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**STEPS TO GET
YOU STARTED:
USING CONTEXT TOOLS
IN URBAN RESPONSE**

Would you like to better understand the context you're operating in, but aren't sure where to start?

'What's Missing? Adding Context to the Urban Response Toolbox' is a new study from ALNAP, part of a broader research initiative exploring how humanitarian response can be more effective in complex urban areas.

These 8 steps highlight key findings from the study including:

What context is and why we need to understand it

What tools are out there

How to use purpose and limitations to choose the right tool

What you need to do next

This research was conducted by Leah Campbell, with design and communications by Cara Casey-Boyce and Alex Glynn at ALNAP. For more information visit www.alnap.org/urban-response

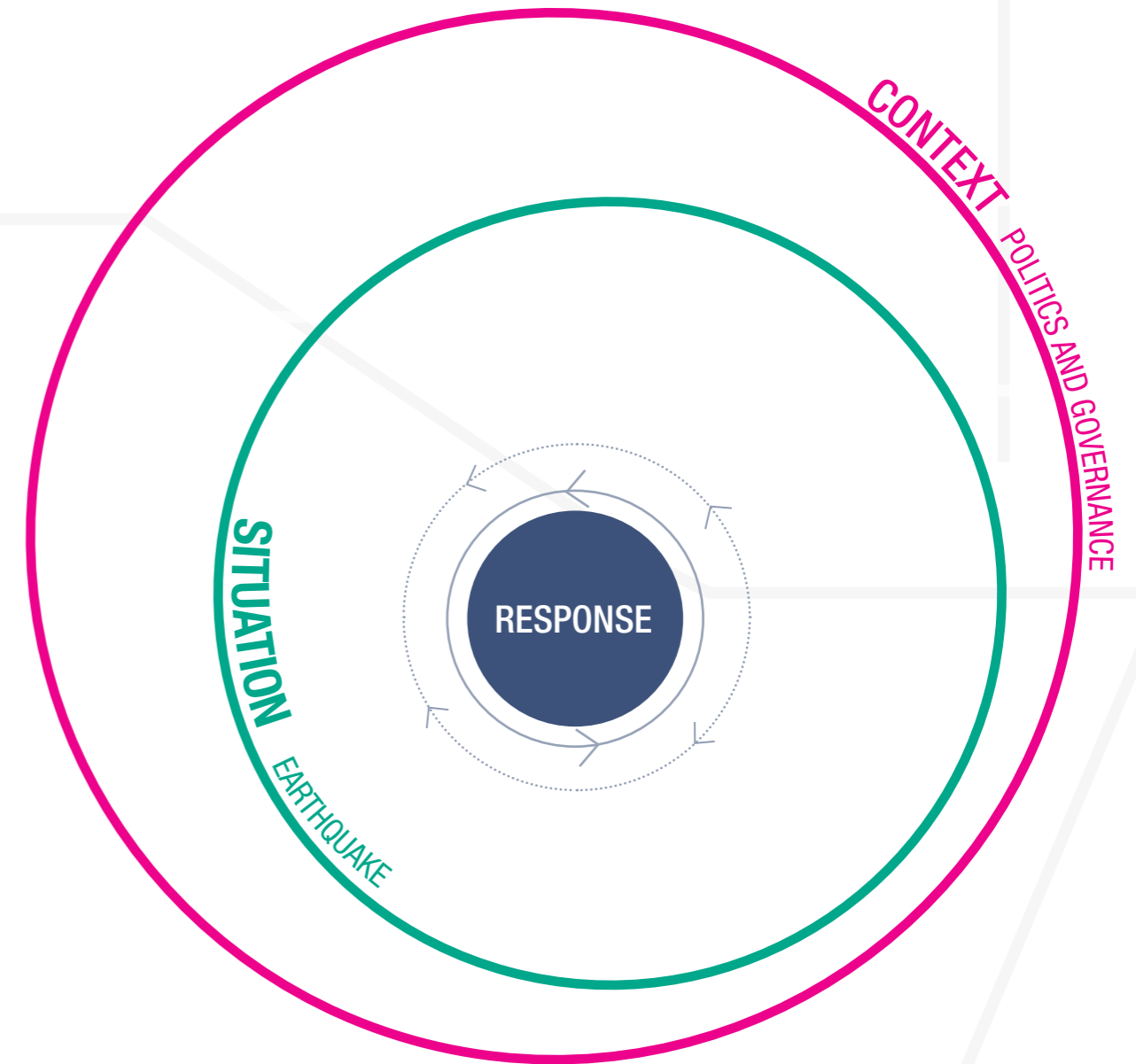
1 GET TO GRIPS WITH CONTEXT: WHAT IS IT? WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Each humanitarian crisis happens within a context - the context is broader than any specific situation or crisis, and can help to explain it.

