



DEVELOPMENT IN THE URBAN ERA

Six strategies for better
managing urbanisation
in Asia and the Pacific

January 2019



RESEARCH FOR
DEVELOPMENT
IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between
the Australian Council for
International Development
and Australian universities

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About the Research for Development Impact Network

The Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network is a collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Australian universities. It is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development with the objective of linking quality research, policy and practice for impact in international development.

The Network began in 2009 and grew out of a collective desire to widen debate on international development and to strengthen collaboration between academics and members of ACFID. Since this time, the Network has continued to grow and promote positive relationships and connections between ACFID members and universities, with the overall goal of supporting collaboration and understanding across actors within the Australian development sector.

Further information can be found at www.rdinetwork.org.au.

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Executive Summary

Prosperous and well-managed urban areas reduce poverty, promote economic growth and enhance security. No country has ever achieved a high-income status without urbanising. High-income countries typically achieve urbanisation rates above 70%¹. The clustering of economic activities that occurs in urban areas results in better economies of scale – cities are more cost-efficient and their ecological footprint smaller due to a density of transport, infrastructure and public services².

When the urbanisation process is not managed well however, inequality and experiences of poverty are starker, giving way to irreversible environmental damage, urban fragility, violence, crime, terrorism and unmanaged waves of migration. These divisive impacts can have ripple effects throughout an entire nation, triggering stability issues right across the urban-rural spectrum.

This paper offers six strategies to underpin better management of urbanisation. For each strategy we provide a summary of key evidence and challenges and identify strategic potential entry points for development actors to target their investment and programs. Case studies are incorporated throughout the paper, highlighting good practices through an integrated programming approach.

SIX STRATEGIES



Strategy 1 encourages approaching **cities as systems** that require integrated programming in order to adequately understand and address urban complexity. It also includes a focus on urban-rural connections through discussion of food and water security.

Strategy 2 focuses on a chronic but critical issue – **the demand for better services and infrastructure**. Underscored in this strategy is the need to support institutions and policies that manage and maintain infrastructure. Strategy 2 also focuses on services that local governments and development agencies commonly engage with – education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene – and offers potential entry points for improving upon them.

Strategy 3 proposes ways for actively and thoughtfully **engaging with informality** and offers some ideas from practice on decent work and land management systems that consider a continuum of land rights, settlement upgrading, alternative models of basic service provision and data collection to fill gaps across multiple dimensions.

Strategy 4 notes that **investment in disaster resilience** is crucial and can be approached by addressing climate and disaster risk together. It also suggests entry points for humanitarian assistance, including increasing cash responses where markets work, area-based approaches (ABAs) and building an evidence base of humanitarian needs through joint needs assessments and profiling activities.

Strategy 5 highlights the need to **support local authorities**, their priorities and their systems of urban management. With governance at the core of most urban challenges, there is a need to focus on issues related to social inclusion, participatory governance and support for fragile and conflict-affected contexts. To this end, there is greater need for localisation – programs that recognise the importance of local actors and build upon their capabilities.

Finally, **Strategy 6** draws a **focus on inclusivity** and its value as a measure of successful urban design and management. It addresses elements of traditional urban planning that have inadvertently disadvantaged certain groups including older people, those with a disability and women.

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Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this working paper is to provide insight into the complexity of urbanisation and present key entry points for its better management. The paper argues that an integrated programming or a 'systems' approach to urban development assistance in Asia and the Pacific is critical to strengthening prosperity, reducing poverty and building disaster resilience. Each strategy highlights practical, tangible activities that contribute to meeting the targets within Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 and other related goals from the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

The audience for this paper includes development and humanitarian practitioners, academics, think tanks and donor agencies working to address urbanisation management issues across a range of sectors in Asia and the Pacific. The strategies are also applicable to local governments; however, this document has not been specifically targeted to that group, but rather, those that work with local governments.

This paper was developed using a number of research methods to gather primary and secondary information and triangulate findings. A desk review of recent urbanisation documents was undertaken in order to identify key trends, challenges, opportunities and examples of good practice. At the same time, 12 key informant interviews were held with staff from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Two workshops were then held, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, with RDI Network members including sector experts, practitioners and academics experienced in urbanisation management, development and disaster assistance. The workshops assisted the authors to triangulate the findings and prioritise identified areas of good practice. A roundtable was then held in Canberra to present and refine the research with a cross section of DFAT staff and members from the RDI Network Urbanisation Steering Group. Based on this process, two papers were developed: one internal paper for DFAT purposes, and this second paper intended for a broader sector audience.

Introduction

There is no longer a need to justify why development aid should be invested in cities. Cities take up two per cent of the world's total land mass, yet they host 60% of the world's population, produce 70% of global gross domestic product (GDP), generate 70% of the world's waste and are major emitters of greenhouse gas³. For aid agencies* not working in cities to produce better outcomes, the question is 'why not?'; and, 'if not now, when?'. In many ways, development aid is catching up instead of being ahead of the game.

The Asia and the Pacific region is home to 75 million people who live below the US\$3.10 per day poverty line, six out of ten of the world's megacities, and more than half a billion people who live in inadequate housing – the largest proportion in any region of the world⁴. The region is also host to 740 million city dwellers who are estimated to be at 'extreme to high' disaster risk resulting from vulnerability to multi-hazards such as cyclones, earthquakes, floods and landslides⁵. In the Pacific, small island states are predicated to experience annual losses equivalent to four per cent of their GDP based on growing levels of inequality and the potential for naturally triggered disasters to be more destructive⁶.

