

Urban assessment practices: state of knowledge

Adapted from “Review of urban assessment practices” (P.Creti)

Intro

This review has been commissioned by WFP and Oxfam GB with the aim of providing an overview and analysis of existing assessment approaches, tools and indicators used to measure livelihoods, food insecurity and vulnerability in urban contexts¹. This review attempts to bring together the experiences and guidance from a variety of agencies and propose recommendations to carry these findings forward into concrete assessment guidance. The report has been structured around the components of the Food and Nutrition Security Framework and touches upon various aspects looking in particular at the need to identify what differentiate urban from rural context when assessing food security needs and how assessments practices may be affected in cities.

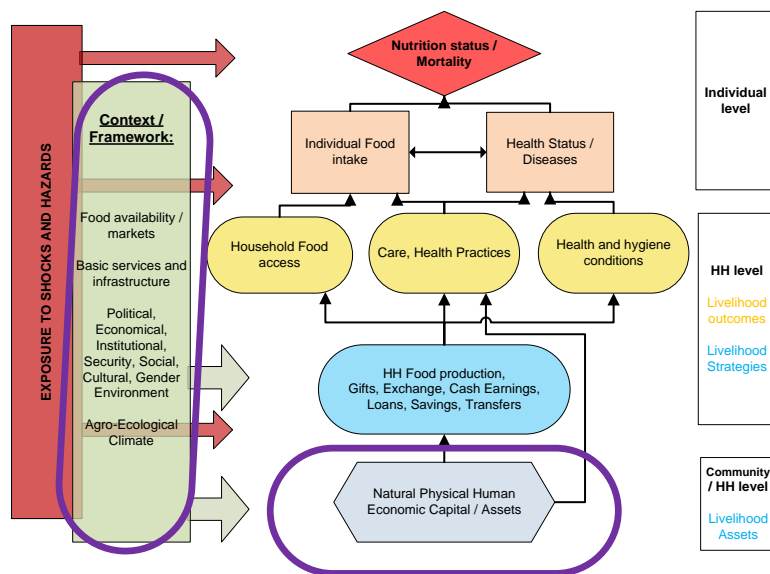
This paper is intended to constitute a basis for forthcoming discussions on how to improve existing guidance and create new tools to tackle the specific challenges that arises in urban contexts.

The train of thoughts proposed here intends to follow the sequence in which assessors may find themselves confronted to the issues during an assessment exercise.

I. Contextualization and urban mapping

This section deals with the macro and meso-level analysis of urban assessments. The Food and Nutrition Security Framework (FNSF) groups these factors under the context framework. A few components of the contextual framework are presented in this section for their relevance and specificity to urban contexts. For each point key findings of the review and recommendations are presented.

¹ *Relevant technical guidance in WFP provides a flexible definition of urban areas. Urban areas are often identified as areas characterised by high number of inhabitants or population density, but the reality is that urban characteristics can be diverse and differs case by case. In the recent WFP/TANGO review, peri-urban and rural are defined as “a continuum held together by their degree of economic and social integration around the city”. This review will often refers to slums areas that are considered as areas characterised by a wide range of low-income settlements and poor human living conditions (UN-Habitat State of the World Cities 2006-7)*



1.1 Understanding the political and institutional setting

The ability to map the networks of institutions that exist in an urban context, their roles, responsibility and political interests can help figuring in possible opportunities and threats within the context.

Findings of the review:

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments cover the following “political economy” features:

- **Institutional and policy setting:** strengthen emphasis on mapping and understanding the role of policies, institutions, procedures and the political interests at stake as they affect livelihoods conditions and opportunities
- **Socio-political situation** (governance, power structures, corruption...) - influence livelihoods hence affect vulnerabilities (in particular in a context of migration / informal settlements)
- **Predictable risks of tensions / conflicts**, related to present or foreseen **political events** and likely to be critical in such politically strategic settings as cities – potentially affecting community-level social organization and livelihoods and exacerbating insecurity factors.

Considering urban specificities, assessment process should adjust to:

- Opportunities for **collaboration during assessment** with relevant stakeholders adopting suitable methodologies and participatory tools.