Humanitarians don't always take time to understand context, and so miss opportunities. Understanding context can ensure responses are holistic, proactive, do no harm and build on existing structures and capacities.

When responding to a specific crisis situation (such as an earthquake), humanitarian organisations should take steps to understand the context. For example, by understanding the politics and governance in that (neighbourhood/city/country) they can navigate complex governance structures without doing harm.

Section 2 of the report explains this further. Visit www.alnap.org/urban-response for more information.



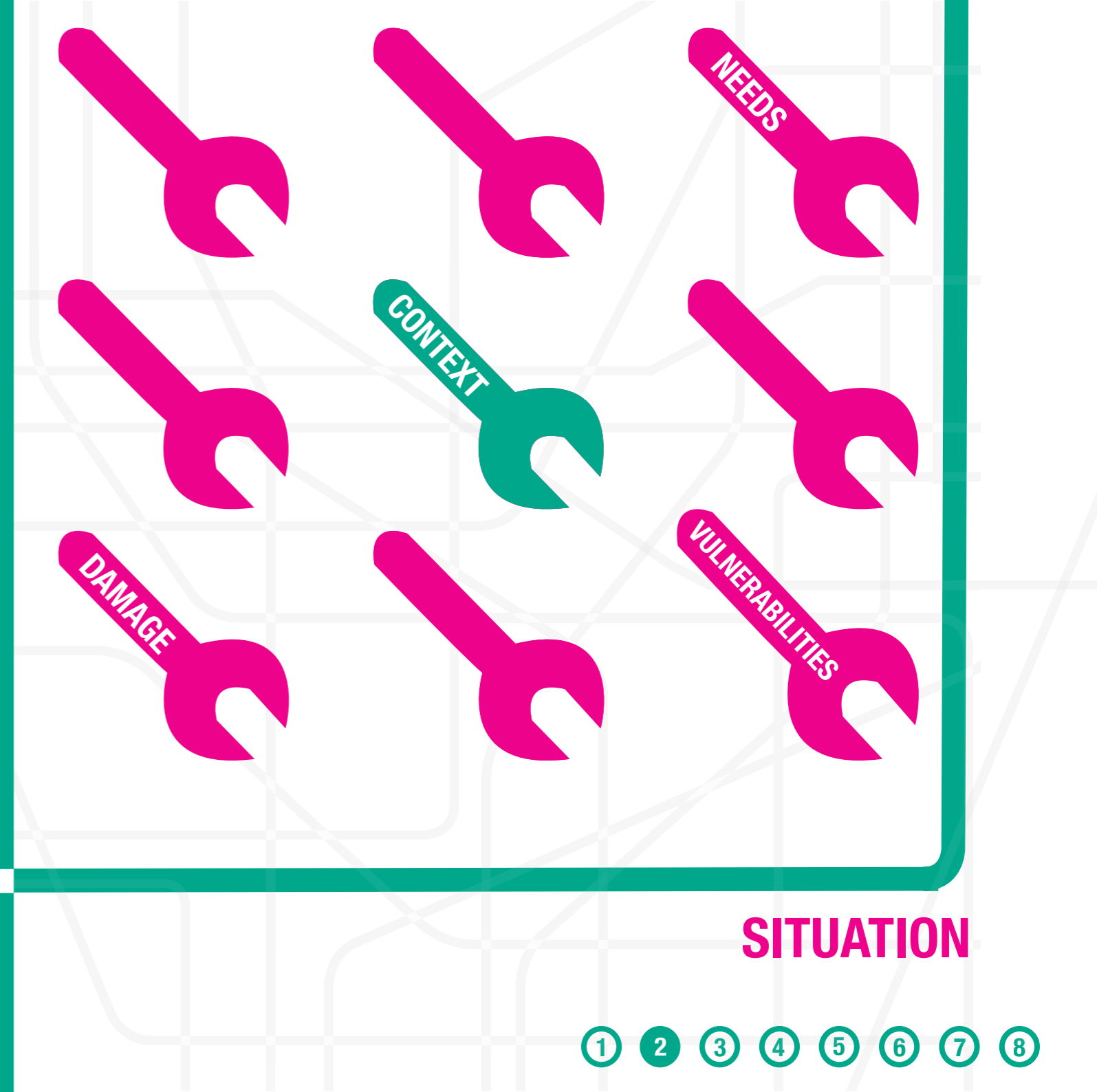
2 WHICH TOOLS HELP US UNDERSTAND CONTEXT?

