

URBAN RESILIENCE

2020 Urban Learning Brief for Mission Staff



This Urban Learning Brief was written to inform USAID Mission staff about trends and developments in urban programming and is now being distributed to a wider audience. The content of this brief is based on learning from the 2020 World Urban Forum (WUF). WUF is a biennial meeting of UN Habitat focused on city-action for the 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs).

As cities around the world face more acute climate events, global pandemics, humanitarian crises and other shocks, there is rapidly growing attention on the need for urban resilience. **There is an urgency to act quickly. The World Bank estimates that by 2030 there will be \$300 billion in annual average losses and 77 million urban residents will fall back into poverty without significant risk reduction to avoid those setbacks.**

Urban resilience is defined by 100 Resilient Cities as “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a **city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.**”

USAID's investments in building resilience help share and shift the responsibility for managing risk, investing in resilience, and responding to shocks from donors to governments, communities, and the private sector. The overriding aim is to **reduce costs of recurrent crises and get ahead of emerging risks to prevent backsliding on development gains.**

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are the primary shocks – e.g. flooding, cyber-attack, fires, and global pandemics - in a city? How do chronic stressors like income inequality, insufficient transportation services, and limited communications networks affect the ability to respond and bounce back?
2. Which people and areas of the city are at greater risk? What specific considerations need to be made for these vulnerable groups and locations? How are vulnerable groups engaged in resilience planning processes?
3. How can government and non-government partners work together on resilience planning? What is the city planning and operations capacity to adapt?
4. How can we pay for resilience? What are the tools to attract outside investment in resilient infrastructure? How are projects capturing the costs and benefits of resilience?
5. What are the necessary links between national and local governments to support resilience planning?

HEADLINES FROM THE WORLD URBAN FORUM 2020

Urban resilience is a governance issue and requires a systems-approach to addressing challenges in cities. Good governance, institutions, and leadership are essential for resilience. Resilience, climate or disaster risk reduction strategies cannot stand alone, rather they must be integrated with other frameworks to promote coherence. These strategies must be multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional – making links between national and local policy and linking with neighboring jurisdictions. While cities are still at the center of urban resilience programs, it is clear they cannot go at it alone.

Resilience to what? While much of the focus on resilience is centered on addressing climate risks and disaster recovery and response, resilience planning should consider a wide range of stressors and vulnerabilities. Anticipating stressors and building adaptive capacity are important to break cycles of recovery and response that may fail to address inequalities in the system, for example, after experiencing a flood. Resilience planning requires government and private sector to work together in non-traditional ways in order to bounce back stronger after inevitable shocks.

Resilience for whom? Resilience efforts must prioritize the needs, interests, and experiences of vulnerable communities. For example, a focus on investment in resilient infrastructure may take precedent over basic needs and services. Engagement with communities in development and implementation of resilience strategies is essential and several new tools and methodologies to support these efforts have been created, such as the Urban Community Resilience Assessment.

Financing resilience requires innovation in domestic resource mobilization and access to private capital, and a better understanding of costs and benefits. Urban resilience is an expensive proposition, especially in the context of cities and regions with limited coverage of basic services. A range of new climate finance facilities and investment funds have emerged to respond to the resilience finance gap, but cities will need support to develop bankable projects that meet their resilience needs. Unlocking capital for resilience requires understanding costs, benefits, and avoided risk and losses.

RESOURCES

RISE-UP: Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor *UN-Habitat*

Flagship program launched at WUF to mobilize and coordinate large scale investments for urban adaptation and resilience-building into the hotspots of vulnerability. Focuses on cross-sector partnerships. Estimated \$75 million in funding for 10-year implementation.

https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/rise_up_resilient_settlements_for_the_urban_poor.pdf

Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030)

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

New UNDRR program pre-launched at WUF10 responding to city demand for capacity development guidance in various technical areas ranging from awareness and strategic planning, to effective implementation of the risk-informed urban development plans. Program to start by end of 2020. Expression of interest for partnership to be launched soon.

<https://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/>

Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCal)

United Nations Capital Development Fund

Mechanism aimed at promoting climate change–resilient communities and economies by increasing financing for and investment in climate change adaptation at the local level in LDCs.

<https://www.un.org/ldcportal/uncdfs-local-climate-adaptive-living-facility-local/>

Mainstreaming Urban Resilience: Lessons from Indian Cities (2020) *National Institute of Urban Affairs*

Summary brief of from policy/research convening with focus on mainstreaming urban resilience in policy and planning in Indian cities.

<https://www.teriin.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/mainstreaming-urban-resilience.pdf>

Urban Community Resilience Assessment, *Cities Alliance and World Resources Institute*

Methodology to amplify vulnerable communities' voices in adaptation decision-making to through measurement, engagement with government officials, and participation strategies.

<https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/urban->

MOVING THE NEEDLE IN YOUR MISSION

Identify the Issue

Mission staff who wish to increase resilience as they provide urban services should first determine what resilience capacities are critical to either stabilizing a country or providing a solid foundation for long term predictability of service delivery. First, staff should meet with their Mission's Environment team and representatives of the RFS Center for Resilience and urban resilience staff in DDI. They can help discuss resilient cities, challenges, approaches, and opportunities for funding and programming.

Understand the Enabling Environment and Key Governance Policies

The next set of stakeholders to engage is Democracy and Governance staff. Mission staff, in coordination with local officials in the Ministry of Housing or Planning, or the Environment can talk through the process for addressing shocks and stressors in a local context. This might include insight into how vulnerable a city is if its energy source is compromised, or if there is a disruption with value chains and markets that impact the delivery of food and goods to urban centers. From this conversation, a next step may be to conduct an economic analysis or resilience analysis.

Reach Out to the Urban Team

Finally, reach out to USAID's Urban Team by emailing urban@usaid.gov to request a formal assessment. The Urban team can provide insight into the situation and/or bring in other technical staff to advise on particular issues if needed. Given the cross-sectoral nature of resilience, there are ways to incorporate best practices into current programming, resilience planning, and/or CDCS development.

USAID Resilience Resources

Progress Toward Climate Resilience in the Philippines

The Philippines' country climate resilience timeline identifies key resilience milestones and results to demonstrate how USAID's support has helped the country progress toward self-reliance and long-term resilience. It highlights the interdependent nature of climate adaptation building blocks and how USAID's investments complement government efforts to achieve policy milestones.

<https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/progress-toward-climate-resilience-philippines>

ATLAS Vulnerability Assessment Approaches & Methodologies

Every climate vulnerability assessment should begin with a clear objective and question. This document illustrates some common objectives and examples of climate vulnerability assessments that Missions can commission. These examples are useful for understanding the various levels of data analysis and recommendations that can be used to inform decision-making.

<https://www.climatelinks.org/project/atlas-vulnerability-assessment-approaches-methodologies>

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