Currently, there are only a small number of development organisations actively and consistently involved in the urban sector in Asia and the Pacific⁷. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), and, to a lesser degree, the World Bank, are the major development agencies. Other key development agencies with an interest in the region (often in collaboration with ADB or the World Bank) include DFAT, the European Union (EU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) New Zealand, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and China. While Australia remains by far the largest aid donor in the Pacific, China ranks third, just behind the United States⁸. In addition to the above, UN-Habitat and The United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) backstops countries in Asia and the Pacific with technical advice on urban management and broader human settlement issues. However, despite UN-Habitat and UNESCAP providing countries with access to global toolkits, policies and plan guidelines, these agencies rely heavily on funding from other partners for implementing their programs.

Beyond the content of this paper, two other recent papers from the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) on urbanisation and Australian development aid may also be helpful resources for those engaging with urbanisation management. These are:

1. ACFID 2016 policy paper – *Prosperous and Sustainable Cities for all: An Australian Development Agenda for Urbanisation in Asia and the Pacific*
2. ACFID 2016 research paper – *Australian NGO Engagement in Sustainable Urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific Region in Support of the Australian Aid*

* As humanitarians and development agencies both need to be working in urban areas to produce better outcomes, 'aid' and 'aid agencies' refers to both development and humanitarian, unless specified.

1

STRATEGY 1 :

Approach cities as systems that require integrated programming

Cities are like a beehive: both have component parts interacting together that appear to behave as one. In cities, the component parts interact and impact on productivity, liveability, inclusion and resilience in complex, non-linear ways and at different scales. The interconnections may appear chaotic at first, but an effective context analysis will show that they are highly ordered. UNESCAP describes cities as “complex adaptive systems, made of networks of infrastructure and socio-economic relationships”⁹. Thinking about cities as systems allows for a broad, comprehensive approach to development as well as to disaster management¹⁰.

Crucially, systems thinking reflects the urban context more closely by moving away from a narrow solution-based sector approach to problem-based thinking that responds with interconnected solutions. Systems thinking also allows programming to circumnavigate separate ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ constructs, and instead places emphasis on the interconnections, overlaps and areas of influence across the urban-rural spectrum.

A systems approach to urban development is essentially a form of integrated programming that addresses the interlinked negative impacts of urbanisation – for example, typically including: deteriorating living conditions, traffic congestion, waste disposal problems, increased disaster risks, inadequate housing, limited access to basic services such as power, telecommunications and water, inadequate housing, and lack of access to formal institutions such as banks, education and health systems. A systems approach builds on the systems and processes that already exist, engages local actors as catalysts and leaders of change, triggers multiple entry points across a diverse network of systems, and works at multiple scales (local, municipal, state, national) so as to maximise value-add. It involves analysis of context, risks and opportunities across the urban-rural purview. Projects often involve a larger number of partners from more diverse backgrounds – representing a mix of government, the private sector and civil society – who co-contribute resources and funds.

Humanitarian actors are also embracing integrated urban development thinking through a number of approaches. For example, place-based approaches such as Area-Based Approaches (ABAs), settlement-based



Power supply: one of many elements to be considered in a systems approach to urbanisation. Image: Bangkok, Philippa Smales

approaches and neighbourhood-based approaches all select a geographical area (such as a neighbourhood) and address the root causes of disaster risk and chronic poverty across a range of sectors, stakeholders and activities with the ambition of scaling up over time¹¹.

By way of example of a systems approach or integrated programming, a case study from the Strategic Private Sector Partnerships for Urban Poverty Reduction in Metro Manila (STEP UP¹²) is provided in Box 1.

B O X 1

Strategic Private Sector Partnerships for Urban Poverty Reduction in Metro Manila, Philippines (STEP UP)

By the Philippine National Government's Housing and Urban Development Coordination Council and the Philippines Business for Social Progress

The STEP UP Project is a Philippine Government response to poverty in Metro Manila, where at the time, 40% of the city's population lived in informal settlements. The goal of the project was to reduce poverty through public-private sector partnerships to improve the living conditions of squatters on government and private land in 23 neighbourhoods, with an estimated population of 35,000 people. The project received ADB-channelled Japanese funding. It was managed by the national government's Housing and Urban Development Coordination Council with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), a well-established non-profit foundation, as the implementing agency.

The project's approach was to:

- 1) Build strategic partnerships that would result in funding by corporate sponsors;
- 2) Establish revolving funds for home upgrading;
- 3) Develop microenterprise funding in order to expand livelihood opportunities;
- 4) Construct neighbourhood infrastructure, services and facilities; and
- 5) Reduce and manage disaster risk.

The success of the project was predicated on the following key factors:

- Professional, experienced NGO leadership
- Neighbourhood capacity building to understand governance structures
- Performance-based allocation of funding to neighbourhoods
- Grants to support pilot activities
- Access to resources and funding to up-scale successful activities
- People centred: extensive neighbourhood participation and consultation
- Community, business and local government partnerships legitimised with MoUs
- Alignment of corporations' contributions with their main line of business or Corporate Social Responsibility.

Addressing urban-rural connections

A systems approach is a powerful way to analyse urban-rural connections. This section focuses specifically on the urban-rural inter-linkages between food and water security.

