International began with a planning process which engaged the affected population, identified and then developed several options for relocation in the project area, which were then supported across sectors, including protection, DRR, and WASH. Under this programme, Plan International developed a neighbourhood-level plan to guide the integration of needed activities and to engage and coordinate with local authorities. This approach was successful in that it sheltered affected populations in and adjacent to affected areas while allowing them to retain the social and economic networks that they relied upon pre-Typhoon, while incorporating DRR measures to reduce future hazard risk.

## Further reading

*The 'Neighborhood Approach', a Means of Improving the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Urban Areas*, USAID, OFDA, 2011: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22783

*Riding the Growth Bubble in an Increasingly Urban World*, Charles Setchell, May 6th 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20667

*USAID Arrives in Nepal, Earthquake Response Efforts Begin*, Charles Setchell, April 29th 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22795

## 2.2 Cash and market-based approaches

### Key lessons

- Markets are more complex in urban areas. They involve more stakeholders, are more diverse, generate more money and function as networks and physical spaces. They are a key element of urban systems and the livelihoods of urban populations.

- Cash programming is used increasingly within shelter and settlement responses, especially rental support and self-build reconstruction for owner-occupiers in urban areas. However, cash response can create shocks in urban markets as it generates artificial inflation and impacts availability and access to markets. Market assessment can help to mitigate these risks and allows more informed decision-making.

- Before conducting a market assessment, the market(s) first need to be defined, depending on context, emergency and local need, and stakeholders need to be consulted. Market assessments should be carried out jointly, to ensure a coordinated approach.

- Market assessments are helpful for non-commodity markets, including the rental housing market. In urban areas, market assessment is particularly important for the housing market, which often goes through periods of boom and bust. Understanding construction and labour markets is also helpful in understanding the links between urban market systems and urban populations.

### Further reading

*ALNAP Urban webinar #12: Market analysis for urban humanitarian response*: http://www. alnap.org/webinar/20 and its script : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21608

*The Market System for Construction Labor in Port au Prince*, Haiti, Emergency Market Mapping & Analysis (EMMA) report, February 2010, http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7704

*A review of evidence of humanitarian cash transfer programming in urban areas*, Gabrielle Smith, Lili Mohiddin, 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21520

*Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Emergencies: A Toolkit for Practitioners*, CaLP, Tiare Cross and Andrew Johnston, 2011: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7056

Evaluation Report: Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Lebanon Host Community Shelter Programmes: 'Increasing the availability of host community housing stock and improving living conditions for the provision of refugee shelter' Period: January 2013– December 2014, Ofelia Garcia, 2014-2015:  http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20329

*Scoping study: Emergency cash transfer programming in the WASH and Shelter sectors*, Helene Juillard and Mainul Islam Opu, 2014: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19553

# 3. SHELTER RESPONSE IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

## 3.1 Needs and damage assessments

### Key lessons

- The key to effective and sustainable humanitarian responses is a good understanding of the local context – assessments can provide this information.

- In urban areas, assessments are more difficult because of the increased complexity and volume (of people, buildings, etc). Because of this, it can be more difficult to extrapolate information, meaning urban assessments require ingenuity. There is a need for a fuller understanding of the Assessments/Monitoring/Evaluation cycle in the urban context.

- Key topics to consider in urban assessments include:

    » How do we define communities? Are communities and settlements the same?

    » How should we adapt primary data collection tools to the urban context?

    » What do we need to know and when? Which decisions by whom are to be informed by which assessment?

    » Who are the local stakeholders and how should they be engaged/considered in the assessment?

- Damage assessments can help us understand the state of a building/infrastructure after a disaster. It also shows the key construction and damage characteristics of an area, and can be used to develop a strategic reconstruction approach, strengthening resilience.

- Damage assessments look at the risk level of each structure, which varies depending on the exposure of that location and the vulnerability (based on the design and structure). Damage assessments are also required for communal service infrastructure, including power transmission, bridges, schools and clinics. Damage to infrastructure and commercial structures, including markets, should also be understood in the context of the market assessments, linking to livelihoods recovery. Assessing the building requires consideration of these aspects as well as a cultural understanding of the risk in each area.