- *The potential challenges and risks of looking into political issues. Need to remain cautious attentive to risks for population and for agencies **related to analyzing socio-political dynamics**, taking into account reliable local advice.*

Suggestions for future normative guidance work needed

- *ACF guidelines point to useful secondary sources to inform public policies and urban planning.*
- *Devise cause / effect diagrams to help analyse this information and the implications of each of these political and institutional elements on food security.*
- *IFRC guidance provides review of participatory tools that can be adopted to capture people's perceptions on the role and power of institutions and governance*
- *Oxfam is encouraged to pilot its proposed approach to "political economy analysis".*

- *Recommendation: What is needed is for guidance to propose methodologies and participatory tools more than developing 'ad hoc' assessment lists (as contexts and assessment objectives vary)*

1.1.1 Understanding the specific role of migration or displacement (if relevant)

Urban IDPs, refugees and migrants live together/very closely with resident population. It can be therefore very challenging to identify them and their specific needs.

Findings of the review

In cities likely to host immigrants, it is critical that assessments cover:

- *Migrations to and from cities – determine i) homogeneity of social fabric and related coping strategies, and ii) fluidity within the city and livelihood strategies*
- *Factors that link and positively connect people, which can affect their livelihood capacities (see section on social networks).*
- *Informal livelihood activities, often not captured in official statistics nor evident from KI information*
- *Relationship between risky behaviours, legal status*

Considering urban specificities, assessment process should adjust to:

- *using participatory methods in order to understand reasons behind the problems of integration*

- *not undertaking separate assessments for illegal groups (IDPs / migrants) as can create stigma, but assessing them alongside residents using proxy indicators to identify specific characteristics of IDPs.*
- *need to manage potential tensions with official institutions when looking at illegal / informal groups*
- *Integrate components of the DNH analysis. This is in order to map and assess sources of conflict, as well as potential connectors among different groups in the urban setting.*

- **Suggestions for normative guidance work needed** *Launch a further study with the aim of better distinguishing what defining issues apply to i) economic migrants, ii) political IDPS; iii) recognized refugees or iv) non-recognized refugees.*

Pending issues where more discussion is necessary:

- *How to collect information from groups which may not want to be recognized / distinguished eg identification of IDPs from residents.*

1.2 Role of macro-economic context and meso-level market variables

Analyzing the macro-economic context and market variables can be relevant for the assessments' purpose as urban markets are more dependent than rural ones on international trends and urban household are generally more vulnerable to price fluctuation.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- *How regional markets are **structured & operate** and degree of integration between markets at various levels; type and capacities of traders at national level, food balance sheets / sale and purchase conditions at national level; transaction costs - determine the potential **food availability** context and **forecast** evolution of FS situation based on causal analysis of food insecurity (how flow of food commodities may affect / stabilize HH FS)?*
- *Market **prices** and **credit** strategies – inform **access** and **vulnerability***
- *The **labour market** situation, i.e.: understanding the macro-level reasons behind differences in wages; the bottlenecks in labour supply/demand; and the external environment influencing labour availability (associated with income sources- see below) All of which determine affordability of food, the main risk to food security for urban households;*

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed

- *Develop more detailed questions on macro-economic policies and a diagram to demonstrate the different changes that each policy can bring about in terms of household food security. (In line with recommendation for institutional mapping in 1.1.)*
- *Develop a market model to guide the integration of all elements analyzed into one analysis: provide further guidance on how to analyse the external market environment (shocks, policies, external aid) and market services (such as credit and information); and to assess in sudden onset conditions: draw from EMMA (adaptable and quick-to-use) for snapshot tool to analyze key market actors in the supply/consumer chain?*
- *Draw from MIFIRA for questions related to local availability and functioning of local markets?*

Pending issues where more discussion is necessary:

- *Discuss the worthiness of carrying out as complex analysis as that of macroeconomic policy's impact on FS, considering the likely large disconnect of poor HH with global systems. See comment made "... people not very often linked to formal institutions so that exercise is purely academic" vs. view that understanding the macro context may inform i) availability and ii) causes of food insecurity.*
- *Availability is unlikely to be the heart of the matter in urban contexts, so it should not be strong a focus of the assessment.*
- *Can a minimum set of information needed be determined as example in relation to markets?*
- *Which existing set of guidelines (MIFIRA, WFP TGS's, EMMA...) can help address the information needs identified as critical in urban contexts?*
- *Does the existing guidance capture the role of the informal sector if official markets cannot / do not supply sufficient food to the urban poor?*

1.3 Urban Vulnerability Mapping: a standard step before sampling

Experience has shown that due to their complexity and heterogeneity, urban settings present a number of bottlenecks to applying the standard sampling methodologies used in rural assessments. In order to address this difficulty, some practitioners have added a step to their standard practice, which can be synthesized under the term "urban vulnerabilities mapping".

