FOOD SECURITY IN URBAN SETTINGS

FSC
FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

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CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

- Cities are dense, diverse and dynamic
- Overcrowding problem – slum phenomena
- Identification of different scenarios with diverse living conditions and degrees of vulnerability – informal settings/urban context
- Urban environment changes quickly – difficult to tackle problems and needs
- The rapid change calls for clearly defined triggers for entry and exit strategies for humanitarian organizations
- Targeting and profiling – difficult to select beneficiaries and specific needs - high degree of mobility within the city
- Beneficiary targeting in health and nutrition crises particularly challenging – these crises might be the by-product of other emergencies – "stress bundles"
- Lack of immediate identifiable communities. Community-based targeting may not be adequate for urban context – poverty and malnutrition dispersed in pockets across the city
- Accountability challenges
- Vulnerable groups – difficult to identify them and therefore plan and implement ad hoc programmes
- Rapidity of urbanization – poor management and control
- Inadequate urban governance – complexity of actors involved – often requires sophisticated social and political mechanisms

Emergency situations:

➢ Compulsion to respond could affect the response's efficiency
➢ Lack of comprehensive livelihood analysis – interventions to be based more on pragmatism
➢ Poor targeting analysis
➢ No mechanism for reporting/identifying protection issues
➢ Rapid and less accurate needs assessments
➢ Lack of specific urban indicators
➢ More difficult to implement participatory and gender-sensitive approaches
➢ Short term guaranteed employment programmes – no need for specific skills
➢ Poor coordination and communication with local stakeholders
➢ Food and cash transfer programmes as the main response mechanism
➢ Network of religious institutions, youth clubs, schools, orphanages can provide an opportunity/capacity for modality for food/cash distribution

Protracted situations:

➢ Activities do be designed and conducted with a long term approach/sustainable approach
➢ More comprehensive needs assessment
➢ Well-structured targeting analysis methodology
➢ Accurate indicators more efficiently tailored to the urban context
➢ Collection of qualitative data very important in project planning – especially in key impact areas such as nutrition and food consumption
➢ Possibility to address wider urban social protection objectives – could ease the Government in developing its urban social protection system
➢ Programmes can be more participatory
➢ Possibility of skills training
➢ Stronger engagement and partnerships with governmental bodies – both national and municipal – and other local stakeholders to achieve a greater scale and sustainability
➢ Advocacy activities needed
➢ Cash for work and business grants as main activities

FOOD SECURITY IN URBAN SETTINGS

- Weak social cohesion and structure
- Severe urban violence and crime – acute gender based violence
- High political risks
- Inadequate sanitation – poor public health conditions
- High rates of malnutrition
- High risk of food insecurity –significant market exposure, high prices, food shortages, lack of safety nests, loss of livelihoods and income insecurity
- High dependence on food produced outside cities – makes urban residents vulnerable to droughts, flooding and other. At the same time a food shortage in a city will disrupt food supplies to surrounding rural areas
- Links between urban and rural settings – "knock-on" effects in disaster management – adaptation of tools and methods from rural to urban
- Acute food insecurity is usually caused by poor utilization (due to poor water, sanitation and health conditions) or restricted food access (due to lack of economic means) rather than insufficient availability
- Non-food interventions – urban agriculture, cash and vouchers – could be more appropriate then food assistance

Natural Disaster:

➢ Poorly built urban infrastructure, inadequate or non-existent services and low incomes of many urban dwellers significantly increase vulnerability to natural hazards

➢ The disaster could then devastate both the built environment and the social economy, resulting in longer term and more extensive setbacks to development

➢ An accurate urban planning can contribute to post disaster rehabilitation of human settlements, increase the capacity for disaster prevention and ensure that post disaster programmes address long term development objectives and needs of affected areas

➢ In some cases DRR is carried out through school education, media

➢ Coordination and partnerships among actors involved extremely important to face and respond to a natural disaster

Conflict:

➢ Different types and levels of violence can be associated with conflict behaviour – events such as food price riots, turf wars between gangs, targeting of particular communities can pose significant challenges to the humanitarian community

➢ Important for all stakeholders to advocate with and support national and local governmental bodies to establish specific post conflict recovery standards

➢ In conflict situations the governance structure itself may be a victim of the crisis – more challenging for humanitarian response

➢ Working with governmental authorities might pose challenges to the humanitarian principle of neutrality in situations in which the government is a combatant in an urban conflict

➢ Importance of peace-building activities and mitigation measures

IDPs:

➢ Urban areas as a refuge for IDPs

➢ "Invisibility" of IDPs in urban context – tendency to remain hidden and be confused with urban poor – lack of data