Food security

The success of urban food security greatly depends on support to agriculture and fisheries and the availability and success of urban markets, the ability to transport food to markets, food quality, safety and biosecurity measures, and the complex value chain that requires engagement from the government and private sector. As in situ urbanisation occurs, smaller towns and cities begin to appear, playing an important role in food systems – often shaped by agricultural or fishing value chains and offering rural regions market places. However, national statistics often categorise smaller urban centres as rural places, constraining growth and reducing the chances of well-planned urbanisation due to a lack of investment in local government (this investment often comes with an urban classification).

When approaching food security, there are opportunities to capitalise on the urban-rural connections through the following entry points:

Entry point 1: Support for partnerships between local government and the private sector that provide knowledge, training and guidance on food standards and safety measures, and how to achieve them.

Entry point 2: Provide training programs for farmers hosted in urban areas in order to generate knowledge of inappropriate chemicals and how to reduce consumer poisoning and soil and water pollution.

Entry point 3: Support for enabling market place environments for women. Key activities could include the construction of physical infrastructure in the market place, greater access to technology, promotion of women in decision-making roles and the elimination of physical and sexual violence against women in market places. Also crucial is training for women in leadership, marketing, financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

Entry point 4: Look for ways to safely recycle and reuse nutrients from both organic waste and human waste in peri-urban agriculture, thereby reducing fertiliser reliance and importation, reducing city solid waste challenges and reducing water contamination and pollution.

Markets for Change (M4C)¹³ is an example of an integrated urban food security project that focuses on women market traders and is shared in Box 2. Another example is that of strengthening street food hygiene bylaws for small towns: see the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO's) project on *Strengthening National Capacity for Food Control in the Solomon Islands*¹⁴.

B O X 2

Markets for Change (M4C), Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

By UN Women

Markets for Change (M4C) is six-year initiative based in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu that focuses on the economic empowerment of women market traders. UN Women notes that in the Pacific, women make up between 75% and 90% of all market vendors. The objectives of the project include increased socio-economic security for market vendors, gender responsive local government and market management, accessible and gender responsive marketplace infrastructure and on-site services, as well as increased voice and participation for women market vendors. The project activities included the installation of market place roofing, the provision of toilets and clean drinking water, and the provision of secure accommodation for rural market vendors. Activities also focused on the reduction of sexual and physical violence against women as well as theft.

Water security

Urban households generally consume more water than their rural counterparts. Managing urban water consumption can support improvements to nation-wide water resource management and address rising concerns about water scarcity in light of climate change¹⁵. Towns and cities must keep up with the demand for access to good quality water and need to contain a growing volume of (often untreated or poorly treated) waste water, which can negatively affect residents in surrounding areas and disrupt vital ecosystem processes in the wider catchment. Climate change and continued unplanned urbanisation threaten to intensify water-related problems. Prolonged droughts and intensified tropical storms can undermine and cause damage to urban water infrastructure and environmental degradation. Urban water security means thinking about proactively managing relevant water resources, considering both physical and non-physical measures.

When approaching water security, there are opportunities to capitalise on the urban-rural connections through the following entry points:

Entry point 1: Support an integrated systems approach to urban water management that brings together municipal water supply, sanitation, storm water and wastewater and the relevant linkages to land-use planning and economic development¹⁶.

Entry point 2: Strengthen key aspects of urban water management policies, legislation, and guidance on all aspects of water management (technical, social, environmental, economic and political).

Entry point 3: Implement demand management programs to reduce domestic and industrial water-use and support adoption of water-efficiency measures, as well as different forms of water recycling. Both large cities and smaller towns are important candidates for this approach.

A case study example of a strategy for implementing eco-efficient water infrastructure in the Philippines is provided in Box 3. The Philippines' Strategic Roadmap for Eco-Efficient Water Infrastructure (EEWIN)^{17 18} and accompanying programs, projects and systems for operation aim to address water scarcity issues with short- and long-term strategies.

B O X 3

Philippines Strategic Roadmap for Eco-Efficient Water Infrastructure (EEWIN)

By UNESCAP and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

Water scarcity is a major issue in larger cities in the Philippines. Tap water supply is not stable in many urban areas. Groundwater often serves as the main water source for both household and industrial uses, which has resulted in the overexploitation of groundwater resources, a decline in groundwater tables, contamination, salt water intrusion and land subsidence. More eco-efficient water infrastructure is required to better manage water supply issues. In response, UNESCAP and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) designed the Philippines Strategic Roadmap for Eco-Efficient Water Infrastructure (EEWIN), which outlines water management policy direction, plans, programs, projects and operation systems. The short-term, five-year plan focuses on addressing gaps related to absent policies, laws and regulations and the weak capacity of managing institutions. Meanwhile, the long-term, 25-year plan focuses on:

- 1) creating liveable cities through sustainable urban water management;
- 2) alternative water source development, such as rainwater harvesting;
- 3) agricultural water resources management, for example, a rice self-sufficiency program; and
- 4) industrial/economic zone water management.

2

STRATEGY 2 :
Meet the demand for better infrastructure and access to services

Urban infrastructure and basic services are defined by UN-Habitat as “the delivery of safe water, sanitation, waste management, social welfare, transport and communications facilities, energy, health and emergency services, schools, public safety, and the management of open spaces”¹⁹. The primary challenges with infrastructure in urban contexts are chronic. They include a rising demand for services, increasing costs of services, inadequate, outdated or poorly maintained infrastructure, poorly performing institutions, congested roads, and the prioritisation of cars over public transport. There are also challenges with the slow integration of technology and green infrastructure, and the inequitable distribution of infrastructure and access to services.