Carrying out a first-level "mapping" of the city, aims to focus the assessment, on the most vulnerable areas. The key principle is that of identifying macro-level determinants of people's food security on the basis of which zones with the highest likelihood of hosting food secure

people can be singled out of the analysis. This allows simplification of the forthcoming assessment process by reducing the scope and heterogeneity of the sampling frame. It also de facto contributes towards defining the specific constraints experienced by the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which will inform the subsequent analysis.

The mapping of urban vulnerabilities needs to take place after the macro-level (socio-political and economic) information regarding food security, has been gathered, and before the assessment prepares tools to collect household level information

Findings of the review

Urban vulnerability mapping should:

- Use participatory methods to identify 'best suited' criteria and indicators, with Government / local key informants' inputs etc.
- Involve local authorities, CBO's, KI's etc to develop zoning information, unless available
- Create a baseline in urban settings that are prone to sudden-onset disasters, to constitute a useful reference in case of future emergency

Pending issues / questions to be discussed re. urban vulnerability mapping

- *Review assumption that: "zones that share the same access to infrastructure, services and other livelihood characteristics have the same structural vulnerabilities and people have similar livelihoods - this may not always hold true for urban environment.*
- *Review and adapt the urban profiling approach proposed in ACF guidelines for slow onset emergencies / development contexts - iterative process consisting in secondary data and KI consultation and observation to identify indicators discriminating poorer / more food insecure areas in heterogeneous urban contexts as the basis for initial zoning, to then be discussed with KIs for cconfirmation.*
- *List possible indicators: type of 'community assets' present (i.e. services, infrastructures or housing) as indicators to indicate households' access to resources and their resilience to shocks? Need to devise a list of potentially useful types of indicators, to be adapted according to context? See criteria proposed by ACF: living environment, access to services, social capital and environmental risks and related indicators and sources of information (review Annex 6) as starting point and see annex 5: list of indicators /criteria used in WFP urban assessments.*
- *Investigate the process for mapping urban vulnerabilities in sudden-onset emergencies and the use of rapid participatory approaches to adjust to the short time available. Participatory mapping tools (as those suggested in the market analysis section) can be suitable for this purpose. Also, different / additional criteria (areas affected by disasters, level of destruction, displacement) should be identified which are suitable for all types of sudden onset emergencies.*

II. Household-level Food Security Analysis

The review of current guidance on how to measure food security in urban settings highlighted several challenges both related to indicators as well as tools. Indicators that are traditionally used to understand households' conditions perform differently in an urban environment and there is the necessity to adapt them in order to catch the context's peculiarity. The review showed that particular attention should be given to measuring of food consumption, income, expenditure, assets ownership, housing and coping strategies. Data collection tools and practices needs also to be adapted and tailored to catch information from urban dwellers.

2.1 Household Food Consumption

Analysis of food consumption in an urban environment has to factor in several differences compared to the rural context related in particular to the variety of food, the possibility to eat outside the home and the differences among households members' eating patterns. The review focused on how the Food Consumption Score (FCS)² should be reviewed and adjusted to reflect these differences.

Findings of the review:

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

HH Food consumption and habits including share of food consumed outside the HH, and differences between and among HHs.

Assessment process should consider:

- *Adapting FCS methodology paying attention to food consumed outside the home.*
- *Use interviews with key informants and/or focus group discussions to understand better the pattern of HH food consumption.*
- *In case of large variations of eating patterns, focus on what is the norm in a household and take out the exceptions.*
- *Associate FCS with proxy indicators of coping strategies that go beyond the CSI and account for crisis and distress strategies.*

² In assessments conducted by WFP, the Food Consumption Score (FCS) is used as a key measure of diversity and food frequency which is used as a proxy indicator of household food security, and it is usually combined with other proxies of food access and level of stress, to create food security classifications.

