

# Cities in Crisis

## Strengthening Humanitarian Action in Urban Areas



### Why strengthen humanitarian action in urban areas?

By 2050, over 70% of the global population will live in urban areas. This urbanisation trend is accompanied by an increasing prevalence and intensity of natural and man-made disasters in urban centres. Despite this increase, the humanitarian system has struggled to understand and effectively engage with the complex socio-economic dynamics and governance structures existing within cities. Humanitarian response planning and coordination primarily occur at the sectoral or cluster level, missing an important holistic understanding of a complex urban environment. Sub-national actors, including municipal authorities, service providers and civil society, often remain excluded from humanitarian planning and coordination processes.

### Promoting the settlement approach

Acknowledging these challenges, with the goal of strengthening humanitarian response in cities affected by crisis, **IMPACT, ACTED, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Cites Unies France (CUF)** have partnered in the framework of the **AGORA initiative** to implement a 2-year **EU-funded programme**.

Throughout this project, IMPACT and its partners are supporting humanitarian actors to:

- ✓ Develop **multi-sectoral response plans and recovery plans organised by area/settlement**
- ✓ Promote **synergies between international, national and sub-national actors**

#### City level



By promoting the settlement approach in **five cities affected by crisis**, the project promotes **more localised response in cities, facilitating links between relief, recovery and development** actions and operationalising key components of the New Way of Working.

#### Global level



At the **global level**, operational pilots are complemented with targeted **advocacy, promoting the use of settlement approaches** and increased inclusion with local actors in key global fora such as the IASC Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas, Cluster and Inter-Cluster fora, and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

### What is the Settlement Approach?

Settlement approaches promote **multi-sector and multi-stakeholder action in a given territory** and are 'informed by community-decision making mechanisms reflective of the social, economic and physical features of the defined area' (USAID, 2011). The use of settlement approaches in complex urban settings provides a **territorial framework upon which to identify needs, manage information, response planning and coordination among humanitarian actors and with target communities**.

The implementation of settlement approaches in urban areas requires:

**Step 1:** Identification of target communities and delineation of the territory/settlement they inhabit (typically neighbourhoods in urban settings)

**Step 2:** Holistic and multi-sectoral understanding of needs and response capacity within a given settlement

**Step 3:** Identification of effective community counterparts, which exogenous humanitarian actors can engage to support the implementation of area-based programming



## How we do it

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### Development of response and recovery plans in five cities affected by crisis

Through operationalising the settlement approach and building synergies with local stakeholders at the city and settlement level, IMPACT supports humanitarian coordination structures to develop city-level response and recovery plans in five cities affected by crisis. Key steps include:

- 1 **Identifying and delineating target settlements**, areas or neighbourhoods.
- 2 **Developing comprehensive area based assessments**, providing an overall picture of multi-sectoral needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, while identifying key actors and services within the targeted settlement.
- 3 **Creating settlement and city-level response and recovery plans**, supporting joint planning with local and international actors and humanitarian and development actors, identifying short, medium and long term priorities.
- 4 **Supporting the efficient coordination** of response and recovery plans through coordination and information management support

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### Provision of Technical Assistance to municipal actors in five cities affected by crisis

In the five targeted cities, project partners (UCLG/CUF) will deploy technical assistance to support local municipal actors, through:

- 1 **Establishing a global level municipality-to-municipality roster** within CUF/UCLG and other technical groups, identifying experts from participating municipalities on a peer-to-peer model.
- 2 **Identifying the required technical support**, informed through municipal needs and response and recovery plans.
- 3 Supporting **technical advisors to visit crisis-affected cities to work alongside local municipalities and actors** on identified priorities.

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### Promote the use of settlement approaches and the importance of effective engagement with local actors in global humanitarian platforms

IMPACT and partners will **engage with global humanitarian actors**, advocating for: stronger inclusion of local actors and the importance of the settlement based approaches, disseminating lessons learnt to inform future humanitarian response. IMPACT will engage with **global level humanitarian coordination structures**, including Global Clusters, OCHA, the IASC Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas, and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. Activities include:

- 1 **Creating a Steering/Advisory Committee** inclusive of key humanitarian stakeholders at global level.
- 2 **Engaging with IASC structures, clusters** and other relevant platforms at the global level through chairing working groups and leading on policy documents.
- 3 **Organizing events on Settlement approaches** and **link between international and national responders**.

## Programme Partners:

**IMPACT** Shaping practices  
Influencing policies  
Impacting lives

