Urban disasters – lessons from Haiti

Study of member agencies' responses to the earthquake in Port au Prince, Haiti, January 2010

Report for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

Disasters **Emergency** Committee
Working together

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Executive summary

'It's poverty that is at the core of these disasters.'

- Sálvano Briceño, Director, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)

Haiti's earthquake of 12th January 2010 killed over 220 000 people, injured 300 000, left well over one million homeless, and destroyed infrastructure, services and homes. The cost of reconstruction is estimated at US$11.5 billion[1]. This happened in a country already the poorest in the western hemisphere, ranked 149 out of 182 countries on the 2009 Human Development Index, with some 78% of its population living on under US$2 a day, and beset by huge societal inequality and weak governance.

While recognising the effects of the disaster on the whole country, this study is required to focus on the impact within urban areas, and to ask, what can be learnt for international NGOs for the next urban disaster? Several lessons emerge. A first one concerns increased urban risk globally, described by the World Bank in a new report[2] as a 'new game-changer.' If this is right, and urban risk presents something different, then agencies need to learn 'new rules of the game' in urban post disaster response. Issues of complexity, range of actors, space, the importance of commerce and trade, services, infrastructure and sheer concentrations of people require a consideration of how to operate compared to rural contexts, including collaborations (with government and the private sector), the importance of cash based programmes (in cash for work but also in supporting petty vendors and businesses), markets (working with them and not unfairly competing) and housing (considering trade offs between short term shelter and long term settlements and thinking about forms of rental).

Building social and human capital is key, and in this response good programming approaches sought to do this in the relief stage, for example working with street food vendors to enhance food security. Some responses however tended to forget that cities contain readily available concentrations of skills and resources that, rather than being imported, might be found locally. Relief provided in camps sought to work through camp committees. Especially vulnerable people were often located and assisted, for example in the work of Age UK in the formation of a network of camp volunteers. The prolonged provision of services in camps however, such as water and healthcare, has been both expensive and has in some cases undermined pre-existing service providers who could not compete.

One reason for this has been the 'extended relief period' many people and agencies find themselves in, with at the time of writing some one million people still in camps. To attempt to reduce camp density the government, with the support of some agencies, has relocated people to new, planned settlements such as Corail, located away from the capital with few services or job opportunities. Already such camps are being labelled as a failure[3], with a real risk that new slums are being created. This approach is opposed by UN-HABITAT, the UN agency tasked with urbanism, which has proposed a policy of 'safe return' based on urban planning principles. Had this been adopted sooner then many more

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[1] Government of Haiti (2010) *Post Disaster Needs Assessment report.* Port au Prince
[2] World Bank (2010) *Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters*; The Economics of Effective Prevention. Washington
[3] See for example the news report *Camp Corail: Haiti's good idea gone wrong*, by Ezra Fieser, December 7 at globalpost.com

camps may have closed by now. More agencies and others ought to consider how they might work with and support this policy further as an essentially 'urban' approach to rebuilding the city.

Within recovery many agencies have adopted transitional (T) shelter as the best option for rehousing people in conditions better than tents. Some good examples of this approach exist, in particular where land ownership has been clarified such as rebuilding on original plots. Examples of success though are small compared to the overall need, and T shelters as a viable urban option here have been subjected to a barrage of criticism from all sides. Certainly agencies engaged in T shelters need to take stock of where they are and consider all the other options open to them, such as shelter kits provided by CARE and Tearfund.

In balancing short term needs and longer term considerations, this has been difficult, given the weakness of government and its capacity to move forward. Good initiatives have included a scaling down of relief operations as quickly as possible, for example in the work of Merlin's surgical response, but this has been hard given the need to engage in other post-earthquake emergencies, especially the cholera outbreak. Agencies that worked closely with partners at the outset have yielded benefits in stronger ties and partnerships, although this was not the case across the board, and in some instances pre-existing agency partners were ignored in the relief rush.

Agencies that sought to work with traders and through markets, and who chose to work in neighbourhoods with locally based organisations, may have provided better responses. Most agencies, such as World Vision, sought to increase accountability, delivering leaflets, putting up noticeboards and distributing complaints phone numbers. Several agencies undertook assessments using tools they used equally in urban and rural contexts, while others such as ActionAid developed urban-oriented tools. A problem identified by several agencies was a lack of link between assessment and implementation, ie that pre-identified solutions were sometimes put in place. As one agency staff member stated, 'if you have a hammer, then all problems begin to look like nails'. Many agencies also reported Sphere to be 'unworkable' in urban areas, though this appears to relate more to numeric indicators rather than the standards themselves.

Concerning building long term urban resilience – this is a real challenge. To happen, agencies need to look beyond the short term and engage in a longer-term vision for rebuilding the city, and consider how their actions are reducing vulnerability. In this regard agencies should consider existing approaches such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and engage in actions that strengthen institutions, build 'a culture of safety' and reduce underlying risk. Agencies also need to genuinely prepare for the next big urban disaster. As one experienced staff member from Oxfam said at the end of a long interview, 'forget all my other recommendations …. we need to prepare for the next one.'

Recommendations

Sequence	Actions for urban planning and response

PRE-DISASTER

- Disaster risk reduction initiatives underway
  - *Make DRR a local priority; identify risks and enhancing early warnings; build a culture of safety; reduce underlying risk factors; strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response*

- Preparedness plans in place
  - *Staff communication and co ordination plans in place; logistics in place; servers backed up; preparedness plans rehearsed regularly*

DISASTER

RELIEF

TO

RECOVERY

- Enact preparedness plans
  - *Decide what the exit strategy is, and at what point to withdraw*

- Save lives and meet basic needs
  - *Ensure safety; provide water, food, health care, shelter, protection etc for as short a time as possible; beware of creating dependency*

- Co ordinate with others in assessment and planning
  - *Conduct joint assessments; co ordinate closely; link assessments with actions*

- Engage with markets and the local private sector
  - *Employ food vendors and water providers; source goods locally; use local importers; find and support local entrepreneurs; be careful not to compete unfairly and undermine local business*

- Keep people in or close to their neighbourhoods where possible
  - *Risk assessments for 'safe return'; avoid creating new settlements; facilitate permanent housing rather than build short term shelter*

- Find, use and build neighbourhood social capital
  - *Use pre-disaster developmental networks and partners; assume skills exist locally; adopt a range of negotiation approaches when dealing with complex sets of stakeholders*

- Work with government wherever possible
  - *Proactively engage with offers of assistance, eg technical support and provision of resources; provide regular updates; avoid creating parallel structures*

- Use cash based programmes
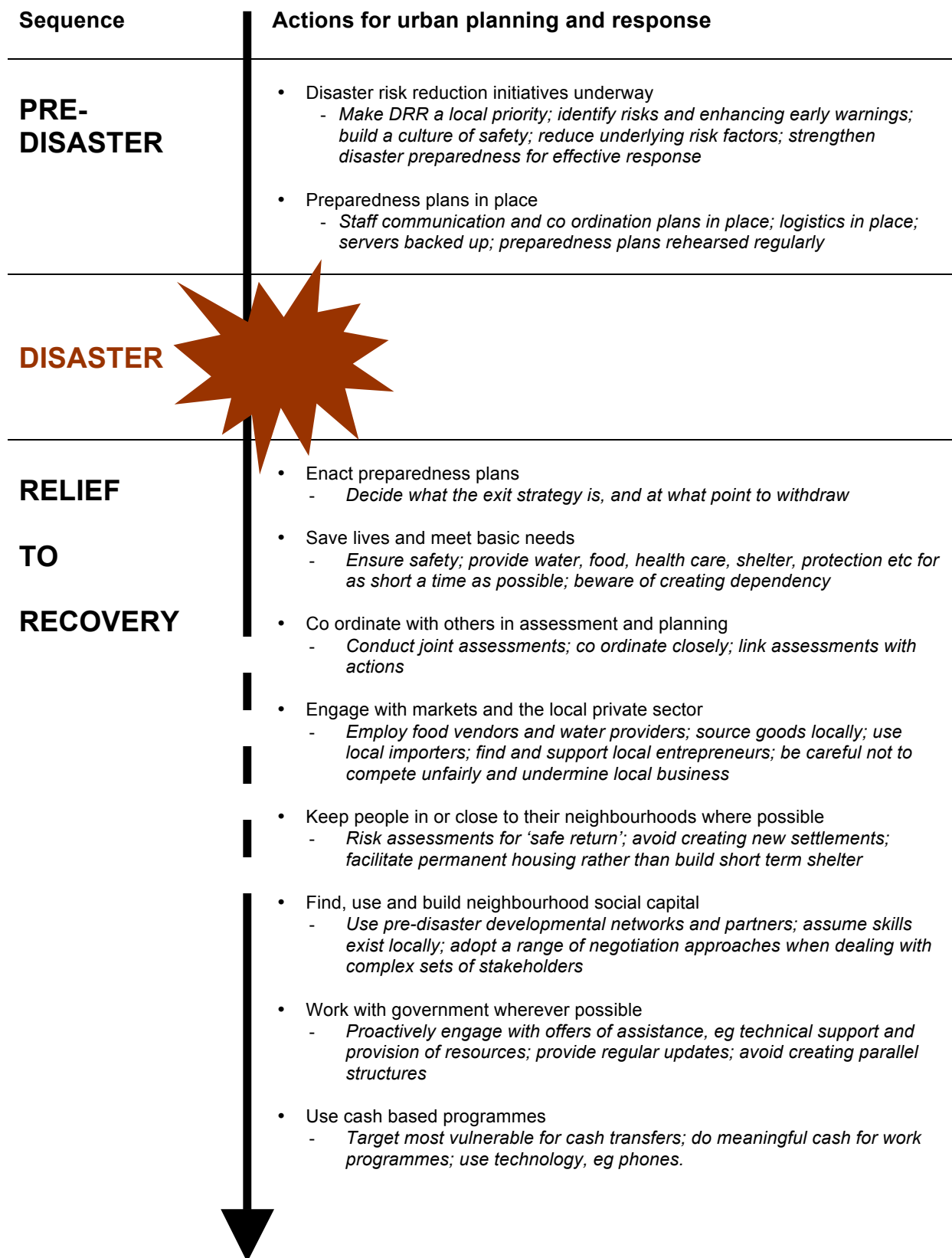 - *Target most vulnerable for cash transfers; do meaningful cash for work programmes; use technology, eg phones.*

Figure one. Actions for urban planning and response

List of Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim/Action Against Hunger
BRC	British Red Cross
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CFW	Cash For Work
CWG	Cash Working Group
CNSA	Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DINEPA	Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement
DPC	Direction de la Protection Civile
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessment
EMMA	Emergency Market Mapping Analysis
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GARR	Groupe d'appui aux Réfugiés et Rapatriés
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IHCR	Interim Haiti Recovery Commission
IHSI	Institut Haitien de Statistique et d'Informatique
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
MINUSTAH	Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation d'Haiti
MSPP	Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SOFA	Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen
T shelter	Transitional shelter
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation.

Acknowledgements

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Research approach

The terms of reference required this report to undertake a context analysis (see Appendix Three); provide a commentary on the effectiveness of Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) agencies' response to the Haiti earthquake and how this differed from rural responses; and to address five questions concerning: using and building social and human capital; balancing short term and long term needs; assumptions made; tools and instruments used; and addressing preparedness and resilience.

Throughout the study the guiding question has been, 'what can international non governmental organisations (NGOs) learn from Haiti for the next urban disaster?' To address this, the study team worked together for two weeks in Haiti in December 2010, with a plan to undertake the following activities:

- visits to affected communities, including camps and focus group discussions with earthquake affected communities
- meetings with all DEC member agencies, either through direct meetings in members' offices or, because of the security situation, through telephone interviews
- meetings with key informants, from UN agencies, government ministries, non-DEC international NGOs and from Haitian civil society.

Appendix One lists organisations and individuals met with.

Prior to the Haiti work, two students from Oxford Brookes University's Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) undertook an analysis of DEC progress reports (phase one and phase two reports). Other desk based reviews included agency real time evaluations (RTEs), evaluations, news articles and reports from other non-DEC and non-NGO sources, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and UN-HABITAT. A selection of key documents used is listed in Appendix Two.