Pending issues / questions

- Discuss need to **adjust rural-tailored food consumption measurements and standards** (which may bias the result due to differences urban - rural consumption patterns) and **recall periods** (challenged by fact that people eat many different meals from a variety of sources in a week)
- If so: how to compare rural and urban?

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed

- Normative work to be done at global level: calibrate Food Consumption Score (typical cut-points for rural are too low for urban; create new category of 'good' consumption);
- Refine the list of the foods consumed, to tailor it to urban specificities.
- Review experience with Individual / **HH dietary diversity** (= GAP in review)

2.2 Income / Expenditure levels

The diversity and heterogeneity of income activities and the widespread informal sector may raise some challenges while classifying income sources/levels in an urban setting. Difficulties relates to expenditures analysis (greater variety of goods/items, difficult to recall food purchased on the street) should also be taken into consideration, as income and expenditures levels must be related to each other.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- **HH Income level range** if relative measures and trends are acceptable for comparisons purposes between livelihood or wealth groups – informs access to food and general wealth level (as with WFP approach) or
- **The diversity of income sources** (including seasonality considerations) per HH and **contribution** of each source to HH income –determine HH access to food, and resilience capacities (the more sources, the more resilient)
- For each income source: **stability** (temporary, seasonal, stable) and **vulnerability** to potential shocks to be cross-analyzed with wage range levels (see next section) – determine reliability of access to food and vulnerability
- The **informal** sector as well as formal.
- **Household expenditure levels** as **proxy** to income level - a more stable indicator to avoid unmanageable analysis due to number of combination between income levels / stability. If assessment approach that requires precise measures to calculate the gap between a standard food basket and household expenditures (as with HEA).
- Or, for a simpler approach: total **share of food expenditure**

Assessment process should consider:

- Using **Qualitative methods** to understand the role of each source of income on household food security – e.g. ‘proportional piling’ methods to gauge the contribution of each source to HH income. The ultimate aim is to identify, classify and categorize livelihoods for comparison between and among different livelihoods groups.
- Developing **context-specific sub categories** for wage labour and self-employment (as well as other relevant income sources) according to: i) their degree of stability, and ii) the level of income they generate, to capture large variations that can exist for the same employment category
- Establishing the **minimum acceptable level of expenditure** on food and non-food items, through purposive focus group discussions (HEA), eg. . rent, utilities, fuel, transports, child-care, as well as households’ debts and to whom they owe money or food (WFP), as threshold.

Pending issues / questions

- How guidance should address the dilemma between the need to **distinguish sub-categories** of activities (as appropriate in such complex working environment vs. rural) **against the risk of unmanageable analysis?**
- Does experience show that urban dwellers purchase larger varieties of items?
- If both the risks that “expenditure is overestimated” (comment from field) and income underestimated (commonly agreed): could a solution be to measure both income and expenditure and aggregate them?
- How to address potential dichotomy between drawing urban-tailored lists of expenditure items and need to compare urban and rural to understand them better.

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed Review recommends to also capture **the Number** of household members with an income-generating activity

- Draw from WFP Urban TGS & HEA guidance where above suggestions are made
- Devise / propose practical guidelines on the use of participatory methods and their combination with quantitative surveys, as well as proper cross-referencing with the eventual technical guidance on urban assessments

2.3 Assets ownership

The utilisation of assets as a proxy measure of socio-economic status / wealth is more complex in urban contexts due to different livelihood schemes which lead to blurring reference regarding assets ownership, even for poor households.

Findings to be reflected into guidance

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- *Urban-appropriate **non-productive assets** (wealth indicators) - the number of different types of assets can discriminate households according to their wealth, thus determining their capacities to acquire food*
- *Urban-appropriate productive assets – inform livelihood and resilience capacities (largely captured when looking at income sources)*
- ***Access to services** (availability and affordability) such as clean water, social protection and health care can also be considered as important discriminating factors - determine vulnerability*

Assessment process should consider:

- *Discussing with KI and observation to identify most appropriate assets to consider, bearing in mind blurred lined between productive and non-productive assets.*
- *Gathering information to develop a general sense of generally owned assets (excluding exceptions) per group*
- *Triangulate this information with income and expenditures*