- There are different types of damage assessments, which can be used depending on the phase of the crisis. For example:

    » Rapid Visual Assessment (RVA) can be used during the emergency phase using trained but semi-skilled teams. RVA is useful in planning phases, to understand the scale and nature of the damage in the context of priorities based upon targeting and the vulnerability and needs of affected populations.

» Structural Integrity and Damage Assessments (SIDA) should be undertaken as soon as possible, followed by Detailed Engineering Assessments (DEA). SIDA is useful in programme planning. It is also informed by targeting. DEA is useful in determining the nature of the intervention at project level, leading to descriptions of works and bills of quantity.

- Effective assessments should be well planned, taking into consideration purpose, actions to be taken and methodology, quality reporting, independent assessors and the involvement of both international and local expertise.

- In urban areas, infrastructure is often more vulnerable than in rural areas, due to its relative complexity, space constraints, its key role in providing day-to-day utilities as well as socio-economic development. The density of urban areas can also make it harder to rebuild. To be more efficient, urban damage assessments should be carried out neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood rather than house-by-house, and should take into account changes between the existing population and any movement into or out of the area.

## Case study examples

**Complementary Approaches:** Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, a Rapid Damage Assessment was carried out based on analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery acquired before and after the disaster. As many of the affected buildings were in urban areas (which are likely to be taller structures, closer together, generally larger and more complex to understand structurally and legally) it was important to get as much information as possible. The assessment used two complementary methods to assess damage to affected buildings, provide a more complete view of the situation. ATC-20, a rapid procedure for evaluating earthquake-damaged buildings using a safe green, limited yellow or unsafe red card system was paired with a checklist of earthquake vulnerability factors from the FEMA 210 method. Assessors also used GPS to assist where maps and addresses were incomplete. Inspecting 3000 structures per day, the first damage assessment combining complementary methods took almost 14 months to finish.

In Nepal following the 2015 earthquake, an RVA was conducted to determine the safety of buildings to be occupied in the short term. Assessors looked both inside and outside the dwellings, and the RVA was found useful to direct initial actions. However, the RVA cannot determine long-term safety, and more detailed assessments are required. Further on, structural engineering consultants and Nepalese surveyors conducted more detailed damage assessments and established a plan for rehabilitation.

**Remote sensing:** In dense urban areas, remote sensing can be a useful tool, and worth the cost, to provide key overall information. Remote sensing has been used in the Syria response, allowing humanitarians to see the relative density of damaged structures for each city examined, providing key information about the shelter situation in urban areas affected by conflict.

## Further reading

*Rapid Humanitarian Assessment in Urban Settings*, ACAPS The Assessment Capacities Project, Currion, P., April 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20143

Haiti earthquake January 2010: damage assessment, The European Commission: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22796

*Haiti Earthquake Response, Arup Assignment Report*, ARUP/ Oxfam, March 2010: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19888

*Four Years of Human Suffering: The Syria conflict as observed through satellite imagery*, UNOSAT, 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22780

*Northern Mali: Limited access to water for affected communities in Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao*, REACH, 2015: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22781

## 3.2. Standards

## Key lessons

- Urban settlements differ significantly. They have higher risks of overlapping and interdependent legal frameworks. Some of these legal frameworks may involve standards for shelter, but more likely for housing, tenants and informal settlement. The basis for use of standards in transitional settlement and reconstruction is found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Countries have adapted their legal frameworks on settlements to emergency situations to different degrees. Where this is the case, the international legal frameworks fill the gap. International instruments should only be used where local instruments are insufficient. The Pinheiro Principles provide practical guidance to all those working on housing and property issues when it comes to the rights of IDPs and refugees.

- The Sphere Project uses the term 'urban' to describe a range of contexts, from prosperous suburbs to slums. While the Sphere standards are universally applicable, they need to be contextualised. In urban areas, this could mean recognising more stakeholders, a different understanding of community, and more developed infrastructure. The Sphere Project is currently producing a guide to adapting sphere standards to urban contexts. The guide recognises that indicators for Sphere standards, such as the number of square metres per person, may be more or less in urban contexts than those proposed by Sphere and will instead need to be agreed locally.