The chief areas of concern within transport are mobility, accessibility, proximity, affordability and safety. Accessing jobs and affordable housing in the city can be challenging when transit systems are expensive, ineffective (such services are sometimes designed to meet men’s needs rather than women’s and other differentiated needs) and unsafe through lack of maintenance and unenforced road safety rules.

There is also a demand for better and more functional public spaces (often overlooked by development and humanitarian agencies) to enable social and economic activities. Public spaces are where people of varying income levels, backgrounds and cultures meet, interact, network and earn income. Crucially, public spaces are used as evacuation points during a disaster and function as a mechanism for building social cohesion.

This strategy is presented in two parts. It begins with a discussion on large-scale infrastructure related to water, sanitation, telecommunications, energy and transport and provides entry points for integrated engagement. The second part focuses on entry points for improving access to services, namely, education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).



Infrastructure provision is critical to safe and sustainable urbanisation in places like Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Image: Juliet Willetts.

Infrastructure

Towns and cities within Asia and the Pacific have great need for quality infrastructure that improves quality of life. As urbanisation continues, a proactive response to infrastructure is crucial to designing and maintaining inclusive, sustainable, safe and resilient towns and cities for existing and future populations. Effective approaches to urban infrastructure involve integrated infrastructure planning within overarching city development plans and are demand-based instead of sector driven. It is important to note that improving the institutions and policies that govern and manage infrastructure is as critical as the infrastructure itself, if not more so.

The following entry points for engaging with infrastructure and services have been identified:

Entry point 1: Support integrated approaches to infrastructure planning, legal and regulatory frameworks as well as coordination between local, municipal, state and regional governments.

Entry point 2: Attract financing and more (or more effective) service providers by identifying and removing institutional barriers in order to better engage the private sector, whilst ensuring appropriate regulatory mechanisms are in place.

Entry point 3: Support institutional reform and financial sustainability to ensure quality and continuity of services especially in relation to urban sanitation, solid waste management and urban drainage – which are chronically underfunded areas and undermine a healthy living environment.

Entry point 4: Support technology and innovation to shift from waste as a cost to a resource, design buildings that are energy creating instead of energy wasting, apply approaches to water management that are ‘net-positive’ or restorative, reduce reliance on fossil fuels for energy, and increase recycling of waste – particularly nutrient re-use.

For an example of an integrated approach to infrastructure development and maintenance, see the Cities Development Initiative²⁰, which has provided assistance to 143 medium-sized cities in Asia and the Pacific, bridging the gap between development plans and implementation of infrastructure investments, totalling an estimated US\$7.7 billion in investment value.

An additional example that demonstrates gender-sensitive and inclusive infrastructure development is the Indonesia Australia Infrastructure Partnership, locally known as *Kemitraan Indonesia Australia Untuk Infrastruktur* (KIAT)²¹. The goal of KIAT is to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth through improved access to infrastructure for all, and to meet differentiated needs through innovative approaches involving women and other marginalised groups in decision-making and economic opportunities associated with infrastructure development.

Access to services

Opportunities for improving upon services related to education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene are presented below. These three sectors are commonly engaged with by humanitarian and development organisations and donors, and therefore are given priority in this section.

a) Education

Density, diversity and dynamism within urban areas create challenges and opportunities for education. Low-income areas and informal settlements are often in need of greater education coverage and quality improvement. The opportunities identified for investing in education focus on improving coverage and quality:

Entry point 1: Increase access to and reduce the cost of child care and pre-school in low-income urban areas in order to better prepare children for formal school and increase the number of hours women are able to work²².

Entry point 2: While enrolment in schools and child care is important, investment in the quality of education in towns and cities is needed to ensure that students attend and participate in classes and that teachers improve upon learning outcomes where needed.

Entry point 3: Engage low-income urban settlements – including through public outreach strategies – to support municipalities to identify and then design means for reaching children who are out of school – in particular street children, children who are displaced or children whose parents are migrant workers.

Entry point 4: Finance and/or strengthen conditional grant schemes (for schools and/or students), targeted stipends, fee-relief approaches and school feeding programs in low-income neighbourhoods. Find ways to vary the level of subsidy according to differentiations of neighbourhood poverty to appropriately tailor the differences in public spending on education per student²³.

The Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program²⁴, or 4Ps, in the Philippines is a case study of a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that assisted 20 million Filipinos with education. It used conditions such as school attendance, regular health checks and parent/guardian participation in neighbourhood-based family development sessions on positive discipline, disaster preparedness and women's rights, demonstrating a systems-based approach to education strengthening. Another example is that of BRAC's *Urban Slum Schools*²⁵ in Bangladesh, detailed in Box 4.

B O X 4

BRAC Urban Slum Schools

By BRAC

Children in urban Bangladesh living in low-income settlements find it difficult to access and remain in school. Low family incomes and the need for students to drop out and find work play a big role in lack of education. An example of how to deliver quality primary education that addresses such challenges can be found through the BRAC Urban Slums Schools, a program serving 62,000 children in informal settlements across urban Bangladesh. This project covers the full costs of primary school education for 2,000 schools over four years. It aims to hire and train 2,000 teachers and 10,000 parent committee members to conduct school monitoring of child attendance in an effort to meet BRAC's teaching and learning outcomes.

b) Health

High density areas with poor living conditions such as inadequate housing, low or no level of public services and infrastructure, pose significant health risks. A high population density combined with low environmental quality can cluster people around the risk of exposure to infectious diseases such as influenza or tuberculosis. Urban environments are host to the paradoxical trend of rising overnutrition and associated non-communicable disease (NCD) risks in some areas, and undernutrition and related risks in others. NCDs, including mental health conditions, are of particular concern in urban areas where poor urban planning policies, long commutes and an overreliance on motorised transport can lead to physical inactivity and difficulty making healthy food choices.