Limitations

A major limitation that affected the work concerned the security situation caused by political unrest regarding Presidential elections. Agencies, and the team, were under 'lock down' and physical movement within Port au Prince or to other cities was prevented. Hence for the second half of the visit the team was unable to visit neighbourhoods or camps, or to hold any face to face meetings with member agencies as originally planned.

To these ends telephone interviews were conducted with remaining agency members and agencies were invited to submit additional information to strengthen the report's content.

Commentary and analysis on agencies' effectiveness in responding in an urban setting and how this may have differed from a rural response[4]

'An assumption made was that working in urban contexts would easier than working in rural ones; which in fact was the opposite.'

- Acting Country Director, member agency

If increased urban risk is a game-changer, what are the new rules for NGOs?

The World Bank's 2010 publication 'Natural hazards - unnatural disasters' suggests that increased urban risk (caused by rapid urban growth and more natural hazards due in part to climate change) is a new 'game-changer[5]'. If this is the case, then what are the new rules for international NGOs?

The Haiti earthquake has provided an extreme test of 'the new game'. This was Haiti's worst disaster in nearly 170 years, causing over 220 000 deaths, over a million homeless, and widespread destruction to infrastructure, government and other sectors. Add to this the pre-earthquake context of deep poverty, corruption, already-ineffective services, a weak civil society and political unrest. In the immediate relief effort agencies provided essential support to spontaneous camps and in neighbourhoods that doubtless saved lives.

The relatively high level of services provided to camps, compared to impoverished rural areas and elsewhere, also produced for a while a magnet effect, swelling camp numbers. Though this has largely receded, and camp numbers are beginning to fall, there are still at the time of writing some one million people living in seeming 'perpetual relief'. The government's response, backed largely by agencies, has been to relocate families to newly set up camps such as Corail. Located far from town and away from services and jobs, these places are already unpopular and unpleasant, and run a real risk of becoming future slums[6]. UN-HABITAT, the UN's specialist agency for urban matters, is critical of this approach, and since February has been advocating an alternative strategy of 'Safe return[7]' to neighbourhoods of origin, combined with risk assessments, based on recognised good practice in urban planning. The approach however has yet to be widely adopted. Support for this approach would appear to be a good move for agencies as contributors to a wider urban strategy. Other urban issues relevant to agencies include:

Presence of government and politics. If in many poorer countries rural areas are marked by an absence of government, the issue is reversed in towns and cities. In Haiti, while government is relatively weak, some state bodies such as the water authority, Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement (DINEPA), have played a key role. Agencies that have sought to work with and through government, while sometimes experiencing a slower process than direct delivery, have worked to strengthen where possible longer-term recovery.

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[4] This section aims to introduce some of the issues discussed throughout the report
[5] World Bank (2010) *Natural hazards – unnatural disasters*, P169
[6] See for example the news report *Camp Corail: Haiti's good idea gone wrong*, by Ezra Fieser, December 7 at globalpost.com
[7] UN-HABITAT (2010) *Strategic Emergency Plan; Safe Reconstruction of Housing in Port au Prince and Other Affected Cities, Development of Transitional Sites in Hosting Secondary Cities*. Nairobi

Pre-existing services, markets and resources. Towns and cities are characterised by a concentration of services, skilled people, elites and services. An assumption too often made in the response appears to have been that local skills and services would not be available[8]. The unwitting consequence of this has been at times to erode existing services. Hence water vendors and medical providers could not compete with free water and healthcare, and private sector suppliers could not compete with large scale imports of goods made freely available from aid agencies.

Developing future strategies to work with the local private sector in urban areas from as early as possible would doubtless enhance agencies' effectiveness, as witnessed by the work of several agencies such as Christian Aid that worked with food vendors and Save the Children's cash grants to petty traders. Concerning markets, Oxfam GB's EMMA (Emergency Market Mapping Analysis) tool was used to assess construction and bean markets, and while cited as helpful by other agencies, little if any take up was reported. Using this tool and other similar approaches to work more closely with markets would make sense.

Measuring complexity. Several agency staff said that there was little difference between urban and rural assessments. Yet this does not bare out the evidence of complex relationships often based on commerce and competition, different sets of actors such as the presence of gangs, cash based livelihoods, etc. Recognising this, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in November 2010 collated some 90 urban assessment tools[9]. A review by all agencies of these new tools would doubtless increase effectiveness for the next urban disaster. This need is also required given the views expressed by several agency members and key informants that assessment and subsequent action was insufficiently linked. A related issue also concerns Sphere Standards, which was found to be 'unworkable' by almost all agencies in this urban context, concerning space, water points and sanitation. The issue however appears to be more one of applying the numeric indicators rather than the Standards themselves.

Scale of ambition and reality of what can be achieved. The above point raises the question of the scale of ambition and reality of agency interventions. In a rural setting a measure of success might be much easier to identify compared to the complex realities of urban recovery. Several agencies referred to a lack of clarity on exit strategy and what success would look like. In the immediate relief phase Merlin considered that a strength of their response was to shut down its emergency surgery unit after a fixed time. In future urban responses agencies may also have to pre-decide at what point they withdraw, and to achieve that, make some hard choices about what they will engage in, and what they will not.

In future urban responses agencies may have to pre-decide at what point they withdraw and decide what they will engage in, and what they will not

Co ordination and collaboration. An agency member pointed out that in tight urban spaces, co ordination is even more important. Given the magnitude of need resulting from this earthquake, agencies have been more effective when they have collaborated. While the multitude of actors present at Clusters reduced many meetings to information sharing, co ordination between actors, and also between sectors, is vital. Collaboration also can lead to new initiatives, for example group advocacy to donors and government bodies on pressing issues (ie utilising collective NGO 'political capital'), particularly when this is carried out in collaboration with local civil society.

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[8] While the earthquake caused a large amount of damage, not everything was lost: street markets for example were operating within a couple of days
[9] The tools were collected as part of a IASC wider initiative, *Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas* (MHCUA)

Collaborations with pre-existing local NGO partners in the relief operations and in the recovery would doubtless have increased effectiveness. Better collaboration within agencies themselves between the long term developmental programmes that were underway and the influx of external humanitarian actors, many of whom were new to Haiti, would no doubt have been beneficial - while fully recognising the damage caused by the earthquake on agencies, leading to loss of life, property and services. Finally, as noted above, the development of new forms of collaborations, eg with private sector providers such as health services, as Merlin and Age UK undertook, provide good options for engaging in urban relief and recovery.

Urban opportunity. A concluding 'new rule' to consider for urban effectiveness is that of the opportunity that towns and cities provide. As 'engines of growth' urban settlements represent the creation of wealth of all countries. In Haiti's capital Port au Prince the opportunity now exists to improve the city beyond its pre-existing state of chronic vulnerability. As UN-HABITAT's Programme Co ordinator for Haiti, Jean-Christophe Adrian stated in interview, 'if only half the money (for reconstruction from the international community) arrives, then we stand a real chance … for making lasting improvements.' the issue for agencies therefore is how their subsequent actions can contribute to this positive vision.

> 'If only half the money arrives, we stand a real chance of making lasting improvements'

How successful were agencies in identifying and building on the existing human and social capital in Port au Prince?

'The crucial issue is building capacities ... that means that the process is as important as the results themselves.'

- Agency senior staff member

Strengthening human and social capital is key to Haiti's recovery and crucial to building its resilience to future shocks. Agencies that sought to recognise, use and build these capitals tended to promote quicker steps towards recovery. While acknowledging this importance however, most of those interviewed stated that finding the right balance between the appropriate speed and scale of the response and this equally important imperative has proved problematic and many agencies have faced practical difficulties in identifying a satisfactory approach.

State capacity

> Decades of poor governance explain the level of devastation caused by the earthquake

Haiti has frequently been categorised as a fragile state. The weakness of the state apparatus and decades of poor governance are the main factors that explain the level of devastation caused by the earthquake as well as the slowness of the recovery. On top of this limitation, the state itself was severely affected by the disaster, which resulted in the death of top civil servants and the destruction of administrative offices. Agencies have therefore found themselves faced with a conundrum whereby they seek leadership from a government which is struggling to cope with a situation of such magnitude. The land tenure issue, for example, has proven to be a vital area where decisive state intervention could have rendered the rehabilitation efforts much more effective. The elections held at the end of 2010 have further detracted attention from the government leading in recovery efforts and donors are withholding funding pending the outcome that will show who will have responsibility for managing the reconstruction effort.

Box one. Urban disasters

Rapid urbanisation is creating unprecedented concentrations of poverty and vulnerability. Around the world, towns and cities are growing by some one million people per week. With this comes opportunity, but also increased risk, which is often concentrated on those who are poorest. Current estimates are that there are some 950 million people living in slums and illegal squatter camps. If not seriously addressed this figure may well rise to nearly two billion by 2030[10].

Even prior to the earthquake, the conditions in Port au Prince were in such poor state that UN-HABITAT had suggested that instead of using Master Planning as an overarching risk reduction tool, the city should opt for strategic, inclusive, integrated and participatory planning[11]. After the earthquake, in February, UN-HABITAT presented to the Government of Haiti a 'Safer Return Strategy[12]' focussed on people returning where possible to neighbourhoods of origin, achieved through the mobilisation of community leaders. Return would be accompanied by risk mapping to ensure those who could not be safely returned would be allocated where possible close to their original locations. The alternative approach, in line with traditional humanitarian practices, supported spontaneous and newly planned camps (such as Corail), for example through registration and the provision of services. This approach however risks increased dependency on external support and provides a further dislocation from effective recovery.

The need to respond to more urban disasters is now inevitable. The question is, how? Two broad ways of seeing this are: either to carry out emergency response in an urban context; or, to carry out urban planning and redevelopment in an emergency context. While the former attempts to square the circle by deploying traditional rurally-derived experiences and tools in the urban setting, the latter takes a long term urban focused view. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) recently completed 'Strategy for meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas' (MHCUA)[13] identifies six strategic objectives towards making humanitarian responses in urban areas more effective in saving more lives and accelerating early recovery:

1. Develop Operational Strategies early-on that ensure multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance assistance coordination and impact
2. Strengthen Technical Surge Capacity for First Response in Urban-based Challenges
3. Develop or Adapt Humanitarian Approaches and Tools for Urban Areas
4. Promote Protection of Vulnerable Populations against Violence and Exploitation
5. Restore Urban Livelihoods and Economic Opportunities during the Emergency for Expedited Recovery
6. Mainstream Preparedness for more Effective Emergency Responses that Save More Lives and Livelihoods.

The IASC compiled evidence from case studies, including Haiti, and has identified 90 tools and approaches for urban areas, applicable to various themes and sectors.

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[10] UN-HABITAT (2007) *Slum Dwellers to double by 2030: Millennium Development Goal Could Fall Short*. Report. 21st session of the governing council. Nairobi
[11] UN-HABITAT (2009) *Strategic citywide spatial planning; a situational analysis of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, Haiti*. Nairobi
[12] UN-HABITAT (2010) *Strategic Emergency Plan; Safe Reconstruction of Housing in Port au Prince and Other Affected Cities, Development of Transitional Sites in Hosting Secondary Cities*. Nairobi
[13] IASC (2010) *Final strategy for meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas*. Geneva

In such circumstances, agencies that have attempted collaboration with government authorities have often found this to be a time-consuming and frustrating distraction. Consequently, the humanitarian community is said to have taken on many of the responsibilities that would normally be that of the government and, according to some, to have more power than the state itself – indeed, one informant referred to Haiti as 'the Kingdom of NGOs'. Yet, failing to work with and through national authorities can undermine their role and capacity to act. Some informants considered that the humanitarian response has actually weakened state capacity rather than strengthened it. One senior civil servant felt that the Cluster system in particular has taken decision-making away from the technical ministries and passed it instead to NGOs, stating 'this response has further weakened national structures. The people who have come in have a very limited knowledge of the field, which is why we see little impact from the investments that have been made.'