## Case study example

**Contextualising standards:** In 2015, the Shelter, CCCM, WASH and Protection Clusters in Iraq worked together alongside the Iraq government and partner organisations to develop a comprehensive technical guidance note regarding support for IDPs living in unfinished or abandoned buildings. The guidance drew upon international standards such as Sphere as well as context-specific guidance such as national property law and building codes. The result was a guidance document agreed by a diverse group of responders, which provided consistency across a dynamic and divided area and also established the foundation for later recovery.

## Further reading

*The Sphere Project : Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10673

Sphere for Urban Response: http://www.urban-response.org/directory/43

*The Pinheiro Principles, United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons*, Centre on Housing rights and evictions, 2006: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22779

*Urban shelter Guidelines, Assistance in urban areas to populations affected in humanitarian crises*, Shelter Centre, NRC, 2010: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/21017

## 3.3. Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Issues

### Key lessons

- Housing impacts livelihoods and dignity. The right to adequate housing is more complex than simply being able to access a house. Availability, safety, affordability are important factors – making HLP issues crosscutting.

- Urban HLP challenges are different from those in rural areas in several ways. In urban areas, a property is more often shared between families; in an apartment building, for example. This means tenure or ownership may also be shared. Land is often 10-20 times more expensive than rural land, meaning fewer people own the house they live in and a far greater proportion rent than in rural contexts. The right to use and dispose (to allow rentals) is therefore an important component of the right to own. Additionally, targeted populations are more likely to be mobile and/or invisible within the city.

- Urban areas also have municipal and national authorities and laws to contend with, which may be unclear or overlap (a top-down master plan combined with local boundaries and tenure agreements, for instance). Due diligence is required to obtain clarity on HLP issues given the range of land laws, the frequent absence of an adequate post-disaster framework

and potential difficulties in working with the relevant authorities, especially in engaging affected and host populations.

- Security of tenure includes peace, recognition, protection, dignity, security and confidence. As urban areas vary, questions about what is secure enough and what needs to be protected should be adapted to the context. Engineers often base level of security and legality on written documents. Depending on the impact of the disaster, documents may be difficult to access or may not be recognised as legitimate. Therefore, unwritten agreements may provide a better, safer framework.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can be a rapid and effective tool for securing tenure, as it can involve many different parties. The process of creating an MoU is often as important as the document itself. It should be created in full consultation with the local population in order to improve appropriateness, equity, accountability, enforcement and legitimacy.

- The way in which disputes are resolved are key for all stakeholders to the credibility of HLP. Therefore it is often helpful, as a preliminary action, to create a clear dispute resolution framework, involving local stakeholders.

- The degree to which humanitarians are involved in HLP issues is often down to local contexts. Involvement depends upon the capacities of local authorities and the mandate of humanitarian organisations. Humanitarians should continue to develop skills that allow them to adapt to changing capacities and contexts, particularly in urbanised developing countries.

## Case study examples

**HLP Complexity:** In some cases, addressing HLP issues means supporting affected people to negotiate complex, multi-layered bureaucracies. There can be differences in land administration structures between rural and urban areas and sometimes these differences can be surprising. In Pakistan, land administration is complex in both rural and urban areas. While there may be fewer formal layers of administration in urban areas, this does not mean there will be fewer competing claims to the land, or that official decisions will be quicker. The different layers of administration should be mapped in order to identify which are most important and effective for the activity required (policy advocacy, local capacity-building, community representation, etc.).

Land Legitimacy In 2012 in Iraq, organisations were confronted with competing claims for 'legitimate' control of a field between three different government departments. Even though all were legitimate political actors, the conflict took two years to resolve through an agreement, stalling reconstruction.

## Further reading

*Handling Land, Innovative tools for land governance and secure tenure*, UN Habitat, IIRR, GLTN, 2012 http://www.urban-response.org/resource/22778

*Learning from Urban Transitional Settlement Response in the Philippines: Housing, Land and Property Issues*, CRS, Seki Hirano, 2012: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20237

*Economic Impact of Shelter Assistance in Post-Disaster Settings*, USAID, CHF International, Stephen Sheppard and Richard Hill, 2005: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/10331

## 3.4: Urban response, recovery and reconstruction

### Key lessons

- Urban areas complicate humanitarian response due to their relatively large infrastructure, developed land tenure and ownership systems, and complex governance structures. Urban areas are dependent on a variety of factors and networks. They are adaptable and flexible, but also more fragile, having an impact on response and recovery.