You might be thinking, don't we have enough tools? Actually, most tools used by humanitarians focus on the situation (needs, vulnerabilities damage, etc) and don't tell us much about context.

Context tools add to our toolbox. While we already use various tools to help us understand the situation, we often don't know enough about the context (which includes politics and governance, economy and livelihoods, services and infrastructure, space and settlements, social and cultural dynamics and stakeholder relationships).

Context tools (such as governance analysis, stakeholder analysis and context analysis) can fill this gap in our understanding, and ultimately improve our understanding of the situation we're facing.

Section 2.2 outlines what's unique about context tools. Visit www.alnap.org/urban-response for more information.

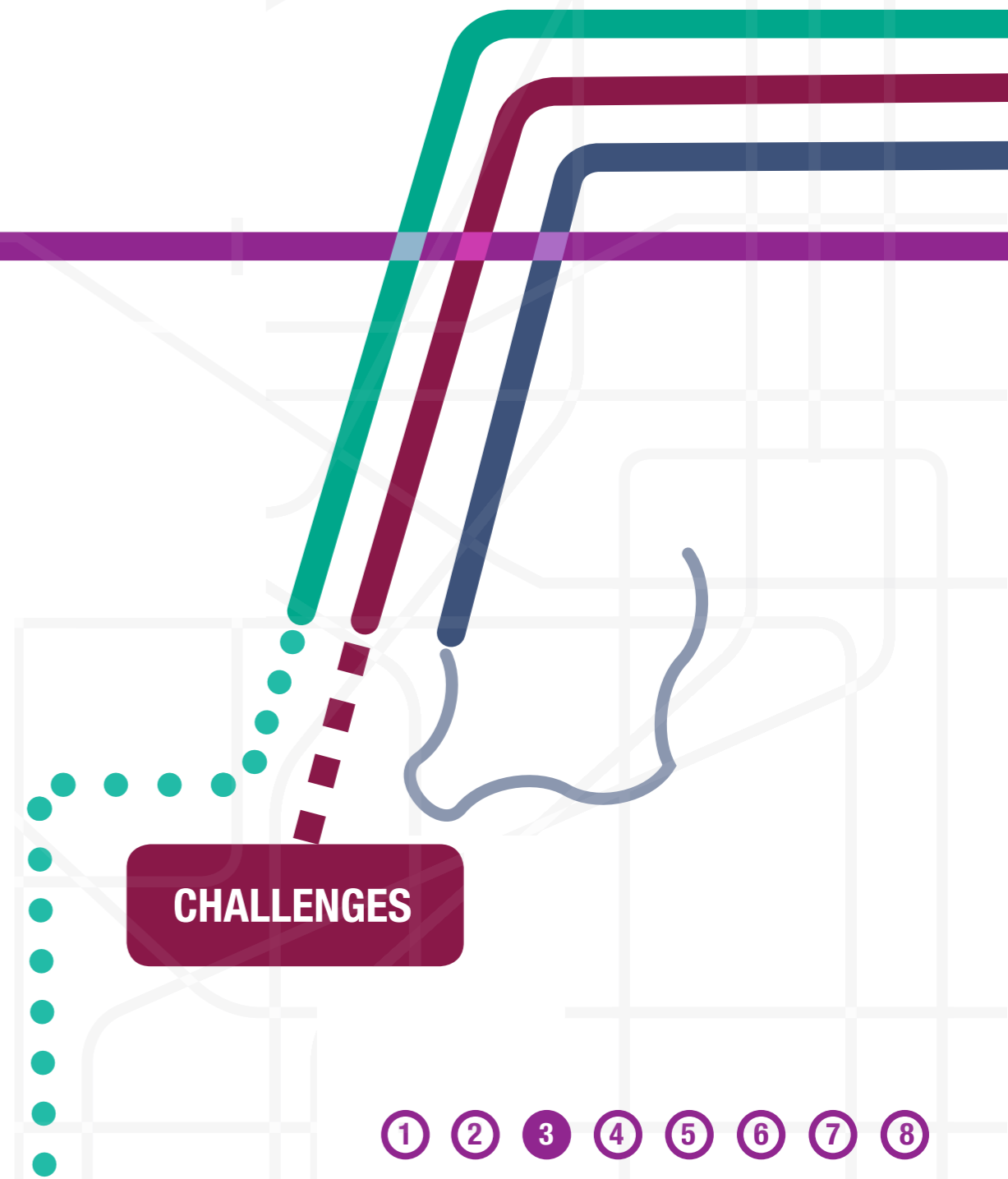


3 DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE: WHAT INFORMATION ARE YOU TRYING TO GET?

Defining an objective helps you make critical decisions and avoid problems later on. Ask yourself, what are we trying to achieve with this analysis exercise?

Challenges can arise when you're not clear on the purpose of analysis from the outset, leading to differing, and even competing expectations, of how the findings should be used. Agreeing objectives and expectations from the start, will help you navigate obstacles along the way

Section 4.1 to ensure your objectives hit the mark. Visit www.alnap.org/urban-response for more information.



4 UNDERSTANDING LIMITATIONS