Moreover, urbanisation is associated with increasing rates of depression, anxiety and other mental disorders, exacerbated by noise, lack of green spaces and crowding, as well as social gradient, poverty, poor working conditions and other stressors. Addressing the root causes of these inter-related issues requires making health a central focus of urban planning.

The following key entry points for engaging with important to health-related issues have been identified:

Entry point 1: Support cities to develop the capacity for disease surveillance and response, including a communication strategy for an outbreak situation. Previous outbreaks of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza demonstrate that newly emerging infectious diseases can pose serious public health threats within Asia and the Pacific.

Entry point 2: Support strategies, policies and action plans that reduce the incidence of NCDs by encouraging healthy lifestyle changes (including through diet, physical activity) and changes that improve mental health (such as reducing levels of noise pollution). Municipal plans and policies should be integrated and harmonised with other department and national plans such as for tobacco control, (over- and under-) nutrition, physical activity, alcohol, mental illness and other diseases.

Entry point 3: Align development aid with municipal and national health processes to increase efficiency and decrease out-of-pocket transaction costs for poorer people. Support reforms to health financing and bottom-up approaches to financing universal coverage²⁶. Also support innovative mechanisms that promote risk-pooling and pre-payment for the informal sector as a means for increasing access²⁷.

A case study of New York's *Active Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design*²⁸ is highlighted in Box 5, demonstrating how a city-wide integrated approach to health can be taken.

B O X 5

Active Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design, New York

By New York City Departments of Design and Construction, Health and Mental Hygiene, Transportation, and City Planning

In 2010, The New York City Departments of Design and Construction, Health and Mental Hygiene, Transportation, and City Planning, released a publication that seeks to educate designers about opportunities to increase daily physical activity entitled, *Active Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design*. The guidelines demonstrate a multisectoral approach to addressing health issues in urban contexts. Based on research and identification of good practice, the guidelines provide built environment professionals with strategies for encouraging an increase in daily physical activity in neighbourhoods, streets and outdoor spaces. members to conduct school monitoring of child attendance in an effort to meet BRAC's teaching and learning outcomes.

c) Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

WASH activities aimed at reducing public health risks are crucial in urban areas. Community engagement in urban areas is different because of a higher population density living in apartment blocks or informal settlements and low visibility of at-risk groups such as migrants, HIV positive people and street children, as well as the challenges of transient populations. Urban areas host a mix of public and private ownership in relation to water, waste and sanitation services and informal settlements are often denied access to formalised services.

The following key entry points for engaging with WASH-related activities have been identified:

Entry point 1: Support activities that promote integrated city sanitation planning, community engagement and hygiene promotion. In particular, support pro-poor market-based approaches to faecal sludge management and re-use, the provision of safe water supply and improved solid waste management, while strengthening related community-based and local government bodies. Focus on the establishment of viable on-going water and sanitation service delivery models – not just infrastructure development.

Entry point 2: Support water activities that enhance governance and institutional arrangements, improve tariff setting and collection, strengthen pro-poor water supply and access policies, particularly in informal settlements. Incorporate mechanisms to increase women's participation in planning, decision-making and job-creation.

Entry point 3: Explore innovations related to both sanitation disposal without water use as well as the potential for domestic waste and wastewater to be a source of energy, water and nutrients for agriculture in peri-urban areas.

A case study of pro-poor market-based solutions for faecal sludge management in urban areas of Bangladesh is provided below in Box 6.

B O X 6

Pro-poor Market-based Solutions for Faecal Sludge Management in Urban Centres of Southern Bangladesh

By Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV), Netherlands Development Organization

In 2010, The New York City Departments of Design and Construction, Health and Mental Hygiene, Transportation, and City Planning, released a publication that seeks to educate designers about opportunities to increase daily physical activity entitled, *Active Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design*. The guidelines demonstrate a multisectoral approach to addressing health issues in urban contexts. Based on research and identification of good practice, the guidelines provide built environment professionals with strategies for encouraging an increase in daily physical activity in neighbourhoods, streets and outdoor spaces. members to conduct school monitoring of child attendance in an effort to meet BRAC's teaching and learning outcomes.

3

STRATEGY 3 :
Actively and thoughtfully engage with informality

Informality is a diverse, complex and growing area of activities that are not subject to government regulation or taxation such as income generation, housing, tenure rights and the provision of basic services. Many factors lead to the growth of informality including inefficient public institutions, inappropriate economic policies and frameworks, and incentives to remain in the informal economy. Some associate the informal sector with “lost revenue, unfair competition, low productivity, human rights abuses and environmental degradation; while others associate it with entrepreneurship, flexibility and resilience”²⁹.

In East Asia and the Pacific, the informal economy accounts for 75% of total employment, in areas of domestic work, home-based work, street vending, waste picking and fishing urban waterways³⁰. Workers in the informal economy, particularly women, are unlikely to have decent work* conditions met in their employment³¹. Moreover, workers in the informal economy are vulnerable to disaster shocks due to their localities, living conditions, lack of savings, and limited or no access to social protection – a reminder that economic sustainability must also be built upon disaster resilience principles.



Informal settlement in Bangkok, Thailand. Image: Pamela Sitko

* Decent work is defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as “opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men”. ILO (2018). *Decent work*. Available at <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>, np.