2.4 Capturing the role of Agricultural production as food or income source

Urban agriculture is not always a relevant source of income; nevertheless sometimes an urban setting can have sufficient land available to produce a significant amount of fresh food. In these cases, it is necessary to assess its contribution to the households' economy and food consumption.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- *The role of agriculture on food security whether as a direct **source of food** or as a livelihood / **source of cash**; and **for whom** (poor or better-off households)*
- *Where agriculture is possible; what are the **seasonal** variations and geographical limitations constraining it.*

Considering urban specificities, the assessment process should consider:

- *Using **qualitative methods** (KI discussions, observation) to capture information on agriculture **practices** (avoid quantitative methods, given the variety of urban agriculture patterns. Then possibly quantifying income generated by agriculture.*
- *Identifying **urban-appropriate proxy indicators** to estimate the contribution of urban agriculture in poor households' food security, such as stocks of the household's own production' expressed in months*

2.5 Coping Strategies

In urban settings the levels and types of coping strategies can differ from rural contexts. This is related to factors like the diversity and complexity of livelihood sources, the different levels of social networking and access to informal safety nets.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- **Coping strategies**, making sure to distinguish between those **damaging to lives / livelihoods** and not. It is important to have a livelihood approach as poverty does not necessarily manifest through food insecurity (-ensuring HH members eat each day does not preclude they can live on the street).
- **Access to credit** / levels of **debts** (distinguished from normal strategy to spread costs throughout the year, largely use in urban settings), including **informal** channels (where extremely food insecure households can access credit) – informs capacities to delay more damaging CS and level of vulnerability.
- Cross-analyze with information gathered re. **social networks** (inter-city and rural-urban) and **migrations** - determines access to CS and remittance flows (capturing value if possible and frequency).

Assessment process should consider:

- use of coping strategy index (CSI) because an aggregated severity provides a more uniform perception across different contexts, allowing for comparisons with thresholds and among different places (as WFP TGS recommends).
- Qualitative inquiry / reliance on local knowledge, to understand coping strategies and ranking of most severe, irreversible and damaging, and to map support systems, networks and power dynamics. Then, quantitative surveys can determine households' access to these critical forms of support.
- Analyze CS alongside HH consumption: the adoption of some CS can help maintain food consumption levels, and thereby mask the severity of the crisis while driving poor households in critical situations.

Pending issues / questions

- Pros and cons of using CSI
- With broader income opportunities available, do households adjust short-to-medium term behaviour in order to manage varying degrees of food insecurity?
- In an urban environment which are the most severe, irreversible and damaging coping strategies?

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed

- Draw from IPC to develop urban specific typologies of coping strategies (insurance, crisis and distress), to complement data from the CSI and FCS in defining food insecure groups.

- *Develop guidance on how to measure these coping strategies, including a list of typical urban coping strategies*

2.6 Understanding the role of formal and informal social networks

In urban areas, social network can be different from traditional support systems based on kinship and trust. These support mechanisms can be weaker in some cases (migrants) but they are often more diverse and complex.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- **Rural-urban linkages** and support flow on both sides – factors of risk reduction and income diversification strategy.
- **Formal social safety nets** / social assistance and socio-geographic coverage
- **Availability and affordability** of formal **social services** (likely more acute due to livelihood and social structure of cities) -e.g. child care for women who work and have no parent / support nearby
- Informal **intra-city support networks** based on ethnicity, place of origin, occupation, religion, neighbourhood or gender. This could include illegal / organised crime networks which influence livelihood strategies, opportunities and bottlenecks; and determine the degree of stress on people which in turn effects security.
- **Specific groups** (women, children and street children) suffering from **isolation** are at risk of: sexual exploitation; lack of safety in accessing services (related to insecurity, density of population, stigmatization of sub groups etc...) This places particular stress on women-headed households, and can be attributed to a lack of traditional social networks.

Considering urban specificities, the assessment process should:

- Utilize CBOs who can constitute useful **knowledge sources** though their **reliability** should be cross checked;
- **Triangulation** of sources is key in environments which are strongly corrupted or lack cohesive structures,

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed

- *Develop guidance on how to gather and analyse social networks.*
- *Key informant interviews and focus group discussions can help in mapping support systems, networks and power dynamics. Then, quantitative surveys can determine households' access to these critical forms of support.*

2.7 Housing

In urban contexts, housing can influence households' levels of expenditure and income, as well as households' living environment, legal status, security and stability. The role of 'housing' on household food security is separately assessed through indicators related to assets, expenditures (rents, and utility expenditures) and income (renting either a room or a house). Information about the quality of the house (materials and access to utilities) is usually gathered at household level, while aspects related to legality, security and protection are explored in contextual analysis and profiling. Specific questions or indicators related to housing needs to be framed according to the specific circumstances. Housing conditions (semi-permanent shelters) or renting can be proxy indicators of socio-economic vulnerability, and associated with the status of IDPs, illegal or new migrants.