Nonetheless, collaboration has worked better with certain technical ministries, for example Merlin's work with the health ministry, the Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (MSPP) regarding working within government guidelines to train 'agents de santé' and community health workers. Another is the engagement of agencies including the British Red Cross (BRC), Oxfam and Age UK with DINEPA in water provision. Tearfund also reported working closely with local government representatives in Léogâne and Gressier. Some agencies also reported working with local authorities, including ActionAid who held regular meetings to improve coordination, and CARE who reported working with the Mayor of Carrefour's office to support needs assessments and coordination activities.

Recommendation one: always seek to work with and through municipalities and pre-existing service providers whenever possible to strengthen local structures

Social capital – community level

Agencies commented on low levels of social capital and a weak sense of community. Nonetheless social ties still exist and contribute to people's wellbeing

The social fabric in Port au Prince has been seriously eroded as a result of weak governance, poverty and violence. Several agencies commented on the low levels of social capital and weak sense of community. Nonetheless, social ties still exist and contribute to people's wellbeing. Groups of extended family members, neighbours and friends are often to be found in the same sections of a given camp, for instance. Solidarity between neighbours has proven important in helping cope with crises on this and previous occasions. One woman spoken to in the Parc Jean Marie Vincent Camp said that this was the only kind of support she received that enabled her to survive. The fact that there are no over-arching institutions, whether linked to elected office or traditional structures that legitimise a given leader, has made it difficult for NGOs to find appropriate ways of interacting with the local population. Camp committees, often self-appointed, have been used by many agencies as a vehicle for communications with the residents, as well as a channel for assisting with distributions and other activities. Yet they are frequently criticised for adopting un-transparent and inequitable practices.

Several agencies have encountered problems in generating community participation when organising people to do collective tasks on a voluntary basis. Instead, people often want employment and expect to be paid a salary by NGOs[14]. Some organisations have resolved this difficulty by opting to pay people a token amount for work undertaken. Others have persisted with a voluntary approach but

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[14] Significantly, this issue does not seem to be as acute in rural areas, perhaps because people have other sources of sustenance however meagre, which is not necessarily the case in urban areas

have found that positions of responsibility have been abused, such as when water committees start charging for use of the water provided for free. Pressure tactics by certain groups attempting to benefit from employment opportunities or distributions for which they have not necessarily been targeted are common and have posed repeated problems. However, in at least some instances, NGOs have been able to employ potential troublemakers and give them a constructive way of contributing to their community.

There are a number of examples of successful collaboration with community-based organisations that have helped strengthen recovery efforts. Islamic Relief (IR) undertook a capacity building programme through establishing a vocational training centre providing short training courses in computer skills, which is graduating 12 students every week. IR is conducting an assessment to see what other skills are needed to design suitable programmes in response to these needs. BRC has worked with local associations in Delmas 19 to improve their environment by contributing their labour to clean drainage channels, thereby preventing the area from flooding. Rather than use cash for work (discussed later), the people who do this task are offered lunch cooked by a local person. It is worth considering such alternative incentives which recognise that people face genuine opportunity costs when they give their time for community activities in what is an almost entirely cash-based economy[15].

'People criticise Committees but representation won't come all by itself; it comes through the work you do with them'

Several interviewees commented that it is important to build trust through engaging with people at the community level and proving a commitment to action. A close relationship with local people, genuine accountability and a willingness to listen take on even greater importance in this context. Despite their unelected nature, working with camp committees to strengthen them in their role can help address some of their limitations. As a staff member from Christian Aid's partner GARR said, 'People do criticise the Committees but representation won't come all by itself, it comes through the work you do with them. You can't just help set up a committee. You have to work with them and help them with management, show them how to organise a meeting, how to manage a small kitty, etc. You can't just accuse them of being corrupt; you have to see what accompaniment they are given in order to help them do their job better.'

Recommendation two: include the building of neighbourhood social and human capital and local civil society as a vital component in all programme approaches and at all stages of relief and recovery

Partnerships

Working with partners has shown itself to carry considerable advantages even as part of a humanitarian brief. Where Oxfam had pre-existing partnerships, it found it much easier to achieve good results (Oxfam's experience in Carrefour Feuilles is discussed later). Christian Aid worked extensively through its partners, providing funds, technical support and capacity building in the form of training, eg in financial accounting and emergency management. Tearfund provided training to partners in project cycle management and quality standards. Merlin reported a positive partnership experience with a health centre, Caravelle Centre de Santé.

In the response however some pre-existing partnerships were not used. One agency recorded that it had neglected working within its existing partner network, to the detriment of that relationship. Another agency reported that in the influx of

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[15] It may be no coincidence that cash for work programmes have not reached this area and have not created the expectation that such manual tasks will be rewarded monetarily

external humanitarian relief staff, partners had been 'forgotten.' Some agencies stated that attempting to work with partners has not always led to better ways of working given that they may lack capacity or appropriate skills. One agency staff member stated that working with developmental partners in a humanitarian response would have been unfair, given that they did not possess the (relief) skills required. Local partners themselves however were sometimes overwhelmed by the situation and have found it hard to get back on their feet. A comment was made that it is important to invest in rebuilding these partners by providing them with assets they may have lost, such as vehicles and office space.

Capacity building also takes on added importance. ActionAid has helped empower one of its partners to engage in future relief efforts by giving them training in rapid needs assessment, which also helped give them a sense of ownership over the emergency response programme. Despite the benefits of partnership however, the pressure to scale up and deliver rapid results can jeopardise relationships with partners.

> A partner said, 'Before, we were the ones who were doing the implementation; but after, we had to run to avoid being left behind'

Not all partners are able to fulfil commitments and relations with them can become difficult as a result or may even break altogether. In the words of one local partner representative, 'There was a huge change in the way our partner agency worked from before the earthquake and after. There was a rapid expansion and it became like a huge machine. It is important to manage relationships. Before, we were the ones who were doing the implementation; but after, we had to run in order to avoid being left behind. The human face got lost. But through honest exchanges and lots of meetings, because of the team's openness and their concern to empower people and be accountable, we have managed to strike a balance.'

Private sector engagement

Relationships between NGOs and the private sector are not traditionally strong. One agency member interviewed described the private sector as 'evil' – an extreme view, but one that may betray a more familiar unease among the civil society organisations suspicious of commercial motives. Others however sought to strengthen local markets. Save the Children for example restored market storage spaces through cash grants, while Oxfam conducted training in business

management among grocery store owners and tradespeople. Much of the water trucking and sanitation services have been provided through this channel as a result of the private sector's involvement from the very early days of the WASH cluster. In this regard BRC reports working with DINEPA to re-establish the water market. Merlin's partnerships with private health care providers, for example a dispensary in Vallue, Petit Goâve, have been positive. Some out-sourcing of T shelter construction has also taken place.

Agencies which used private importers, while paying a higher cost, saved money on avoiding lengthy hold ups of goods held in customs. Nonetheless, there is general agreement that more could have been done on this front. A question which cannot be fully answered without a closer examination is whether it might have been possible to make greater use of local procurement capacities. Unlike many rural emergencies, there is a wealth of experience in cities such as Port au Prince of negotiating the customs system and finding alternative routes for accessing merchandise, notably from the Dominican Republic, due to Haiti's dependence on imported goods. Many agencies tended to respond to the problems caused by the damage to Haiti's ports and airports by recruiting large numbers of ex-patriate logisticians (although this was not always the case, with Islamic Relief for example recruiting and training local logisticians). However, they too encountered many obstacles which have delayed implementation of certain activities such as T shelters.

It is not too late for agencies to introduce a 'Haiti first' policy for buying from Haitian suppliers

Arguably, these bottlenecks could more readily have been overcome by building better links with in-country private sector importers. An issue in working with the private sector also concerns to what limits does ethical interest lie? For example, if an importer may be paying bribes to ensure quicker carriage of goods through a port, is the agency complicit? Some, if not all agencies, are aware of the Haiti Market Place - a directory of Haitian businesses set up by the Peace Dividend Trust (whose slogan is, 'Buy local, build Haiti'[16]) - but it is not clear to what extent they are making use of it. This initiative, which pre-dates the earthquake, is intended to support private sector development, and small and medium enterprises in particular. It is not too late for agencies to introduce a systematic 'Haiti first' policy which commits them to buying from Haitian suppliers wherever possible. This can bring multiple benefits in terms of job creation, strengthened capacity, tax revenues and efficiency gains.

Finally, while some experiences of working with the private sector were found, there are undoubtedly more opportunities for linkages and mutual gain, eg in sourcing of materials for T shelters, rubble crushing and also innovative approaches such as Oxfam and Christian Aid's use of food vendors to create a food security feeding programme. There is scope for further engagement, as noted in the IASC six month evaluation, which concludes, 'The humanitarian response operation missed some prime opportunities to work more closely with private sector actors[17]'.

Recommendation three: NGOs should take care not to compete unfairly with the local private sector, and should work where possible with local commercial providers

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[16] See www.haiti.buildmarkets.org
[17] IASC six month evaluation, P27

Staffing /internal human resource (HR) issues

Recruitment and retention of skilled local staff has been a challenge. Most members reported a rapid growth of staff, sometimes increasing its pre-earthquake staffing numbers three-fold. HR management was therefore complex ('one of the biggest challenges', according to an Oxfam representative) and at times neglected. One agency for example was without a human resources manager for a prolonged period at a time when they were rapidly scaling up. Several NGOs struggled to hire local staff.

> Many existing staff were traumatised, had lost family members or homes, and an unfortunate few were killed or injured

Many existing staff were traumatised, had lost family members or homes, and an unfortunate few were killed or injured. Many well-educated people preferred to seek other opportunities outside the country. In the early stages of the response, CAFOD's sister agency and implementing partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) brought experienced staff from its office in Les Cayes to Port au Prince where they had only a limited presence and were awarded a pay rise in order to ensure that good staff stayed with the organisation. Some agencies were successful in identifying good personnel but this, they are aware, may be because of the relatively attractive salaries they offer, which has helped them bring people back to Haiti from the diaspora (one agency at least advertised for Haitians in Canada and the USA).

At the same time, in order to counter the distortions that can arise from NGOs offering relatively high salaries, some organisations operating in the health field have had to cut their pay scale. This has been painful but was considered necessary in order to avoid large discrepancies between NGO salaries and those paid by national health facilities. Such policies do not prevent a number of perverse situations, such as one that was highlighted where teachers are working as drivers for NGOs because they are better paid. One agency with upwards of 800 national staff found that very few had previous experience in a humanitarian response. To cope, efforts were made to build capacity even though time pressures made this difficult. The training that has been carried out has brought good results. Staff who were not aware of Sphere and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standards, protection principles and so on have become advocates in the field ensuring that such standards are met, such as with Tearfund and Christian Aid's partners.

Other agencies found that where there are skills deficits, people are eager to learn. The difficulty has been to find time for training given other competing priorities. One organisation got around this by conducting training on Saturdays. Islamic Relief sent local programme staff to training programmes conducted by other specialist agencies. Most of the NGOs participating in the workshop run in connection with this study indicate that they consider it will be important to do more over the coming year to build staff capacity. For the future, it has been suggested that it would be appropriate to establish a local network of national professionals with emergency experience in order to facilitate response efforts.

Several agencies, including Save the children, Age UK, ActionAid and Oxfam are engaged in skills training as a means of helping promote more sustainable livelihoods, thereby contributing towards building lasting human capital. This is particularly important in the construction sector in order to promote good building practices that will resist future disasters. Some informants however commented that any vocational training should be accompanied by a package to help launch the person in their trade, by facilitating access to tools and capital, initial contracts and employment, etc. The importance of this kind of intervention is illustrated by

the case of a carpenter met in Delmas 19. He has construction skills but rather than getting involved with the rebuilding efforts, he was making chairs. He was not confident that he would be able to get work in building, commenting that jobs are so scarce at the moment that even engineers cannot find employment. Ironically, this was said to a BRC staff member who had been searching unsuccessfully to identify engineers.

What assumptions did agencies make? Were these correct?

The scale of the earthquake, its location in an already impoverished and under resourced country, and the largely (though by no means exclusively) urban nature of the impact, led to a series of relatively unusual circumstances of the international humanitarian aid response. Some assumptions that were made in this difficult context are as follows.