The Asia and Pacific region also continue to see persistent housing shortages and the growth of low-income settlements with more than half a billion poorer urban people living in substandard housing³². Such circumstances are often accompanied by unsecure tenure, an inability to access basic services, exclusion from formal institutions such as banks, and an increased reliance on the informal market for employment and access to goods and services. Moreover, there tends to be a range of piecemeal 'solutions', lacking sufficient scale and not part of overall city strategies. Interventions must take care not to do harm by undermining aspects of informality on which the poor currently depend. For example, moves to formalise housing should not limit informal economic activities and thereby negatively affect beneficiaries' livelihoods³³.

In many locations, current systems for managing urban land use and ownership are often outdated, inappropriate or dysfunctional. Inheritance and property law in places such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore for example, take traditional views of gender roles and restrict legal access for women, putting those who are low-income at a distinct disadvantage³⁴. Lack of formal law and messy customary law, including proof of ownership, are especially challenging in the Pacific; sometimes 'good enough' arrangements are preferred³⁵. However, the potential for conflict in Pacific urban areas is considerable as land boundaries are often ill-defined and contested by competing groups.

Informal housing and land ownership have a strong link with informal provision of services and infrastructure such as water, electricity and transportation. Some of the barriers to formalising service provision and related infrastructure include cost, legality and the exclusive policies of service providers. Activities such as building new roads, electrical grids and water pipelines are costly. Doing so in informal or illegal settlements raises political concerns about legitimising informality and promoting further sprawl³⁶. However, informal and squatter settlements are a permanent part of the city fabric of Asia and the Pacific and this should not be an obstacle to service and infrastructure provision to the poor.

Understanding the opportunities and challenges related to informality requires more and better data. Currently, there is a large gap in the effective collection and analysis of information about people who engage in informal aspects of urban living. For example, informal settlements are often not included in health, demographic and socio-economic surveys, leaving large data gaps concerning the lives, livelihoods and living conditions of hundreds of millions of people. Such data would assist municipalities to better prioritise urban development activities and geographical areas of investment.

The following opportunities have been identified as entry points for investing in informal settings:

Entry point 1: Support the four pillars of decent work at a municipal and country level through activities such as training entrepreneurs in small business administration, strengthening social protection systems, assisting trade unions to promote occupational safety and health, working with governments to revise labour laws and develop and implement labour market policies, eliminating child and forced labour, and all forms of discrimination in the workplace, promoting gender equality and assisting in the collection of labour statistics³⁷.

Entry point 2: Support for land management systems that consider a continuum of land rights. For example, secure property rights through titling and working to mitigate 'downward raising' (the sale of a title to wealthier people). Consider supporting land readjustment approaches (land owners voluntarily contribute their land to urban development) such as land pooling (pooling rights into a single partnership) or land sharing (for example, when a land owner transfers part of the land occupied by an informal settlement to the informal occupants)³⁸. Support relocation only when it is a more appropriate option, for example, if disaster exposure cannot be reduced and risks cannot be mitigated.

Entry point 3: Support an integrated approach to incremental settlement upgrading that addresses income generation, health, safety, inclusion, social connectedness, the building of trust and leadership capacity. Engage with a broad range of stakeholders and institutions. Find ways to take a city-wide approach and scale up activities that are contextually appropriate to each neighbourhood and its unique vulnerabilities, risks and stresses³⁹.

Entry point 4⁴⁰: In regard to services, support alternative models for providing urban drainage, sanitation, solid waste management, mobility and clean energy in informal settlements. While governments typically provide these services, support alternative models that complement government-provided services through co-management or co-production. Crucially, it is important that basic services planning is undertaken through participatory planning processes and is strongly linked to overall city planning and development strategies.

Entry point 5: Community-driven* data gathering can fill data gaps in informal settlements through participatory mapping, surveys or enumerations in informal settlements. People known and trusted within the local population (such as a savings group leaders) are best placed to conduct surveys on controversial or sensitive issues⁴¹. Widely available and inexpensive technology permits quick collection and representation in online data visualisation approaches such as OpenStreetMap⁴².

* Communities are not spatially defined in towns and cities. Instead, there are communities of interest that form around an issue; communities of resistance that form during a crisis; communities of culture formed through shared language and beliefs; communities of practice that form through livelihood connections; and virtual communities formed through online connections. Campbell, L. (2016). *Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and Their Systems*. ALNAP Working Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI.

Box 7 describes a case study on Baan Mankong⁴³, a Thai national government infrastructure investment program that provides infrastructure subsidies and housing loans to low-income urban neighbourhoods and their networks for in situ upgrading at a city-wide scale.

B O X 7

Baan Mankong 'Secure Housing', Thailand

By the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), an organisation under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

Baan Mankong, a nationally driven 'Secure Housing' programme has improved tenure security, housing conditions and access services for 96,000 households in 1,800 neighbourhoods across the country. The program starts with a city-wide survey of poorer neighbourhoods and then formed networks with NGOs, local government, academics and built-environment professionals to upgrade communities. Communities form savings groups and register as legal cooperatives, which then access loans with four per cent annual interest rates from CODI, the agency managing Baan Mankong. Cooperatives then lend to their members with a small added margin to the interest rate to cover inconsistent loan repayment, neighbourhood expenses and welfare programs. The program has been running since 2003.

4

STRATEGY 4 : Invest in disaster resilience by addressing climate and disaster risk together

The Asia and Pacific region is one of the most disaster-affected areas of the world. Between 2015-2030, the population of 'extreme-risk' areas is estimated to grow by more than 50% in 26 cities, and by 30 to 50% in 72 cities⁴⁴. Extreme risk arises when urban growth takes place on marginalised, often environmentally degraded land such as steep slopes, drainage canals and riverbanks, further exacerbating exposure to multi-hazards such as cyclones, flooding and earthquakes.