House ownership is not only associated with economic but also with social and political factors. It can be difficult for new arrivals to find the right social connections that are often needed to access either house or land. Land-tenure is a complex and multidimensional question and it is not only economic, Understanding the problems related to this issues is critical in profiling urban HHs.

Findings of the review

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

- The typology of house (concrete, temporary, semi-concrete),
- The length of residence,
- The status: owner, renter or illegal condition
- The monthly rent;
- The contribution of housing expenditures towards total household expenditures
- The number of households / persons living in the same house unit (square metres/individual)

III. Nutrition analysis

There are several challenges related to nutrition analysis in urban setting: among them it is worth mentioning higher malnutrition differentials between poor and better off parts of the city than in rural areas³, an accelerate shift in adult BMI with overweight replacing thinness, and reduced time for women for breastfeeding. Differences in habits and practices have to be considered in order to prepare adequate tools for data collection and a proper analytical framework. Nutrition analysis will also consider access to health facilities, water and sanitation. These indicators are also fundamental in the HHs FS analysis and provide additional inputs to understand the underlying causes of undernutrition.

Findings of the review:

In urban settings, it is critical that assessments generate information with respect to:

³ Ruel et al. 1998

- *General malnutrition factors in poor areas: street food hygiene, sanitary environment, and access to health care. The choice of the vulnerable areas can follow criteria and indicators as defined at stage of urban vulnerability mapping.*
- *Child care practices and breastfeeding and causal analysis in relation to women livelihood strategies (work outside the home)*
- *Quality of **eating patterns, food and diet** – explain high malnutrition rates / overweight problems (consumption of cheaper food rich in carbohydrates and fat) and causal factors (e.g. recent rapid economic transition?).*
- ***Micronutrient deficiencies** - diets lacking vitamins and minerals due to low consumption of fruits and vegetables and animal products (more expensive).*
- ***Availability of water sources** and distribution according to population density; and **quality** of water sources (includes checking transport and storage conditions). Time spent in fetching water can be used as indicator.*
- ***Cost** of water – usually free in rural areas – accessibility determines risks to health / nutrition and expense levels, and can indicate wealth status.*
- *Availability of **sanitary toilet and sewage systems** and distribution according to population density – determine extent of pressure on services and potential sustainability of system, and in case of no / limited services, risks of environment prone to waterborne and sanitation-related diseases.*
- *Availability of **waste management** systems - affect the health environment and risk of epidemics and of blockage of drainage canals and subsequent flooding risks increase.*
- *Community **practices** and local / national and health education campaigns.*
- *See relationship of access to these services with “**political**” power structure*

Suggestions for normative guidance work needed

- *More guidance called for on how to sample for nutrition surveys in urban areas*
- *Develop a list of minimum information to be captured by FSA re. the nutritional situation*
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- *It is recommended to focus nutrition analysis on the most vulnerable areas of the city in order to avoid average numbers masking specific nutritional problems amongst the poorest.*
- *In food security assessments, secondary information from health clinics and local doctors can help to highlight specific nutritional problems.*

IV. *Response Analysis*

The urban context, with the diversity and complexity of livelihood and vulnerabilities and the often greater role/importance of markets, opens up a number of market related response options, with which agencies have much more limited experience, and the appropriateness of which needs to be analyzed.

In urban contexts, the response analysis process needs to give more attention to local government capacities and to integrate local authority's programmes and to promote their sustainability. Consultations with other international or national civil society organizations will also likely have to take place to analyze potential synergies and avoid duplications. Additionally urban contexts offer more opportunities to collaborate with the private sector (banks, financial institutions) through market interventions (e.g. cash, vouchers).