When making decisions about your purpose (**step 3**) and the right tool to use (**step 5**), it is important to acknowledge potential limitations and use these to inform your choices. You may face constraints around time or resources. It may be hard to obtain commitment.

As you go along, you'll need to recognise that just using a tool won't guarantee quality analysis. There are challenges you have to overcome. Strong analysis requires skilled individuals, institutional and donor commitment, stakeholder buy-in and resources.

Read **Section 3.2.1** for information on tool limitations. For more on what strong analysis requires, read **Section 5**.



5 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOL

‘Context tools’ come in many different shapes and sizes, names and methodologies. They include governance analysis, stakeholder analysis, context analysis and profiling. Although this means you’re spoilt for choice, it can also be confusing.

Being clear about your purpose and scope (for example, will your analysis focus on one neighbourhood or the entire city?) will help. Read **Section 3.3** and the **Annex** to the report which describe over 25 different tools and tips to make the right choice.

Watch ALNAP’s video - ‘Which tools help us understand urban context?’ - for more information.



6 QUESTIONS YOU'LL NEED TO ANSWER TO GET STARTED

You'll have to answer several big questions to get going:

- When is the right time to do the analysis?
- Who will be involved?
- Will your organisation do it alone or work with other organisations?
- How will you present and share the findings?
- What do you need to do to ensure analysis gets used?

Section 4 of the report looks at each of these areas. Visit www.alnap.org/urban-response for more information.