Resilience is an approach for doing development better and has been widely used by other donors as a means of linking both disasters and development into one unified, people-centred approach⁴⁵. Urban resilience is about "the capacity of cities (individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems) to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of stress and shocks, and transform when conditions require so"⁴⁶.

An essential part of building urban resilience is reducing the risk of disasters and adapting to the impacts of climate change – these must be complementary processes which are part of the wider ambit of effectively managing urbanisation. Without climate adaptation actions, the Pacific region could see a GDP decrease of 3.3% by 2050, mitigated only by taking a low carbon resilience approach⁴⁷ that is estimated to cost the region 1.4 to 1.8% of its GDP⁴⁸. This strategy first introduces entry points for disaster risk reduction and climate change and then suggests entry points for humanitarian action.



South Tarawa in Kiribati is vulnerable to rising sea levels and natural disasters. Image: Paul Jones

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change

Support to local government is critical for reducing risks related to climate and natural hazards, fluctuating food and energy prices and the breakout of disease. Built environment professionals – including land surveyors, planners, administrators and land tenure specialists – have a key role to play in designing integrated approaches that reposition towns and cities to be better prepared to deal with and mitigate the consequences of disaster risk. These technical specialists and practitioners play a role in project consultation and briefing, design, planning, project management and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation⁴⁹. They are critical to the design and implementation of policies, standards and regulations concerning the built environment. After a disaster, they are important stakeholders who engage in city-wide planning, securing planning permission, land acquisition, zoning regulations, and traffic related activities⁵⁰.

There are several global frameworks that are crucial to ‘building out risk’ and ‘building in resilience’ in urban centres. These include the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, a “15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders”⁵¹. The Paris Agreement on climate change, designed to keep the global temperature rise below two degrees Celsius and to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change through access to appropriate financing, new technology and capacity building⁵². The New Urban Agenda (NUA) is an urbanisation management blueprint developed for and by UN-Habitat, government, the UN, civil society, communities, the private sector, professionals, the scientific and academic community⁵³. The NUA complements the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and specifically draws upon targets in SDG 11 – making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Lastly, national urban plans are important to know about as they prioritise urban development interventions, plan future development, coordinate planning amongst various departments responsible for managing urbanisation and seek adequate financial investment to achieve development goals⁵⁴.

The following entry points are opportunities to invest in DRR and climate adaptation focused activities:

Entry point 1: Support DRR-focused activities such as linking cities to national early warning systems; carrying out municipal environmental planning and management; municipal vulnerability and risk assessments (participatory and technical); the design of city climate plans and policies and disaster resilience strategies and action plans; and setting performance indicators and plans for the evaluation of existing and future municipal plans.

Entry point 2: Support climate adaptation activities such as revising master plans; developing new strategies for land use, transportation or specific sectors. It is important that plans and adaptation strategies reflect climate changes in sea level, coastal areas or floodplains and natural resources such as water supply. Support investment in infrastructure adaptation such as levees, sea walls and road improvement in densely populated flood plains. Finally, where possible, support incremental changes to municipal service delivery, which could include activities such as painting bus roofs white to reflect heat during extreme temperatures.

Entry point 3: Provide funding to partnerships between key stakeholders for DRR and climate related activities including academic and scientific actors, NGOs, the UN, community organisations, governments, financial institutions, business and large-scale industry.

Examples of DRR and climate change plans include the *Bangkok Master Plan on Climate Change 2013-2023*⁵⁵ and the *Surat City Resilience Strategy*⁵⁶) described in Box 8 below.

B O X 8

Surat City Resilience Strategy, India

By 100 Resilient Cities and Taru Leading Edge

The Surat City Resilience Strategy is designed to help the city “prepare for, adapt to, and quickly rebound from, shocks and stresses” (Surat Climate Change Trust and TARU. (2017)., p.3). The strategy has seven pillars focusing on: 1) road connectivity and mobility 2) affordable housing 3) water quality and quantity 4) diversifying economic sectors 5) environment and ecosystem 6) social cohesion and 7) public health. These pillars were prioritised based on heavy consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders such as the Surat Urban Development Authority, Surat Climate Change Trust, Surat city police, Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Gujarat Gas, Surat Citizen Council Trust, Traffic Education Trust and various subject matter experts, communities and NGOs. The consultation process was led by a city project team comprised of 100 Resilient Cities (100 RC) and Taru Leading Edge. The strategy set 20 goals and 63 initiatives requiring collaboration between 25 organisations and input from 4.4 million citizens. It is a living document that can be fine-tuned as priorities change and initiatives are completed.

Humanitarian assistance

Relevant and appropriate urban humanitarian assistance builds on the systems and services that already exist. It recognises that 'community' in an urban context is not homogenous. In addition, because chronic poverty adds to the complexity of addressing humanitarian needs, an exit or hand-over strategy is crucial. Importantly, relevant and appropriate humanitarian action connects with local opportunities that exist such as specialised skill sets within the local labour market and access to markets and technology. Moreover, it is critical to collaborate with local actors such as municipal and local authorities, local businesses and traders, urban planners and designers and other built environment professionals who possess local knowledge, connections and are stakeholders in their environments.

The following entry points have been identified as opportunities for investment after a disaster:

Entry point 1: Support the strengthening of existing health services and improvement to the provision of water, sanitation and waste management services. Do not create parallel structures.