➢ Displacement places extra stress on urban services and resources - IDPs sharing densely populated and poorly service environments with the host community – increased competition and conflict among communities over limited urban resources may exacerbate the potential for urban crises

Urban Poor:

➢ Urban poor have been among the hardest hit by the financial crisis – urban consumers almost exclusively dependent on food purchases and variations of food prices and income directly translate into diminished purchasing power and rising rates of food insecurity

➢ Household-level assets as the basis of coping and recovery – aiming to build ownership

- Keeping of livestock and working animals can play an important role in urban and peri-urban settings – animal welfare could be included into food security programming
- Food production and markets contribute to generate income and employment and provides an opportunity to reduce vulnerability
- Importance of the role of the market – market channels to distribute food assistance
- Importance of planning and policy formulation to ensure urban food security – preparedness and awareness programmes needed
- Importance of integrated programming - EFSL to be complemented with sustainable livelihoods and good governance – complementary activities of WASH and EFSL
- "Building back better" concept to enable smooth transition s from relief and recovery to long term development – reduce vulnerability and improve resilience of urban social and governance systems
- Bridging development and humanitarian relief and recovery work is critical to meet humanitarian challenges
- Outreach, good communication and strong collaboration with local authorities and community organizations critical to maintain a stable environment and enable progress in relief and recovery

➤ Negative coping mechanisms such as begging, prostitution, human trafficking more likely in urban settings
➤ Traditional skills of farming not suitable to earn a livelihood in urban settings - middle aged/older persons coming from rural areas unlikely to recover and integrate in urban settings
➤ Difficult to target and design ad hoc programmes for IDPs
➤ IDPs in urban areas often receive less support than their rural counterparts from international and domestic aid systems
➤ There is an on-going perception of local authorities of IDPs as a temporary condition – little incentive to extend infrastructure support and services or social protection – no different assistance for IDPs and urban poor

➤ Importance of participatory approaches in all stages of programming assessment, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation
➤ Importance of market recovery – necessary aspect of recovery efforts
➤ Strengthen urban livelihoods often depends as much on social capital as on financial assets for poor families

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

o ***Coordination:***
  ➤ *Develop ways to work and collaborate with the existing institutional framework of governmental bodies - national and municipal - and civil society organizations – effective collaborative local partnerships are needed*
  ➤ *Understand and define clear leadership and roles in disaster management in urban context – humanitarian actors to complement rather than lead the response*
  ➤ *Improve coordination among humanitarian actors - agreement on procedures, policies and exit strategy*
  ➤ *Engage and consult with communities at all stages – planning and response – emergency preparedness and awareness programmes are necessary and could be done through existing local networks*
  ➤ *Coordinate with all stakeholders - including local religious institutions, schools, and other associations*
  ➤ *Coordinate with private sector actors involved – exploit their capacity to participate in humanitarian assistance*

- Importance of building collaborative partnerships with all local stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental - to better respond to emergencies
- Coordination among all humanitarian organizations – for planning and disaster response
- Partnerships and transparency with private sector also important – expertise and capacity in urban contexts
- Humanitarian actors to have a support role rather than a leading role in urban disaster response – governmental bodies already in place to manage humanitarian action

o *Assessments - Targeting – Profiling:*
- ➤ *Vulnerability assessments and measures – difficult to identify vulnerable groups - typical categories often not straight forward in urban areas*
- ➤ *Needs and capacity assessments – necessary to set clear targets/beneficiaries – to identify actors involved with expertise and knowledge useful in emergency response and to build capacity tools where needed*
- ➤ *Risks analysis – bridging humanitarian assistance and reduction risk/development is important*
- ➤ *Profiling and documenting target groups requires effective community outreach*
- ➤ *There is general need to set internationally accepted standards and instruments for assessments in urban settings*
- ➤ *Need to differentiate between urban and informal settings/slums – different needs and capacities*

o *Defining procedure, technical guidance and other tools*
- ➤ *Some specific handbooks or technical guidance on Food Security in Urban Settings exist but need to up to date – important to set priorities and objectives*
- ➤ *Define common methodologies and operating procedures, standards and indicators is necessary to improve the understanding of urban context and coordination among humanitarian actors*
- ➤ *Best practices and a "How To" materials could be produced – could help to define best responses, exit strategies, communication and collaboration methods both on the field and among humanitarians, local partnership building*
- ➤ *Preparedness and disaster prevention guidance and trainings could be useful for humanitarians and to build capacity at the local level*
- ➤ *Policy guidance to national and municipal levels on specific food security programmes to be integrated in urban and territorial land use planning*
- ➤ *Monitoring and Evaluation tools*
- ➤ *Need to encourage adaptation from rural methods, tools and policies to urban context – no clear guidance on what and how needs to be transferred/adapted*