That interventions would be achievable in the timeframes given

A number of factors have affected the relief and recovery effort, some of which were anticipated and others which were not. These include preparation for the hurricane season (June to November), including strengthening where possible shelters and the clearance of rubble from drains to mitigate floods in urban areas (although less severe than expected, Hurricane Tomas led to some deaths and damage in some rural areas), and the cholera outbreak, which since mid-October has caused the death of nearly 4 000 people. As a consequence NGOs such as Merlin continued their provision of health care, while others such as Oxfam increased their focus on WASH activities.

In addition political unrest caused by Presidential elections led to disturbances, particularly in towns and cities, with use of tear gas, riot police and gun fire. The unrest led to 'lock down' of agencies on a number of occasions and the suspension of work. In some cases NGO offices have become targets for violence. Given these events some planned activities have been slower than anticipated.

One aid worker said, 'We're in the same position as in March' referring to the continuing presence of camps

Progress on activities including rubble clearance, building of shelters and use of machinery has also been slow: as one aid worker said, nearly one year after the earthquake, 'We're in the same position as in March', referring in this instance to the continuing presence of most camps, the slow rate of relocation of people to more permanent dwellings and the continued presence of a large amount of rubble. While some NGOs have been criticised for perpetuating the emergency response ('it's good business' said one informant, critical of the long term presence of NGOs in Haiti), others resist. One NGO Country Director stated he was 'a bit unapologetic (still to be) doing relief' given the context of an absence of an effective government framework. An additional factor concerned the cholera outbreak, where a reduction of services at a time of great need would have led to greater problems.

That engaging in camp management was a necessary option

In other large scale earthquakes, such as in Pakistan after the Kashmir earthquake, camps were closed by the government after six months. While controversial at the time, recovery was promoted. However in that circumstance there was more space for people to return to - an issue raised in urban Haiti as a

key problem: 'where do people return to?' Concerning the question of engaging in camps, two views are:

1. That there was no other choice. Most camps were spontaneous, and the humanitarian imperative was to respond to need, including basic water and sanitation, assistance in temporary shelter (tarps and tents) and health care. Improvements were also made in living conditions, eg Concern's work to improve ground drainage in spontaneous camps. Undoubtedly these interventions saved lives

2. That supporting camps has created dependency and stalled the recovery. It is certainly the case that many camps are sources of services which do not exist elsewhere. Between June and August reports emerged of non-earthquake affected people, often from rural areas, moving to camps to benefit from the services available. Other reports also concern residents with 'one foot in and one foot out' of camps, ie registered for services but often being elsewhere. Maintaining services to the camps are very expensive (eg water trucking), yet conditions are often similar in slum areas that do not benefit from similar levels of investment.

Purpose built relocation camps have been widely criticised for risking the creation of new future slums

The purpose built relocation camps at Corail and Tabarre Issa have been widely criticised for risking the creation of new future slums. Previous experience of post-earthquake recovery indicates that these settlements may well become new suburbs for Port au Prince, and if not carefully managed, may well end up as places with few jobs and limited services. This approach is also in contrast to UN-HABITAT's 'Safe return' strategy, as mentioned, which proposes the return of residents to their original locations wherever feasible. However, this strategy, at least for now, appears not to have been widely supported by others.

Most spontaneous camps cannot continue to exist. The land is often needed for other purposes and the conditions are inadequate. It is therefore essential for exit strategies to be developed that enable all residents to find other more permanent and appropriate solutions. This will require creativity from all parties concerned, particularly given the overall shortage of housing stock, but must involve widespread consultation with the stakeholders. Agencies have an obligation to ensure that they accompany people who transit out of camps and to avoid pushing people back into situations where they continue to live in unsafe conditions. So far, efforts have concentrated on home-owners, which is necessary, but renters are frequently even less well off and will require a different strategy. Livelihood interventions are particularly crucial in this context.

Recommendation four: support the 'safe return' of people to neighbourhoods of origin, considering especially the most vulnerable, as a strategy based on urban planning principles

That the importing of external resources and skills was the best option

Several agencies spoke of great delays in importing vehicles and goods through customs. Some NGOs waited over five months for vehicles to be released from customs. This had a substantial knock on cost where car rentals were in the order of US$150 per day. Other NGOs as late as November have heavy equipment for rubble removal still languishing in ports. A wider related assumption may have been that there was little already in Haiti that was usable, in goods and also in skills. While this may well have been a good assumption in the immediate post-disaster period (due to loss of staff, skills, capacities and resources), opportunities to make use of existing capacities and skills were missed. Merlin for example documented cases of local doctors and nurses being ignored by incoming international medical teams, even in their own medical centres. Existing links with partners through developmental programmes were sometimes ignored or not utilised. Subsequently some national and international staff left agencies, sometimes as a consequence of such a large, externally driven relief effort.

Linked into this is the importing of approaches and assumptions behind key activities to be undertaken, including sectoral responses, and the meeting of immediate needs. On this differing views emerged, from 'emergency is emergency, wherever you are' (regardless of historical or political context), to a criticism that in several agency responses there has been a disconnect between assessment and implementation, ie that agencies came with pre-conceived notions. One informant said, concerning importing shelter solutions, 'this is not Aceh,' and another concerning pace of interventions, 'this is not Darfur.' However others reported that they were well aware of the complexities to come, and as one stated, 'we knew in advance that this was not business as usual.'

Recommendation five: In urban response and recovery assume that professional skills and resources might be found locally

That clarity over land ownership is a prerequisite to recovery

In attempting to answer the question, 'where should people live?' land availability and ownership has become a major issue, and in some cases, a large hindrance to recovery. This has proven to be a hugely complicated area, and issues have included: proving ownership where documentation has been lost or where there are competing titles; rebuilding T shelters on land owned by others, including negotiating with land owners on land rental; eviction notices served on camps by landowners; presence of camps on land intended for other uses; and the issue of no-land owners, renters and squatting communities with varying degrees of ownership.

Often shelter and homes have been equated with availability of land. However other views exist. One staff member from CARE stated, 'the issue concerns space, not ownership', ie taking advantage of the varying forms of living that occur in urban areas, such as rental, sub rental and lease holding. Another, complementary view concerns an urban planning approach where city densification is an advantage for sustainability factors, including an efficient use of space, reduced distances for movement and greater efficiency in services. A shift in focus therefore

more to space than land might yield some fresh approaches for tackling such a seemingly intractable problem.

That the provision of T shelter is an effective post-relief shelter option

For members that addressed post relief shelter, ie beyond the provision of tents and tarps, T shelter has been a common response. Concerning T shelter, two views are:

1. T shelters substantially improve the immediate living conditions, where it is unacceptable to leave people in tents and where immediate permanent housing programmes are a major undertaking

2. T shelters remove the political incentive to provide permanent reconstruction, they are costly, wasteful, and exacerbate long term vulnerability - the statement 'there is no such thing as temporary shelter' is often invoked. They are essentially rural in conception. They also suit NGO budgets and timeframes more than people's long term needs.

For this response, there are examples of success, wherein families have received and are living in T shelters, which is an improvement on tents. But many of those that have been built have been completed much later than originally planned, and only a relatively small number have to date been built. Many agencies reported significant problems with T shelters. One large NGO appears to have withdrawn its shelter programme altogether after several attempts at different approaches. Urban-oriented T shelter development, such as multi-storey T shelters, described by one informant as 'the holy grail of T shelters' have so far not worked.

Many informants, both DEC member staff and others, have been very critical, labelling T shelters varyingly as 'a total waste of money,' 'counter-developmental' and 'suiting NGO timeframes and marketing needs' rather than people's needs. Concerning shelter overall, other approaches appear to be gaining better results. In addition to T shelters, Tearfund, BRC and CARE also provided shelter kits. Habitat for Humanity (a non-DEC NGO) is engaged in permanent shelter reconstruction. UN-HABITAT, who in November became Shelter Cluster lead, advocates for 'the facilitation of shelter rather than its provision', ie working to support people to rebuild.

Recommendation six: in recovery, prioritise the facilitation of long term homes over the building of short term transitional shelters

How have agencies balanced the need for longer-term solutions against short-term needs? How far have agencies adapted their programmes to changing needs?

'We have to ask, what will left behind afterward the humanitarian intervention? What water systems will be left behind, for instance? This would suggest that it is important for us to work with the state .... Sustainability needs to be thought about from the beginning. We started talking about that after five or six months but it could have been in the plans from the start'.

- CRAD, Oxfam partner

After the earthquake there was an inherent tension between short-term, life-saving situations and the longer-term interventions that can contribute towards addressing the underlying structural issues that shape the humanitarian situation. Quick but less sustainable solutions (water trucking, direct delivery of free health services) met the humanitarian imperative but have tended to be favoured over those which require more complex strategies, eg working with existing services. Yet these approaches can be costly and beg the question of what will happen when funding ends if the needs they are designed to address persist. This requires agencies to be able to identify exit strategies or ways of transitioning to development interventions that seek where possible to improve pre-earthquake conditions (a reasonable assumption is that this is the business of agencies who were present in Haiti before the earthquake).

In Port au Prince today this means looking to ways of providing access to basic services for the years to come, as well as reducing widespread vulnerability in all its multiple dimensions. While what follows are not, in fact, mutually exclusive options, they do contrast shorter term approaches that have been adopted but which need to be phased out as quickly as possible in favour of longer term ones. Several agencies are preparing for this. One, which admits that it has 'got stuck in

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[18] Da Silva, J (2010) *Lessons from Aceh; key considerations in post-disaster reconstruction*. Practical Action Publishing, page 12

service provision', said that it is planning to withdraw step by step from camps and work towards strengthening systems. Another says that it is programming in a more developmental way and is starting to work with local people and structures.

Camp management versus a return to improved neighbourhoods

Strategies for transitioning away from camps and camp management are perhaps the main area where agencies are seeking ways of moving out of their current mode of operating. The spontaneous camps that arose immediately after the earthquake should almost certainly not continue longer than is strictly necessary, and their continued presence is an object of embarrassment to the recovery effort. Consequently, although it may be possible to improve certain aspects of camp life, it is doubtful that such investments can be justified in order to avoid keeping people there longer than is absolutely necessary.

On the other hand, forced evictions are unsavoury to most and there are undoubtedly a large number of people - primarily those who were formerly tenants who have not land or whose houses are completely destroyed - who have no other option but to stay in the camps until viable alternatives are offered. Finding solutions for this group of particularly vulnerable people should be a key priority, otherwise there is a risk, as several informants have pointed out, that camps may turn into long term squatter camps.

In line with the Shelter Cluster strategy, certain incentives have been offered to people to help return to their former homes and repair 'yellow' houses (those that have been classified as possible to repair). Partly because certain agencies have started to support this option, such as BRC, numbers in camps have started to fall - from 1.5 million people in July, numbers are now said to be closer to 1,050,000[19]. On the basis of at least one field visit made to the Cite Kat area of Delmas 19, where much of the population were living in the now closed Automecca Camp, return packages are being used at least in part for the purpose they were intended. However, unless this new start is accompanied by advice and technical assistance, building will simply go on in the same fashion as before the earthquake - as can already be witnessed - with all the attendant risks. Training for local tradesmen is being planned by some agencies, but needs to be scaled up to reach most practicing construction workers.

In the face of these complexities, Oxfam's support for the master development plan for Carrefour Feuilles is a good example of longer-term thinking. Oxfam is working with six pre-existing partners on a joint plan for the development of their neighbourhood. The plan includes education and waste management, as well as efforts to address flash flooding. Participatory planning has been used with support from the NGO Architectes d'Urgence. A pilot programme is being launched where local leaders will be trained in community consultation techniques they can replicate elsewhere.

A staff member from one of the partner organisations, PEJEFE, stated, 'We wanted to do something. We were born in Carrefour Feuilles, we know Carrefour Feuilles, we have to live with the consequences of the work that is done. The resource centre will act as a focus for thinking about reconstruction and interaction with other partners'.