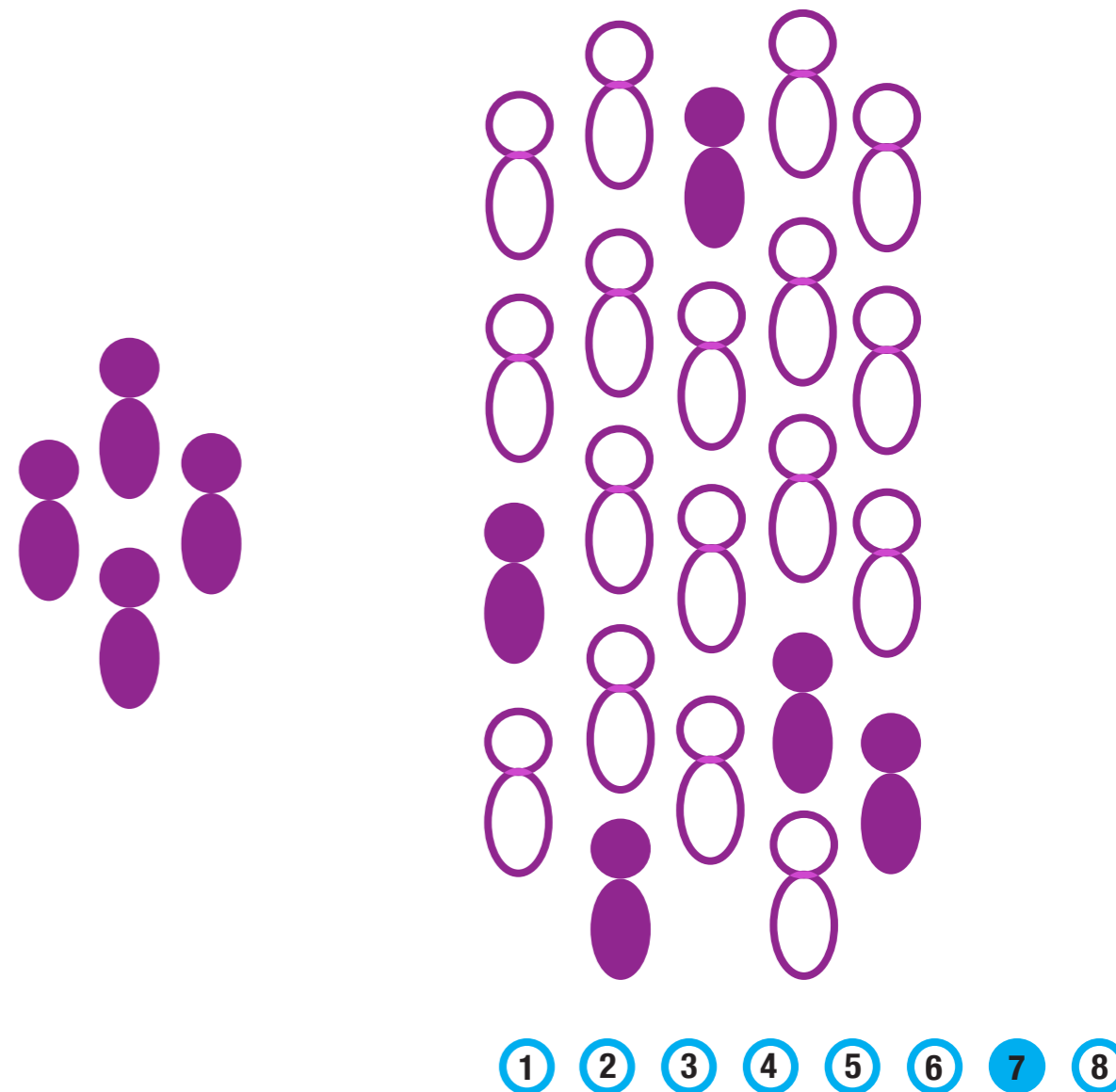


7 PREPARE FOR BATTLE! GETTING OTHERS ON YOUR SIDE

At the moment, context tools are not being used as standard in humanitarian response. It might take some convincing to get others to understand the value of using a new tool - if so, take a look at **Sections 2.3, 5.2 and 5.3.**

Some might be happy to do an analysis but worried about working with others or sharing sensitive information - **Sections 4.61 and 4.4** can help navigate these issues.

Relationships and buy-in can 'make or break' any exercise, so make sure you're confident and well-prepared to win over your colleagues.



8 WHERE DO I START?

There are lots of resources available for you. In addition to ALNAP's study, annex, videos and additional resources (see links on the right), the following documents might also be useful:

- [IIED's review of context analysis tools for urban humanitarian response](#)
- [World Vision International's report on macro-level conflict analysis](#)
- [LSE & OCHA's book on conflict analysis: linking humanitarian action and peacebuilding](#)
- [Saferworld's resource pack on conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding](#)
- [The World Bank's effective conflict analysis exercises for overcoming organisational challenges](#)





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