- There are a variety of urban shelter and settlement assistance methods available, including material distribution, self-help labour, voucher systems, cash for work, and rental support.

- Urban areas often provide more opportunities to work with the private sector. Partnering with private sector organisations can improve the speed and scale of the response, the cost effectiveness, access to technology and technical knowhow. Humanitarians should also be aware of the drivers for private sector actors, and consider the potential benefits and risks of these partnerships. For example, private sector actors may wish to engage in disaster response to get access to new markets, gain policy-making influence, to improve their image and to give back to the community.

- Successful recovery and reconstruction is often dependent on decisions made early in a response, making it important to consider long-term/permanent solutions as early as possible. Without a strategy outlining a process for families to return to durable and safe homes, emergency shelter could end up as permanent slums.

- Shelter is an important aspect of economic recovery; adequate housing facilitates other recovery elements as it stimulates the economy and regenerates livelihoods. Shelter should be at the centre of urban disaster recovery. Post-disaster shelter recovery is also an opportunity to reduce risks and vulnerability, reinforce security of tenure and to better include vulnerable people such as renters, squatters, and women in housing programs.

- Communities should be at the centre of recovery policies from the beginning, in order to help determine priorities and identify solutions that address community and cultural needs. The community can be involved through 'community contracting', whereby funds are placed in the hands of the participating and engaged community, who develop skills that can later be used to generate income.

- In urban areas, it is more effective to work neighbourhood by neighbourhood due to the high density and diversity of neighbourhoods in a city.

- Urban recovery programming requires a solid context analysis, which includes an understanding of the economy (including cash and markets), its complexity, diversity, informality and fluidity. Humanitarians should optimise opportunities for communication, participation and inclusive urban governance by establishing a systemic and strategic approach.

## Further reading

*Humanitarian crises, emergency preparedness and response: the role of business and the private sector, Final report*, Steven A. Zyck and Randolph Kent, July 2014 : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/19404

*Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing Housing and Communities after Natural Disasters*, GFDRR, Abhas K. Jh. : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/12606

*Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas, a Handbook*, IFRC, SKAT, 2012 : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6393

*Urban informal settlers displaced by disasters: challenges to housing responses*, IDMC, NRC, June 2015 : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20675

*Transitional settlement and reconstruction after natural disasters*, OCHA, DFID, Shelter Centre, Corsellis, Tom ; Vitale, Antonella, 2008 : http://www.urban-response.org/resource/6547

## CONCLUSION

Shelter and settlements are core aspects of response to urban crises. The key learnings and examples shared in the Shelter in Urban Emergencies pilot course and documented here have brought to light a number of key themes, which should be kept in mind going forward.

A recurring lesson from this discussion is the importance of adapting approaches based on a thorough understanding of urban systems and the urban environment. In addition, examples shared highlight the importance of integrated understanding and responses in urban response.

Shelter and settlement are crosscutting concerns. When dealing with them, livelihoods, GBV prevention, WASH, DRR and other issues will be impacted. Shelter is especially a key point of the economic recovery as reconstruction stimulates livelihood regeneration.

In shelter interventions, many factors make humanitarian actions more complicated in urban contexts, such as greater numbers of stakeholders, more complex infrastructures and networks, particular local arrangements for sheltering, local land tenure systems and governance and complex repartition of the communities.

Moving forward, shelter responders need to adopt more context-driven approaches, which involve communities, integrate local systems and stakeholders, and are based in a long-term vision.

By integrating communities, not only is response more relevant in terms of housing but also in terms of security of tenure and of economic and social recovery. This emphasis requires a change in the scale of intervention, from the household to the neighbourhood, to make it more relevant for urban contexts.

The key to effective and sustainable humanitarian response is a good understanding of the local context, which assessments can provide. In urban context, these assessments must also be adapted to the environment. Thus, other methods and tools, different from traditional ones, may need to be considered to adapt to the particular complexity of urban settings.

Finally, there is a lack of documented lessons and examples of urban shelter and settlements approaches, which has limited the scope of this report. Further documentation is of critical importance in order to move forward with clear guidance and best practice for response to urban crises.