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[19] '*Significant Drop in Numbers of Internally Displaced in Camps in Haiti*', IOM press release, undated, consulted at http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/ASAZ-8BZEG8?OpenDocument on 10/12/10

High quality health care in temporary settings versus support for improved services in existing structures

A similar dilemma exists over the provision of free health care in a country where cost-recovery, operating through a predominantly private system, had been the norm prior to the earthquake. In attempting to build on existing structures, Merlin's training of community support workers has emulated the approach used by MSPP, although this is reported to have all but stopped before the earthquake. The level of health coverage has undoubtedly improved with the combined response of international health NGOs since the earthquake.

This is fortunate in the light of the subsequent cholera outbreak that has stretched in-country providers to the limit, and caused some agencies to delay their withdrawal of services in camps. However, resources have tended to go into parallel, temporary structures - including mobile clinics in the camps - rather than into strengthening the health facilities that were in place before the disaster and which will need to provide the backbone of the system in the future. Indeed, on some occasions, the free health care policy has led to staff being made redundant because no extra resources were provided to compensate for the reduced income. In order to overcome these problems, a credible strategy for handing over to the state is required but, in the face of weak ministerial capacity, seems illusory.

Water trucking versus Improvements to water systems

Some community projects were abandoned after the disaster because free water was made available

Water is a critical resource for people and in this respect the humanitarian response in Haiti has worked well. The widely used strategy of making water available free of charge through water bladders is likely to have reduced instances of disease very significantly, and has obviously been particularly vital during the current cholera epidemic. Yet for many people in Port au Prince who do not live in camps, water tends to be very expensive indeed. It is not unusual to pay more than 15¢ for a bucket of water. In some areas, self-sustaining community-run water kiosks that distribute water at relatively low cost and generate profits that are reinvested in community projects which were operating prior to the earthquake were abandoned after the disaster because free water was made available nearby.

In a positive move, DINEPA has established a strategy whereby resources are to be moved away from the camps towards investments in the surrounding neighbourhoods. In urban settings, where access to public goods such as water necessarily involves a significant cost, it is essential to work towards re-establishing functioning systems in order to reduce vulnerability, and hence the overall incidence of illness as well as the impact of future disasters.

Since the water supply system for the wider city is currently grossly inadequate, improving this system is the only way to ensure that most people have sufficient access to water and can maintain the health gains beyond the duration of the immediate post-emergency phase. While this is a daunting task, support for basic infrastructure it is also a condition of urban recovery. Oxfam has taken steps in this direction by helping to rehabilitate a number of water points. World Vision has also contributed towards improved sanitation through building settlement ponds for liquid waste as a step towards a longer-term solution.

What tools and instruments did agencies employ? Did these differ from those used in rural responses? To what degree were they appropriate and successful?

'People have to have ownership of community plans, so consultation is important'.

- NGO worker, BRC

Agencies used a variety of tools and instruments. In some cases urban-oriented tools were used while in other instances approaches from a rural background were applied and/or adapted. Some were successful while others were found to be harder to adapt, eg Sphere indicators.

Assessment

Several members undertook participatory needs assessments. ActionAid undertook a rapid needs assessments using its PRRP (Participatory Review and Reflection Process) tool 'wherein community members identify issues and develop an outcome plan.' Focus areas were gender, age, vulnerability, shelter, livelihoods, protection and psychosocial needs. Between February and April Age UK's assessment team carried out nearly 1 800 interviews with older people living in camps. Age UK also held focus group discussions with older people to identify needs and as a result replaced food baskets with cash grants.

CARE undertook rapid assessments in camps followed by more detailed household assessments. Beneficiary identification was carried out with community leaders. CRS worked through a partner NGO AMURT (Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team) to undertake assessments, beneficiary selection and monitoring. Christian Aid worked with a local organisation APROSIFA with a network of women and street food sellers to feed people during the days following the earthquake. They found that this was an effective way to launch assistance while providing an income to street vendors.

A rapid 'one hit' multi-sectoral assessment tool was called for

A point made by several interviewees concerning assessments was the set in of fatigue among communities that may have experienced several visits by sometimes the same agency focusing on different sectoral interests. A rapid, 'one hit' multi-sectoral assessment tool was called for by one agency member. A further problem of multiple assessments, from the point of view of communities (let alone the staff costs involved), was the raising of expectations, leading in some cases to anger if assistance did then not materialise. Several difficulties emerged during the response with regards to the targeting of beneficiaries. Some lists of beneficiaries were provided which, on cross-checking, were found to be inaccurate and some had registered people who had died in the earthquake.

Several interviewees noted the pressure to respond quickly without adequate assessment. In group discussions one agency member stated 'We just jumped.' Another stated there was 'no diagnosis, just go go go!' Another stated, 'we had no time to analyse.' Another stated, 'there was no time to consult with communities', citing a reason that proposals had to be developed quickly, and in this respect called for greater donor flexibility. One agency member stated 'we were not asking the right questions at the beginning', citing an inadequate understanding of local issues and needs. In this regard another interviewee called for the development of a tool for measuring/understanding pre-existing social structures. Another

interviewee warned against arriving in an unfamiliar context with pre-exiting social solutions, evoking 'the fallacy of the hammer', ie that if you only have a hammer, then all problems begin to look like nails.

Recommendation seven: assume complex and fast-changing environments: improve the link between analysis and action, and have a clearly identified exit strategy

Box three. Women, children and increased vulnerability

After a disaster women and girls can become even more vulnerable to harassment or enforced sexual behaviour. As one former agency Country Director stated, 'The risks that women and girls are abused or forced into prostitution in exchange for money, food or shelter are very high.' During a visit to camp Park Jean Marie Vincent, a girl spoke of regular attacks - 'almost every day' - by men while attempting to use facilities. Access to goods and services for women can lead to women and girls exchanging sex for food or other goods they need. In one camp a woman said, 'I have five kids and I have to feed them, so I practice sex for the card or for food.' According to a CARE report from April, more then 35 000 women and girls in camps were pregnant.[20] An older woman spoke about insecurity. She and others said that they have been robbed because there are no doors: 'People come at night. Just the other day robbers took H$45 ($5)'. The woman's friend said that she cannot sleep at night because she is worried that this might happen again.

According to the organisation Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen (SOFA), many international NGOs did not pay adequate attention to women and girls' dignity in camps, especially in the first distributions and in ensuring safe places for women to take showers and to use other facilities. Issues included unrecorded cases of harassment. In recognising the threat of the spread of HIV however several agencies handed out condoms. Since the earthquake, SOFA has worked in the camps by deploying brigades of students to promote awareness on violence against women and girls. An 'emergency cell' was established in Martissant giving support on trauma. Other centres were also opened, providing social assistance, psychosocial support and financial support. In the first few months after the earthquake about a thousand women and girls were reached. Of these 500 women and girls received financial support for school fees, house rental or repair, and to revive small businesses.

Use of cash

The Cash Working Group could be a key working structure that could be replicated in future urban disasters

Most members have engaged in some form of cash delivery, including cash transfers, cash for work (CFW) and small cash grants, with at the time of writing several agencies considering larger cash grants to small and medium sized businesses. At the end of January/early February a Cash Working Group (CWG) was set up with support from the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), hosted by Oxfam GB. As stated by an informant from Christian Aid, the CWG 'could be a key working structure that could be replicated in future urban disasters.' There are many agency examples of cash related initiatives. Concerning grants, at least two members are considering developing grants to support small and medium-sized businesses, for example construction firms of 15-20 people. Age UK successfully piloted cash transfers of US$20 per month for six months to some 4 000 older people using banks, and plans to advocate to the Government of Haiti for the establishment of a universal pension scheme.

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[20] Care communiqué 2 Avril 2010- Care s'efforce de prévenir la violence sexiste dans les camps

Several agencies are also piloting micro-credit, working through existing institutions. After supporting street vendors to provide a cooked meal to the poorest members of their community, Christian Aid's partner APROSIFA made a credit fund available to its beneficiaries in order that they could become more self-reliant. Concern assisted small traders to resume their former activities. Age UK is also planning a micro-credit programme, using existing micro-credit organisations, for some 2 500 older people to rebuild and resume businesses.

Christian Aid's partner RNDDH distributed US$130 per month (US$26 per family member for an average family of five) for three months to some 2 200 families living in camps in Petit Goâve. The value was calculated as the equivalent market cost of a Sphere Standard dry food ration. An existing money transfer system was used for remittance collection and provided a fast set up at a low cost (3% transaction fee). Christian Aid found that 47% of the cash was used to purchase food and cooking fuel, 16% on water, 10% on education and 9% on small enterprise. Also, 68% of recipients used some of the funds to either start or re-start a small business.

While good examples therefore of cash transfers exist, experience within CFW programmes has been more mixed. The case for support as a short-term measure is clear, hence their widespread use. CFW intends to help vulnerable people in emergency situations gain access to badly-needed cash they can use to meet their most urgent needs. It has been widely used in this response - particularly for solid waste and rubble removal - and the fact that there is competition for places on work teams indicates that it provides a welcome opportunity for certain groups in vulnerable neighbourhoods. Several agencies have reported good experiences of CFW, such as ActionAid who provided CFW to 2 000 families to undertake rehabilitation and soil conservation, while Save the Children organised CFW around Jacmel. IR reported over 20 000 tonnes of rubble clearance through CFW, while Age UK registered some 3 000 older people to work on INGO CFW programmes.

Several informants however were critical of CFW, for creating dependency, promoting fraud (eg the use of 'zombie crews' where the pay for fictitious crew members goes to the boss) and for funding meaningless work, where the benefits of handing out money is prioritised over the value of the task to be undertaken. One informant highlighted that a distinction needs to be made between cash for work - where the main objective is to help people gain access to cash in a dignified fashion - and work for cash, where the focus is on the results achieved. The latter is linked to measurable targets and labourers are rewarded on the basis of measurable productivity targets. Those who work well will have the incentive of earning more than is the case on standard cash for work programmes. Both Oxfam and CRS have indicated that they are moving towards the work for cash model in preference to the widely used alternative.

For Cash For Work to work well, care needs to be given to doing meaningful work that is carefully monitored

Given the large-scale need for reconstruction, CFW is a good option if the objective is to get cash into people's hands over the short-term so that they can buy essential goods. To work well however, care needs to be given to doing meaningful work that is carefully monitored, and for which payment is provided for results and not for being on the programme alone. This incentive-based approach is likely to involve payments that are higher than those currently been paid out because they are associated with productivity and avoid the perverse effects that otherwise arise. The challenge therefore is to find ways of addressing such considerations from an early stage in humanitarian programming - something which is difficult when pre-existing structures were weak and levels of access to basic services were so low.

Clearly however, programmes which use cash and also develop skills are vital programming approaches in urban recovery in particular.

Recommendation eight: use cash transfer approaches to aid recovery and stimulate markets, but beware not to create dependency

Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA) tool

Oxfam GB in association with ACDI/VOCA and the Livelihoods Working Group used EMMA, a tool 'designed to encourage and assist frontline humanitarian staff in sudden-onset emergencies to better understand and make use of market-systems[21]'. In Haiti mapping was undertaken of the bean market and the construction labour market. The latter focused on Port au Prince and found that 'a tremendous opportunity exists to create jobs in the construction sector, and if resources are well targeted, these opportunities could help meet not only immediate needs but also longer-term development[22]'. While providing useful findings however, take up of EMMA's findings by other agencies was reported to have been limited – as one informant asked, 'who's using it?' This may well be a missed opportunity given the priority that should be given to markets in urban areas.

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Box four. City community challenge funds

Between 2000 - 2003 the UK Government's Department for International Development (DfID) piloted a city community challenge fund, know as the C3, in cities in Uganda and Zambia. Implemented by CARE and the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB), the fund sought to make small grants accessible to low income urban groups to improve livelihoods. The mechanism required small groups to be formed and for bank accounts to be opened. CARE and LGIB provided technical assistance in the form of drop in advisory sessions as well as administering the mechanism. In Zambia CARE channelled its funds via local government in order to strengthen municipal governance.

Lessons from the C3 project as well as other urban-oriented granting mechanisms were documented in the 2008 publication 'Funding local governance. Small grants for democracy and local development' by Jo Beall and Nick Hall.