Finding of the review:

The review found in the existing guidance several tools that can support the response analysis:

1. The SWOT analysis is a very helpful tool that facilitates decisions about the different response options in urban contexts. This can facilitate the discussion on appropriate responses that, however, needs to remain anchored on the information provided in the situation analysis.
2. Consultation processes need to be highly encouraged in urban contexts, as they can help disentangle the complexities of urban livelihoods and encourage local stakeholders to engage in the process
3. 'Do no harm' analysis – This analysis needs to take place at the level of SWOT analysis and, in general, will fall under the analysis of 'threats'. 'Do no harm analysis' can be adapted to assess and reduce the range of problems that resource transfers can create or exacerbate in urban contexts.
4. Cost/benefit analysis. Different response options are likely to be available and suitable to respond to the identified needs. The problem is how to allocate scarce resources towards those responses with the highest net benefit in relation to costs. A full economic cost/benefit analysis is typically not feasible in emergencies and would probably be too burdensome for the response analysis process. Oxfam GB's guide suggests thinking through some basic questions about the possible cost/benefit of the different options:

Urban assessment recommendations for response options should consider:

- *In urban contexts, where a large variety of stakeholders exist who have the power to support or undermine any intervention, going through a **process of consultation of stakeholders at play** is critical.*
- *In particular, **local political interests** (more articulated and powerful) should not be ignored, as they may not be in line with humanitarian priorities.*

- The potential **tensions with official institutions**, in particular when recommending to assist illegal / informal groups should be managed
- Programming along **existing social networks** (formal and informal) to synergize with / not undermine individual, household or community support mechanisms and ultimately tackle structural problems more efficiently. Risks to strengthen or weaken community leaders needs to be weighed-up when formulating intervention options and selecting partners
- **Partnership / programme synergy opportunities** with other institutions present; integration of new interventions within existing **government actions**. Institutional presence to be taken into account to promote durability and sustainability of interventions and to minimize future urban vulnerabilities, such as in the case of water and sanitation activities. **Limitations and opportunities generated by established regulations, codes and procedures** to comply with or lack thereof and to whom they do or don't apply (eg informal groups) **Governance actors to involve or weaknesses in governance:**
 - **Power structures** and risks of corruption to take into account (more likely to occur with concentration of resources and power-decision structures) - possible alternatives to work with civil society organisations to avoid corrupted networks.
 - **Understanding what divides people** and informing about the risks to **cause or exacerbate conflicts**, divisions within groups or discrimination (likely more present due to complex power dynamics and institutions)- Do no Harm
 - whether macro-economic environment (a central element affecting all urban livelihoods) may **allow for certain modalities** (cash) deemed relevant to be used and is solid enough to avoid **adverse effects** of the intervention
 - if appropriate, whether food can be **sourced** locally from functioning markets or is there regional availability
 - Typical urban **insecurity**, related to combined **socio-political, economic or demographic** factors of population density: may hamper **going to scale**, bring up costs, slow down activity levels and affect choice of modality
 - **Linking humanitarian response and risk reduction:** responses to include risk mitigation activities, to avoid recurrence of disasters. Reconstruction of shelter to take count of livelihood and market options, not to undermine prior capacities. Responses to take protection issues into account
 - **fluidity / constant movement** of population -brought about by urban livelihoods– will affect the capacity to identify the people and find them (i.e. the **targeting**) and may therefore **determine the preferable modality** (e.g. choosing to target through institutions, or to distribute at a given site). Choice between:
 - a) Administrative or criteria-based targeting: i) Means testing is expensive - unless done through reliable institutions / CBOs; ii) Use of proxies: likely

higher margin of errors using geographic indicators; complementing with other reliable proxy for household food insecurity / poverty calls for identifying observable indicators (for feasibility) or having reliable institutions.*

- *b) Self-targeting may likely be more appropriate but has limiting effects on programming options.*
 - *c) Community-based targeting: availability of reliable communities / institutions / partners / IT systems.*
- **Availability** of existing **networks** (social security systems, banks) and of **water, sanitation, hygiene and health services and risks** to raise property value / rents and expel poor in case of extending these services.
 - *What is the need – the gap to be filled – the group that needs help?*
 - *What will happen if the project is undertaken? What if it is not?*
 - *What are the logical sets of alternatives to achieve the same goal?*
 - *Who benefits and who loses from each option?*
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Partnership with the private sector and other local constituencies