



**SETTLEMENTS' APPROACH**

**Philippines Country  
Consultation**

Manila, Philippines  
November 2019



**USWG**

Urban  
Settlements  
Working Group



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Urban Settlement Working Group

Manila National consultation

27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

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Co-chairs of the Global Shelter Clusters's Urban Settlement Working Group (USWG)

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### **1. Event details / Participants**

A consultation in Manila was held on the afternoon of Wednesday 27 November 2019, at the Habitat for Humanity International Offices. The consultation provided an opportunity for humanitarian and development agencies operating in the Philippines to discuss the application of the settlements approach in their own programming, including the programmatic implications, challenges, successes and lessons. The consultation also allowed USWG co-chairs to outline the work of the USWG undertaken to date, including:

- The USWG case study compendium;
- The development of the settlement-approach guidance note;
- The application of the approach in different contexts – including Iraq, CAR and the Philippines.
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Approximately 12 participants joined the 3 hour consultation, with representation from NGOs, International Organisations and the RCRC Movement. See annex 1 for a participant list.

### **2. Consultation proceedings**

Following an overview provided by the USWG co-chairs as outlined above, discussions were undertaken in a plenary format, with discussion primers including:

#### **ORGANISATION WIDE**

- Does this change the way you currently work? How? What does this look like?
- What are the key blockages / things that get in your way?

#### **SYSTEM WIDE**

- How does this approach complement our current system & ways of working?
- How does it align with the system? Is it possible to mainstream?
- What are the key blockages / things that get in your way?
  
- What are the Challenges in meeting affected people's holistic needs?
- Is ABA relevant for a city like Manila and other cities across the country? Or already a practice?

**A summary of key discussions is listed below:**

- **Population movement vis-a-vis the settlement approach:** Noting Manila with a population of 17 million during the day and 14 million at night, participants were curious as what population the approach would take into consideration? Which can result in significant differences in population number and required resources. Acknowledging the above, settlement approaches are most effective / relevant when considering smaller geographies such as municipalities or neighbourhoods. In smaller geographic areas population movement remains a reality, and a project following the approach should consider the most appropriate parameters.
- **When to apply the approach?** Settlement approaches can be considered as generally good practice programming. But there remain contexts where the approach may be of more, or less relevance. For example, the approach may be of most use in contexts where there is a relatively stable population (in terms of movement), and with a legitimate and open local authority leadership structure. Further work is needed – such as development a checklist or simple guidance to clearly identify when an approach may be most useful.
- **Settlement based approaches in humanitarian & development contexts:** The approach is naturally applied more regularly in development contexts. Whereas in contexts of sudden onset and protracted crises, the default humanitarian architecture is a sector / cluster led approach. Which in many instances, has led to siloed thinking. The settlement approach aims to create a holistic / multi-sectoral picture of needs and integrated programming.
- **Integrating settlement approaches into a sector-led system:** Applying a settlements approach is considered to be more time and resource intensive – which poses additional challenges in contexts of sudden onset crises. For example, a detailed area based assesment may take 4 – 6 weeks to complete – with further time needed for stakeholder validation etc. Emergency priorities are set and implemented earlier. Further, unlike detailed sector led assessments > sector response plans, there is no clear ‘plug-in’ for settlement/area based assessment findings into system with response priorities and subsequent resource mobilisation. This represents a significant challenge in the scale up and replication of the approach.
- **Varied experience within the Philippines: Examples from attendees highlighted:**
  - **Habitat for Humanity:** Strong focus of working with Local Governments as partners in all projects – predominantly, but not exclusively, focused on shelter and settlements
  - **Catholic Relief Services:** Aside from a large shelter programming which is always complemented by WASH programming, CRS often tie in livelihoods programming and disaster risk reduction components.
  - **International Organisation for Migration:** Across the Philippines, always commence their programs with a multi-sectoral needs assessment, followed by brining in the local government, whereby a partnership is often established with IOM undertaking any CCCM and shelter needs, with the local authority addressing other identified needs.
- **The value of settlement approaches in medium-scale crises:** Participants questioned whether the approach may be more applicable in medium-scale crises. Enabling factors may be the non-activation of clusters, and hence assessments, coordination and programming could be aligned according to settlements / neighbourhoods etc. However, medium scale emergencies also likely do not attract the level of funding needed. Therefore with limited funding and limited operational organisations – this brings its own challenges to the application of the approach.
- **Donor funding parameters and limitations: Funding is predominantly sector based. Agencies** apply by sector – therefore not only do organisations need to change, but donors also need to change. For example, to advocate and encourage donors to allocate funds per municipality or neighbourhood or Barangay in the Philippines. This would entail a significant shift within the donor community.



- **Value of settlement approaches at localised levels:** Within a large scale crisis with the coordination architecture active, participants discussed the added value of approach is often moreso at a localised level, vis-a-vis the clusters / sectors which operate at a national and occasionally on a sub-national level. At this localised level, there is strong argument how the approach can complement the larger humanitarian coordination system by feeding information to the larger system.
- **Competition or Complementarity:** There remains a misconception that applying the approach means identified agencies are required to do 'everything' in that targeted location. This is first a misconception that needs to be clarified. Secondly, there remains a level of competition between agencies – for funding, for visibility. Agencies in the most case want to be positioned as the lead agency, rather than as a subsequent partner. This brings up a recurring issue of funding and competition in an increasingly scarce funding environment.
- **Strengthening localised humanitarian and development action:** Especially in a context such as the Philippines, where there is a high degree of localisation, this approach is welcomed – as it implies working closely with Local Government, who operate within a strong decentralisation culture in the Philippines. However – when a large disaster strikes, the national led system is established, often with a centralised decision making structure. This can become difficult to then navigate different levels of Government with varying priorities, mandates etc.

### **3. Next steps:**

- Outcomes and next steps from the National and Local consultations in the Philippines are incorporated into the draft Regional action plan, [available here](#).



## Annex 1: Participant list

Name	Organization
Ariel Sadural	CRS
Karen Janes	CRS
Manuel Gheno	ACTED
James Schell	Impact Initiatives
Shirshah Ayobi	American Red Cross
Andreas Hapsoro	Habitat for Humanity
Enid Kathleen Madarcos	Habitat for Humanity
Gregg McDonald	Habitat for Humanity
Kristina Carreon	IOM
Mohamed Hilmi	InterAction
Kathryn Sidlowski	InterAction