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Community negotiation

An interesting observation was made by Concern regarding its experience of community engagement. Concern adopted a strong negotiation stance with a camp committee to achieve improved camp-wide drainage. Being prepared to walk away and not to accede to outlandish demands, the agency eventually succeeded in their objective. They found however that once they had made an agreement, and had demonstrated some success (the works were carried out section by section), the work was successfully completed with the committee's support. The agency cited the building of trust, commitment to completion and persistence as key to the work being achieved.

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[21] Lili Mohiddin and Mike Albu, 2010, sourced from http://fex.ennonline.net/35/emergency.aspx on 16 Dec 2010
[22] www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/news-Haiti-Emergency-Market-Mapping-Analysis-EMMA accessed on 16 December 2010

Such an approach complements one of the lessons in ALNAP's 2009 report 'Learning from urban disasters: learning from previous response and recovery operations' which found that 'engagement and participation of local actors are essential for a relevant and effective response' (O'Donnell et al, 2009, 14). A lesson here may be that using a 'tough stance' in negotiation, especially for dealing with complex sets of actors that can be found in urban areas, may well be a useful addition for NGOs to the urban repertoire.

Recommendation nine: use urban-derived programming tools and approaches for working with complex sets of stakeholders

Accountability

Many agencies went to some lengths to build accountability, with several using HAP principles. Tearfund joined an accountability working group hosted by HAP and distributed information to households concerning its projects and contact details for any feedback, for which it has hired a community liaison officer. CRS staff visited locations where it is working once a month to elicit feedback, including holding focus group discussions and meetings with committee members in camps. CRS is also piloting a response mechanism using mobile phone messaging. Concern visits camps on a weekly basis and holds monthly zonal meetings to elicit feedback from residents and camp management committee members concerning activities underway. Concern also initiated a complaint and response mechanism (CRM), and also sought to communicate issues as they arose through committee facilitators, eg concerning distributions.

Age UK implemented a complaints and suggestions mechanism 'to give all beneficiaries an opportunity to voice their concerns'. Residents were invited to call a complaints line at a day and time noted on complaints cards, which were distributed within camps. The mechanism has been used to report cases of abuse and harassment, as well as to receive suggestions on issues including cash transfers, tents and food. World Vision organised a Humanitarian Accountability Team of 20 field staff, organised Community Dialogue Committees and trained Camp Liaison Officers in protection and accountability.

World Vision also 'collected and acted on' complaints, undertook community consultations and installed notice boards and suggestion boxes in camps. One agency reported that 'information sharing at community level has been difficult due to language and high levels of illiteracy.' Another agency established a hotline for information on interventions being undertaken, developed in response to claims of fake distribution vouchers being used.

SPHERE

Sphere
Indicators
were helpful
to prompt an
examination
of what
would be
appropriate
in an urban
area

Sphere was criticised by several agencies for being not relevant for a dense urban setting, with some stating 'the tools are rural', and that Sphere was 'not usable' in an urban setting. A salient point made however is that while the standards apply, it is the indicators that need revision. One informant stated that indicators were helpful, to 'prompt an examination' of what would be appropriate. CRS reported that government standards in WASH of 10 litres per person per day and 50 persons per latrine are more realistic objectives than those cited in Sphere. According to one agency, 'There has been confusion in the WASH cluster on the applicability of Sphere standards.'

One agency reported that since most camps were spontaneous, there was no control over space standards to enforce Sphere. Another agency reported that 'allowing for 45 metres squared per person in camp settings in urban areas was not possible'. Such lack of space in urban areas also meant that the Sphere indicator of 3.5 square Metres of covered living space per person was 'difficult to apply.' Others however sought to promote Sphere. World Vision reported that they had trained 120 local World Vision staff working in the field in SPHERE standards, distributing books in French and English. Christian Aid, in consultation with other NGOs based its food ration calculation on Sphere Standards for a family of five for one month. Oxfam stated that it had 'maintained Sphere Standards as far as emergency shelter response is concerned,' although it had been more difficult with respect to the numbers of users for latrines.

Engagement in clusters

Some members reported that cluster meetings were useful for exchanging information, but given the large size of many, co ordination was a problem. To these ends smaller clusters were developed, eg in health, attended by Merlin, where a small number of NGOs accounted for the majority of the actions. Other members were more critical. Issues included: the time and effort taken to attend to meetings, where traffic might mean a three hour round journey each time; a lack of co ordination between clusters, which some stated 'did not work;' the high turnover of staff, requiring people to 'repeat the same questions again and again;' and language, which was almost always English at first, though replaced in many clusters by French later on, excluding many local organisations. It was noted however that ECHO provided French translation. Regional/communal clusters were thought by some agencies to be more useful as they are at a more manageable level than the central meetings, which tended to mix national (and therefore strategic) issues with operational ones related to Port au Prince

To what extent have agencies considered and built into their programme design disaster preparedness and community resilience?

'We owe it to the devastated population of Haiti – and to all communities affected by disasters – to act on the lessons we have learned ... the biggest lesson of all remains the need to reduce the risks of disasters before they happen.'

- Sir John Holmes, former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator[23]

Recommendation ten: prepare for the next 3-5 big urban disasters that will almost definitely occur over the next ten years

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is widely acknowledged as a vital part of post-disaster disaster. Though sometimes seen as an independent component that follows rehabilitation, it indeed is an integral part of relief and recovery, and ought to be mainstreamed into a disaster response right from the start. In the urban

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[23] Humanitarian Exchange (2010) *Learning the Lessons of Haiti* No. 48, October

disaster recovery context DRR becomes all the more critical for two reasons: firstly to avoid a second wave disaster, such as an epidemic, resulting from poor living conditions; and secondly to avoid reconstruction with the same mistakes as before - and often worse than before - due to paucity of resources and time. The Haiti earthquake response provides insights into the opportunities and challenges of integrating DRR in urban disaster response. These are discussed below, organised according to the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action[24] (HFA).

Making DRR a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

Long-term solutions are best led by an effective and accountable government. Good exit strategies of agencies are also usually dependent on strong local governance systems that will take up the recovery roles that the agencies played during the emergency response phase. In the absence of such governance systems in Haiti, the principle activities of many agencies seem to be stuck in an extended relief mode. In some camps latrines are being constructed by some agencies with raised plinth levels since the water table is high, but in places the government has stopped this because they do not want to allow a sense of permanence. Also, sludge removal from latrines costs money, and will be very difficult to continue after external funding comes to an end. In Delmas BRC is addressing a shortage of space by building community latrines over a canal, with excreta channelled into pits. There is no space in this congested settlement for provision of individual toilets – streets are often less than three feet wide - hence the community toilets are housed over uncontested space.

The agency has also been cleaning drains in these areas for free. When it was communicated that the agency cannot continue doing it endlessly, people wanted it continued because they have got used to the cleanliness. The agency provided tools including shovels, picks and buckets to the people for cleaning. The approach therefore is of building local capacity and handing over maintenance to the local groups. However, there are challenges sharing the same value systems across the communities in such short time durations, and one can see children playing in the drain water even in times of cholera.

There is no modern building code in place, and urban Haiti faces the real risk of being rebuilt in as dangerous a state as before the earthquake

The issue of DRR concerning the structural safety of buildings is vitally important given the seismic risk in Haiti. However, there is no modern building code in place for the country[25] and urban Haiti faces the real risk of being rebuilt in as dangerous a state as before the earthquake. While a primary concern in the construction sector is the lack of earthquake safe construction awareness among the community and skills among construction workers, there is no policy environment to even start working on these concerns. In the absence of clear government guidelines, building codes, byelaws and zoning regulations there is no common agreed denominator for initiating widespread safe construction campaigns.

Several interviewees noted that the reconstruction activities by families who could rebuild started immediately after the disaster, with residents of damaged houses initiating repair work on their own so as to occupy the houses as soon as possible. If any agency is successful in navigating the complexities of land ownership, then for many households this may well arrive too late. Such families were interviewed in Delmas. One had rebuilt their house while others were in the process of doing so. The reconstruction work was being done exactly the same way as it stood

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[24] UNISDR (2005) *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. www.unisdr.org.
[25] http://www.oas.org/dsd/Nat-Dis-Proj/HBSD.htm accessed on 17 December 2010

before the earthquake. The owners said that this is the only way they knew how to build.

Recognising this concern, BRC began conducting a training programme for masons, carpenters and other construction workers. The focus is on seismic resistant house design. Besides training, toolkits will be given to the construction workers. An international agency has been hired to carry out the training and capacity building work. While the approach is creditable, the limitations and challenges are many. Though the agency has identified 37 masons to be trained, the consulting firm is able to take up only six to start with. The training will be of one day duration, which is inadequate to address the need.

Needless to say, the absence of a supportive enforcement mechanism is another aspect to be looked into as the building codes are developed and put in place. One of the greatest institutional concerns at present in Port au Prince is the lack of clarity on land titles. Without reliable government records, or evidence of ownership with the occupants, it is virtually impossible to establish the genuineness of claims. Many families are at a loss for this reason. Most agencies in this respect stated that 'it was up to government' to sort land issues out, while in the meantime providing temporary measures where feasible, such as paying rent to landowners for three year periods or negotiating with land owners for extended land usage.

The BRC is implementing a neighbourhood development plan where residents are able to prove their ownership. Residents who lost their houses in the earthquake come to the agency on their own to ask for shelter reconstruction support, saying that they themselves will contribute by cleaning the rubble and preparing the land. This, however, is not a typical situation, and in many other locations shelter reconstruction work is stuck for want of land clearances. An overall implication of the lack of clarity on land titles, lack of space to build infrastructure and legal hurdles in providing any services with a semblance of permanence, is that all of these interventions are taking place in a piecemeal manner. In this regard there could be more adherence to the Government's 'Action plan for national recovery' or to UN-HABITAT's 'Strategic emergency plan for safe reconstruction'.

It may well be the case that solving land titles and building code establishment are beyond the scope of most NGOs (although Oxfam GB has undertaken some research in this area). However, these could be areas for collaborative advocacy and engaging with donors, local groups and government. One member suggested it would be beneficial if DEC members came together to advocate on agreed priority issues such as land - a suggestion made was to jointly initiate a database of land ownership. As a whole though it strongly emerges that DRR has to have a long term vision, supported by government and civil society.

In this regard, there are reasons for hope. The Direction de la Protection Civile (DPC)[26], the government body responsible for DRR, has emerged strengthened from the current response, particularly at the departmental level. In the view of its Director, Alta Jean Baptiste, they worked well with international organisations in preparation for Hurricane Tomas, and the system is now better prepared as a result of simulation exercises, strengthening of local committees and developing tools. One DEC agency that had previously had a strong relationship with the DPC, which lapsed in the period after the earthquake, shared its intention to resume this partnership.

A second reason for hope is from UN-HABITAT's office in Port au Prince, who recognise that the massive influx of aid to such an impoverished nation provides the opportunity, if handled correctly, to make substantial improvements on pre-earthquake urban conditions[27]. As Jean-Christophe Adrian, UN-HABITAT's Haiti Programmes Co ordinator and Shelter Cluster lead stated in interview, 'if only half the money (for reconstruction from the international community) arrives, then we stand a real chance … for making lasting improvements.'

Identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and enhancing early warnings

Haiti is exposed to frequent hazards: in 2010 alone the earthquake was followed by a cholera outbreak, a hurricane and civil unrest. While not all these hazards were predictable, some were, but the lack of assessing and monitoring systems leads to a grossly crippled early warning and risk avoidance capacity in Haiti. In spite of being in a highly seismically active zone for instance, the country did not have a widely used seismic zoning map. Port au Prince is largely built along steep hill slopes without any assessment of the soil structures and no building codes to account for it. Haiti's hurricane vulnerability is well known, and the country has seen many hurricanes in recent years, with four alone in 2008. After the earthquake several agencies had identified the possibility of a hurricane as a very significant risk to the tented relief camps, and had advocated for better preparedness measures. Yet in the eventuality very few preparedness measures, for example identifying key safe places of refuge, were enacted.

While larger disaster risk assessment and monitoring is again dependent on institutional systems, some agencies took up some actions under disaster preparedness activities that supported this function. BRC reported its work with the Haitian Red Cross Society (HRCS) in DRR, including coordinating with the Permanent Secretariat for the Management of Risk and Disaster and the Civil Protection at national, departmental, municipal and local levels. World Vision

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[26] See the DPC's website on http://protectioncivilehaiti.net/
[27] in 2009 UN-HABITAT produced a detailed study of Port au prince, detailing actions for a more sustainable future. Major hindrances however to progress concerned lack of political will and resources

carried out hazard mapping in its work area, and used the information to sensitise the local community. ActionAid used its Emergency Alert, Review and Response Mechanism (EAR-ARM) tool for reviewing and building local partners' capacities. Training programmes were conducted for partners and community members on aspects of disaster preparedness and awareness campaigns were carried out.

Other agencies also used risk mapping, through for example participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments, to get a broad understanding of the risks in the work areas, and to equip local groups with this knowledge as a preparedness measure. Concerning preparedness, several agencies enacted measures in the threat of the November cholera epidemic. This can be, however, also attributed to the fact that there was significant capacity with agencies for medical response that had been deployed after the earthquake, such as with Merlin, and was about to be reduced when the epidemic struck.

Using knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety

Several agencies seek to contribute to an improved 'culture of safety'. CRS's WASH facilities for example are being built to withstand heavy rains and hurricanes. In the reconstruction component, the impact of future disasters is mitigated by the construction of safe, strong houses and on-the-job training in earthquake and hurricane resistant building techniques. Oxfam reported implementing efforts to reduce the risk of post disaster disease outbreaks through the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion in Port au Prince, Carrefour, Croix de Bouquets, Corailles and Delmas.

Besides knowledge transfer, innovations are also required in housing finance to enable access to housing reconstruction to as large a number as the one million or so people currently living in camps. Another area of intervention that should be considered is the structural retrofitting (repairing to be seismically resistant) of repairable buildings. According to the shelter manager of one agency, this can be very useful for the yellow (repairable) houses. According to the same official, some of the red (to be demolished) houses also need review, as they are not all unrecoverable. Calling them `orange houses', the manager stated that about 30% of these can be repaired and retrofitted. Yet, there are little, if any, retrofitting initiatives currently being taken up - although agencies including Oxfam have been engaged in assessing damaged housing.

A good practice taken up CRS lies in the payment, training and participation of camp communities in T shelter construction. Labour is taken from the camps and the process starts with training. The project engineers supervise the work. If the quality of work does not pass the standard, they have to redo the work and they lose their time and income. In this way, capacity on safe construction is built locally, and can spin off into larger locally appropriate construction capabilities extending to permanent housing, public buildings and infrastructure.

Concerning disaster management awareness, Christian Aid and World Vision have implemented emergency simulation exercises and drills, which are an established way of creating local awareness. Save the Children reported that its child-focused DRR activities included training educators, children and parents on DRR, supporting target schools to develop or improve child-friendly emergency response plans and establishing and supporting youth-led emergency response teams in target schools. Christian Aid has also engaged in local DRR capacity building wherein two partners (GARR and Haiti Survie) attended training in participatory vulnerability and capacity assessment.

Real
behavioural
change
towards
mitigation
Need
sustained
efforts

More skills transfer for local first response though would benefit from sustained and intensive engagement. Similarly, real behavioural change towards mitigation measures can be attained only through systematic and sustained efforts such as hygiene promotion or health and nutrition education, and not one-off demonstrations and trainings, ie the promotion of actions that develop a 'culture of safety.' Working on education and locally appropriate innovations is a must for reducing future risks, and should be an integral part of disaster response right from its early stages, and across all sectors.

Reducing underlying risk factors

One agency found in one of its surveys that people's needs in order of priority were livelihoods, education and shelter. This was different from their survey results in rural Haiti where education was the highest priority. The urban poor often have few physical assets such as permanent safe houses or financial assets such as bank savings and insurances. Poverty thus emerges as one of the most prominent underlying risk factors in this context, and any long-term measures to reduce risk will need to be based on sustainable livelihood development. This understanding is partly reflected in agencies' budgets, where roughly one third of the amount in the second phase is allocated to livelihoods related activities.

A second underlying risk is urban social fabric. BRC reported that when asked for community needs in a participatory assessment meeting, the answers included scholarships for children, individual toilets in houses and shelter reconstruction support. It was highlighted that the affected populations in Port au Prince were often characterised as individualistic with little community perspective. This may well be a reflection of weak social assets such as deep bonding with neighbours, marginal income, lost identities and competition for space and resources in an urban setting. Social disruption is an important underlying risk, and is ever more significant in the context of Haiti where political processes further fan the fire of social divides[28].

Opportunities
for improving
urban
planning to
reduce
underlying
risk, even at
small scales,
exist

Opportunities for improving urban planning to reduce underlying risk, even at small scales, exist. During a training exercise organised by one agency for local construction workers, a member of staff said, 'If only we could get a big bulldozer and clear the area to get proper access and services in, and could reorganise the land, this would be a great opportunity to redevelop the area. But in the given situation we will have to build back in the same disorganised setting and we will try and maybe we will be able to build back a little better.' Interestingly one community member echoed this when in conversation he pointed to the narrow lane and clogged drain in front of his shack, and said it would be better if land could be reorganised to have better roads and drains. To these ends BRC plans to develop a local area plan document through community action planning, and even if it cannot be implemented right now, they would like to leave it behind with the local community, CBO and authorities for future use. Being participatory, the plan will be locally owned. Shelter components will be linked to sanitation and business plans for livelihoods.

One agency has a budget for T shelters which it is using instead to build permanent foundations, with families erecting temporary superstructures that can be replaced relatively easily to make permanent houses on the same foundations in an incremental way over time. Concern has designed transitional shelters made

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[28] Rencoret et al (2010) *Haiti Earthquake Response: Context Analysis*. ALNAP, July

from fire resistant materials and anchors which help to prevent damage during storms. Additionally, the house is built on a raised concrete floor to reduce the risk of flood. Other interventions by agencies that address underlying risks are tree plantation for prevention of erosion and floods, and CFW for mitigation activities such as using rubble to stabilise hillsides.

Strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response

Disaster preparedness is often the most clearly understood of all disaster risk reduction priorities. Concerning hurricane preparedness, CARE supported some 1000 families in putting in place hurricane strapping to their shelters. The houses being built by them also sought to make such disaster preparedness elements visible for possible future replication. Some agencies have pre-positioned stocks, and some informants highlighted the importance of identifying staff that can be recruited in advance, anticipating needs in an emergency.

The issue of human resource preparedness came up in different ways, including the identification of agents able to operate independently if the area were to be cut off and able to carry out assessments, and appropriate training for local staff and volunteers. Christian Aid has established local committees within communities, linked with government and equipped them to carry out warning dissemination, identifying for instance emergency shelter. While there were some instances of work with schools for disaster preparedness, there can be significantly more that can be done with local community nerve centres such as schools, health clinics, churches and local interest groups. Similarly, preparedness activities around public and lifeline buildings are a clear area of work that require further effort.

Finally, it was observed that many agencies present in Haiti before the earthquake had suffered significant damage to their own offices, infrastructure, data servers, communications and personnel. While operations were re-established as quickly as was possible in the given circumstances, the internal disaster preparedness of organisations is an area of concern as it affects the personnel and assets of the agencies and continuity. It is important for agencies to assess their own establishments to ensure that they are structurally safe, their servers backed up, and that they are safe from riots and other risks in the area.

> Agencies whose headquarters are usually in cities need to be prepared

Agencies, whose headquarters are usually in cities, need to be prepared, and to have in place a business continuity plan before a disaster strikes. Disaster preparedness assumes that systems need to be in place for a quick and efficient response to minimise the impact. This is the last element in the DRR framework, with the earlier priorities outlined trying to avoid the impact itself. Disaster preparedness thus needs to be mainstreamed in the local urban management systems so that it remains in a standby mode at all times, ready to be triggered at short notice.

Appendix one: organisations and individuals met with

The following organisations and individuals were met with. Contact in most cases was through face to face meetings, while some interviews were carried out by telephone due to the security situation

Organisation	Individuals
Action Aid, Haiti	Selome Araya, Emergency response manager Daniel Gedeon, Emergency Response Program Manager
Age UK / HelpAge Haiti	Roger Markowski, Country Director
British Red Cross, Haiti	Richard Casagrande, Programme manager David Monnier Hans Visser, Shelter Manager
Catholic Relief Service / CAFOD, Haiti	Laura Dills, Director of Programmes
CARE Haiti	Neil Brighton Kate Crawford, Shelter field adviser Jim Kennedy, Shelter advisor Julien Mullez, Shelter manager
Christian Aid, Haiti	Amy Blyth, Programme funding officer Prospery Raymond, Country manager
Concern Worldwide, Haiti	Elke Leidel, Country director
Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire	Pierre Gary Mathieu, Coordonnateur
DINEPA	Pierre-Yves Rochat, Coodonnateur urgence
Direction de la Protection Civile	Alta Jean Baptiste, Directrice
Fonkoze Foundation	Carine Roenen, Director
GARR	Patrick Camille, Responsable de Programme
Islamic Relief, Haiti	Shihab M. Ali, Acting Head of Mission Jimmy Tulhaise, Disaster response personnel
IOM, Haiti	Matt Huber, Community Stablisation and Early Recovery Programme Manager
Merlin, Haiti	Céline Beaudic, Country Director

OCHA, Haiti	Toumane Dianke, Contingency Planning Coordinator
Oxfam, Haiti	Emilio Huertas Arias, Programme Manager for Port au Prince Esther Guillaume, Programme Manager for Carrefour Feuilles Jeremy Loveless, Acting Country Director Cedric Perus, Humanitarian Programme Manager Don K Sowers, Business Support Manager Philippa Young, Livelihoods co ordinator
Save the Children	Lisa Laumann, Programme Director Gary Shaye, Country Director
SODADE	Sabine Malebranche, urban planner
SOFA Tearfund	Carole Jacob, Coordonnatrice Kate Beck, field manager Bekele, Deputy Programme Director David Markloy, finance manager
UN-HABITAT	Jean-Christophe Adrian, Programme Co ordinator
World Vision International, Haiti	Annika Mueller, HEA Programme Officer Team Leader Nicole Peter, Operations Director

Appendix two: key documents

There are a large number of reports concerning the Haiti earthquake. Some key documents used in this study are:

Da Silva, J (2010) *Lessons from Aceh; key considerations in post-disaster reconstruction*. Practical Action Publishing. Rugby

Government of Haiti (2010) *Post Disaster Needs Assessment*. Port au Prince

Grunewald, F and Binder, A (2010) *Inter-agency real time evaluation in Haiti: 3 months after the earthquake.* Groupe URD, France

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *Final strategy for meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas.* Geneva

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *Response to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti.* Geneva

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2010) *World Development Report 2010 focus on urban risk.* Geneva

O'Donnell I et al (2009) *Learning from urban disasters: learning from previous response and recovery operations.* ALNAP. London

Rencoret, N *et al* (2010) *Haiti earthquake response; context analysis*. ALNAP. London

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2005), *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).* New York

UN-HABITAT (2010) *Strategic Emergency Plan; Safe Reconstruction of Housing in Port au Prince and Other Affected Cities, Development of Transitional Sites in Hosting Secondary Cities*. Nairobi

World Bank (2010) *Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters*; The Economics of Effective Prevention. Washington

Appendix three: context analysis

Political context

Haiti's history has been one of political unrest, beginning with the wrestling of independence from France in 1804 and subsequent occupation by the United States from 1915-1934. Successive military coups from 1946 to 1954 finally gave way to the 30-year Duvalier dictatorship. During that time, many people lost relatives to repression and much of the intellectual elite migrated to Africa and North America. Since Jean Claude Duvalier was forced out of power in 1986, the country has gone through yet more instability in its search to establish a functioning democracy.

The arrival in power of a former priest, Aristide, hinted at possible social change for the poorest but he was forced out of office in 1991 by a military coup, during which there was widespread persecution, including mass rape of women. Aristide returned in 1994 with the assistance of the international community and was re-elected again in 2000. However, despite having abolished the army in a bid to remove the source of instability, he was forced out of office once again by a protest movement in 2004. It was in the period immediately following his departure that the UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH, was established to back up the interim government that followed. Their mandate, despite provoking controversy, is still in force. A few years of stable and legitimate government followed the election of Rene Preval to office in 2006, bringing relative social calm and economic stability, although three Prime Ministers in as many years was a reminder of the fragile nature of the political system.

Security conditions, although still a matter for concern, have improved, but food security and service provision became worse due to the succession of disasters that have hit the country, from the 2008 hurricanes to the January 2010 earthquake and most recently the cholera epidemic. To make matters worse, the presidential elections in November 2010 have been heavily contested as a result of mismanagement and allegations of widespread fraud. This situation has led the country into a renewed crisis, postponing action to deal with the country's many woes and jeopardising much of the funding promised by the international community for Haiti's reconstruction.

This prolonged instability has prevented Haiti from consolidating its national political institutions and has perpetuated a situation of poor governance that is also experienced at a local level. Although the country's constitution allows for a high degree of decentralisation, it has never been properly implemented for want of the requisite structures. Prolonged interruptions in the parliamentary cycle have prevented the passage of much needed legislation and proper discussions around the state budget have failed to take place, encouraging a lack of transparency that permits corruption and nepotism to flourish.

Economics

Over the last few decades, political instability has been accompanied by economic decline, even though there were signs of a slight economic revival just before the earthquake. Haiti has traditionally been a predominantly agricultural country, but productivity is low and accounts for only 25% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a result, about 60% of the country's food needs have to be imported, leaving it very vulnerable to international price shocks. High food prices in 2008 were behind riots that resulted in the dismissal of the then-Prime Minister.

Haiti's economy has shrunk over the past 25 years, with per capita GDP falling by 50% since the mid-1980s[29]. This situation leaves the country highly dependent on remittances and fluctuating levels of international aid. Thus, in the face of the poor returns from agriculture, people have resorted to migration abroad and to urban areas. Remittances from abroad have become a hugely important pillar of the economy: Haiti is the world's most remittance-dependent country when measured as a % of GDP and 44% of urban households receive them. In urban areas, however, jobs are scarce. The unemployment rate is estimated to be 49%, and still higher for youth[30]. This situation drives large numbers of people, particularly women, to seek precarious employment in the informal sector.

To address these issues, Haiti's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) identifies four key areas for growth: agriculture and rural development; tourism; trade and industry; and infrastructure. It also identifies four strategic areas: promotion of rapid economic growth and sustained pro-poor policies; increased investment in human capital and improving access to basic social services; protection of vulnerable groups, environmental protection and risk management; and institutional strengthening and modernization of the state, and promotion of good governance. This fragile situation has been made worse by the earthquake. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), the document prepared by the government after the earthquake, will cost US$ 11.5 billion to implement (52% for social sectors; 15% for infrastructure, including housing; 11% for the environment and managing risks and disasters) but only a small part of this has been disbursed to date. Donor funds are to be managed by the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which must approve all projects before implementation, but they have been slow to be released.

Environment

A mountainous country, once covered almost entirely by trees, Haiti has been stripped of most of its vegetation as a result of exploitation of its forests for commercial purposes, land clearance for cultivation and the production of charcoal for cooking fuel. This deforestation, combined with high population densities in flood-plain areas, has left the country highly vulnerable to the risks of natural disasters to which it is exposed. Haiti is situated in a region susceptible to hurricanes and, as a result, suffers serious damage every few years. In August-September 2008, a series of hurricanes in rapid succession caused serious devastation of infrastructure and the loss of livelihoods for tens of thousands of families.

Consequently, although it was known that Haiti is subject to earthquakes, most risk reduction efforts had been concentrated on the regular threat of flooding, with little attention given to less frequent risks. As a result of a high rate of urban growth (5.8% per annum in recent years), slightly more than half of Haiti's population of 10 million now live in urban areas, and of these, approximately 2.3 million live in metropolitan Port au Prince[31]. The unplanned nature of urbanisation has led to heightened vulnerability, with much of the population concentrated in poorly constructed settlements on steep hillsides, ravines and by the edge of the sea. Drains blocked by rubbish that accumulates in the absence of adequate waste management, and hard surfaces which prevent water infiltration, increase

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[29] World Bank (2006), *Haiti: Social Resilience and State Fragility, a country social analysis.* Washington
[30] Ibid
[31] Population estimate for 2009 in metropolitan area, IHSI, Population Totale, Population de 18 ans et plus, ménages et densités estimés en 2009

the serious risk of flooding. These same slum areas are densely inhabited[32] and have limited road access, making it difficult for emergency services to reach them in the case of fire or episodes of violence.

Port au Prince has witnessed very rapid population growth in recent decades. Estimates suggest that the city has quadrupled in size over the past two decades, and currently has a population close to three million. With close to one third of the country's population concentrated in this one city, urban domination by the capital impacts not only Port au Prince (through chronic overcrowding) but the other cities and countryside, as there is overdependence on the capital for goods and services, further straining its overwhelmed systems. Much of the city's growth has been through spontaneous and unplanned settlements. As a result, neighbourhood facilities fall short of physical and social infrastructure standards, further forcing people to move around the city in search of livelihoods, education, markets and services, thus straining its informal transportation network.

All of these gaps are reflections of the absence of a comprehensive urban development plan, or master plan for the city. Needless to say, sub-city growth has taken place without effective Zonal Plans and Local Area Plans. As a result, settlements have sprawled along unstable hillsides: there are almost no green areas, garbage piles up in the absence of a solid waste management system, and the city is vulnerable to floods and disease in the absence of a sewerage system. The lack of sub-division regulations sees the plot sizes reducing to unviable sizes and dimensions, with many living in spaces that do not meet emergency shelter requirements even without a disaster. The absence of building regulations, byelaws and building codes has led to mushrooming of unsafe structures, many of which failed in the earthquake.

Social context

Haiti is characterised not just be high levels of poverty but also of inequality. Over half of its population (56%) lives on less than one dollar a day and another 20% on under US$2. With a Gini coefficient of 59.5, it is ranked as the fifth most unequal country in the world[33]. Although poverty indicators are generally worse in rural areas, there are still large pockets of severe deprivation in over-crowded urban slums. While it is easier for the population in Port au Prince to reach key services, access in urban areas is limited not so much by distance as by cost. Both health and education services are provided largely by private institutions run on a for-profit or cost-recovery basis. This fragmentation has led to large gaps in coverage, with qualified professionals overwhelmingly concentrated in Port au Prince, inconsistent quality, and a weak policy environment.

Given the private nature of the system, parents are forced to make considerable sacrifices to send their children to school. Among the poorest, this may often be at the expense of meeting their food requirements[34]. The high cost means that parents are frequently unable to keep up with school fees with the result that schools find it difficult to pay qualified teachers and drop-out rates are high. These difficulties are compounded by the weak regulatory capacities of the state, which is unable to ensure basic standards. 18% of primary school aged children in urban areas were not able to go to school at all in 2003[35]. As a result of the earthquake,

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[32] IHSI, op. cit. shows that population densities reach to over 55,000 inhabitants per km2 in Port-au-Prince, despite the fact that most construction is single storey
[33] UNDP Human Development Index 2010
[34] FEWS NET, *Port-au-Prince Urban Baseline: an Assessment of Food & Livelihood Security in Port-au-Prince*, April-May 09.
[35] IHSI, Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement: Etat, tendances et perspectives, décembre 2009

87% of schools in Port au Prince were damaged or destroyed, according to a rapid assessment carried out by the Education Cluster, compounding the already serious difficulties faced by the education sector[36]. While access to clean water and sanitation prior to the earthquake was better in urban areas than in rural areas, they are still largely inadequate. According to UNICEF, 70% of Haiti's urban population used improved drinking water sources in 2006, while only 29% had access to improved sanitation facilities[37]. This situation, combined with the poor access to health services, explains how rapidly cholera has spread throughout the country, including its capital city.

Women outnumber men at a rate of 10 to eight in urban areas and the majority of households in Port au Prince are female-headed (53%[38]). It is women who have to support much of the burden of families' economic needs while still being responsible for most reproductive tasks. This is why, although girls attend primary school in equal numbers to boys, they drop out of education earlier and are unable to participate actively in professional and public life. Instead, women are overwhelmingly engaged in the informal sector of the economy where returns are low and they are vulnerable to external shocks.

Prevalence of HIV in Haiti stands at 2.2%, a figure which represents an improvement on earlier levels due to a combination of factors, including early control of the blood transfusion service and greater awareness about HIV prevention. In metropolitan Port au Prince, the rate for women is slightly higher than the national average at 2.5%, while the figure for men stands at 1.3%, a difference which reflects women's greater vulnerability. Women also face high levels of maternal mortality, at 630 per 100 000 live births nationally[39], as a result of women's poor nutritional status and the lack of qualified medical personnel.

Rates of under-five mortality have improved slightly over recent years but still stand at close to one in 12. Rates of acute malnutrition are below WHO's emergency thresholds[40], a fact which is attributed to the effectiveness of the humanitarian interventions in preventing the situation from deteriorating[41]. Nonetheless, conditions are such that this could change rapidly if the situation evolves unfavourably. 12.5% of children in Port au Prince were chronically malnourished in 2005-06[42], reflecting low incomes and poor diets of the poorest sectors of the population. The National Food Security Co ordination (CNSA) body estimates that in June 2010, 39% of households (1.1 million people) living in areas directly affected by the earthquake were food insecure - less than in the period immediately after the earthquake but still way above pre-January levels[43]. However, there are strong indications that food prices are likely to rise from March 2011 onwards, causing increased hardship for poor families.

Family structures have been eroded as a result of urban migration changing cultural norms, while urban-rural, economic and religious divides result in a relatively fragmented social structure. The abuse of power is often exercised in an abusive way at all levels of society. With the high rates of youth unemployment, poverty and inequality, competition evolves over the limited availability of

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[36] draft Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, op. cit.
[37] UNICEF, see http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/haiti_statistics.html
[38] Haïti : Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services (EMMUS—IV), 2006-06
[39] EMMUS-IV, op. cit
[40] The nutrition survey carried out from April-June 2010 shows that malnutrition rates in affected areas are similar to those prior to the earthquake (5.36% global acute malnutrition; 0.55% severe).
[41] MSPP-Unicef-Nutrition Cluster, 'Rapport Préliminaire de l'enquête nutritionnelle et de mortalité rétrospective dans les zones affectés par le séisme en Haïti du 12 janvier 2010
[42] EMMUS IV, op. Cit.
[43] CNSA, Summary of Findings, Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA II), 22/9/10

resources and, when combined with the availability of weapons and political manipulation, has resulted in episodes of urban violence exercised by predatory gangs. Political and security initiatives have contributed towards bringing this largely under control but certain areas continue to experience violent incidents.

Technological challenges and opportunities

Over the last 10 years mobile phones have revolutionised communications in Haiti. Whereas once telephones were available only to a privileged few, they are now widely accessible and the networks cover even remote rural areas. Internet, on the other hand, remains relatively expensive and access is restricted because of the cost of hardware and the lack of electricity. This presents significant opportunities even though, for the first days of the disaster, the mobile network was largely unable to function. This experience had led to the realisation that optic fibre connections are vitally important and a new joint venture company, NATCOM, is set to introduce access to broadband internet. Now many young people have been given jobs in new services such as call centres, social networks and geolocation information sites or web 2.0. This holds out the potential for young people to find employment and to develop creative new initiatives.

During the response itself, mobile and social networks played a major role in the rescue effort, provision of information, family reunification and location of survivors. Digicel was able to trace population movements using the patterns of callers from different locations, while others used text messages to promote awareness about public health and safety issues. With the cholera epidemic, special numbers have been set up to call an ambulance to take sick people to treatment centres so that transport difficulties do not prevent people from getting the care they need. To help cope with the difficulties of making cash transfers and cash for work pay-rolls in insecure environments, mobile phone providers are currently experimenting with payments using their networks. The ability to identify locations using geo-information systems was widely used in helping to map and therefore co ordinate responses in the densely populated urban and rural areas where several sites may have different names. All that was best in terms of computerized geolocation was quickly put in place. Large multinationals such as Google and Cisco quickly intervened to restore service infrastructure.