Entry point 2: Where markets work, support cash-based programming to meet basic needs and revitalise markets after a disaster.

Entry point 3: Support shared analysis and coordination mechanisms through joint assessment and profiling activities with governments, affected neighbourhoods and other relevant stakeholders.

Entry point 4: Fund place-based approaches that use systems thinking and integrated programming to adequately deal with people-place complexity and achieve incremental, lasting change at scale.

Entry point 5: Understand land and housing tenure arrangements in order to decide how best to invest humanitarian aid. Activities focused on housing, water, public safety and livelihoods can all be influenced by tenure arrangements (or lack of).

Entry point 6: Support locally produced urban plans and policies. Where these do not exist, support new city plans and policies ensuring they are inclusive of disaster resilience and provide a comprehensive view of city needs and solutions to be put in.

A case study of a recent urban area-based approach (ABA) by the British Red Cross in Port-au-Prince, Haiti⁵⁷ is shared in Box 9. While Haiti is not in the Pacific region, it does present similar challenges facing small islands and the case study itself exemplifies good practices within ABAs.

B O X 9

The Urban Regeneration and Reconstruction Programme (URRP), Port-Au-Prince, Haiti

By British Red Cross

The British Red Cross took an Area-Based Approach to 2010 earthquake recovery activities in Port-au-Prince City. The Urban Regeneration and Reconstruction Programme (URRP) focused on recovery in the neighbourhood of Delmas 19, a low-income settlement, providing assistance to 4,000 households. The integrated approach focused on four areas:

- 1) Shelter and infrastructure - households received various forms of shelter support, public infrastructure was rebuilt, specifically rehabilitation of a canal to improve flow and drainage, walkways, public spaces and markets.
- 2) Public health – where support for water and sanitation and public health education was prioritised.
- 3) Livelihoods – whereby savings groups were established and small loans provided to access to credit and health insurance.
- 4) Community governance – in relation to DRR, protection, and local stakeholder engagement in decision-making, planning and project implementation.

The four areas demonstrate urban integrated programming in a particular geographical area. The programme evaluation notes “there is promise in an integrated approach, as long as it comes with a clear, overarching vision of the expected outcomes, a precise description of how programme components fit together, and specific indicators with effective tools for measuring them in order to assess progress in achieving results”.

5

STRATEGY 5 : Back local authorities, their priorities and their systems of urban management

A renewed focus on improving city governance, urban management and investing in localisation is taking place within urban development. In towns and cities, aid and development is no longer about providing goods and services, but rather about supporting local government to fulfil its mandate to provide water, sewer and electricity connections, household waste collection, community toilet maintenance, public/social housing and open space management. There has also been greater acknowledgement of the role of powerful political and developmental interests in city governance and any attempts at reform⁵⁸.

The World Bank notes, “Over the past decade, decentralisation has devolved more authority to local governments, without the corresponding and necessary fiscal decentralisation”⁵⁹. Therefore, investment in urban governance should consider capacity building, policy development, public sector financing⁶⁰ and engagement with city management, planning (master planning, metropolitan planning, integrated urban and regional planning), laws and regulations on safety, security, resource use and urban development. It needs to also factor in an understanding of the local political economy dynamics and strategies to address these⁶¹.

Greater investment in social inclusion – the process of engaging individuals and diverse groups to partake in society – is also needed. The United Nations notes that “[i]n nearly all countries, to varying degrees, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and sexual orientation and gender identity have been grounds for social exclusion over time”⁶². Governance structures greatly influence who gets to participate in decision-making and in what ways. Asia and Pacific cities generally have a weak culture of public participation, with legal frameworks in place but uneven implementation of participatory planning practices and decision-making. For example, the Philippines has a stronger track record of citizen engagement than countries like Cambodia and Vietnam⁶³. However, as participatory processes are



Local authorities often manage varying levels of informality within their region. Image: The Philippines, Philippa Smales

affected by existing socioeconomic inequality and poverty, they are not a panacea and should be part of broader approaches, including policy bargaining⁶⁴. Public spaces are also important mechanisms for integrating people with multiple income levels, varying identities and degrees of social capital. At-risk youth, street children and migrants are key groups that face social exclusion challenges in Asia and the Pacific.

Ineffective governance – the structures and processes set up for managing a town or city – is at the core of most development challenges. Governance is a complex negotiation and contestation over resource allocation by a high density of actors. Urban governance weaknesses often lie within the capacity for service delivery, generation of local revenue, socio-economic inequality, preservation of public order and security, relevant institutional arrangements and the degree to which residents participate in decision-making.

Fragile and conflict-affected urban contexts are linked to weak governance, social and economic insecurity and political instability. Evidence shows that social inclusion, structural policies and public sector management are some of the weakest areas for fragile and conflict affected countries and that multifaceted development interventions are required, prioritising gender mainstreaming, accountability mechanisms for public resource use, investment in health and education, strengthening frameworks for land use, trade and finance⁶⁵.

The following entry points have been identified as priority activities within urban governance programming:



Entry point 1: Support the localisation agenda⁶⁶, which recognises that local people are the change makers in every day development and the first responders when a disaster strikes. This principle aims to shift power and capability to local organisations, recognising the importance of local actors and the need for them to be at the forefront of projects instead of international non-government organisations (INGOs), including during disaster response*.

Entry point 2: Support capacity building activities within relevant municipal structures related to budget and asset management, integrated urban planning, inclusive service delivery and gender responsive planning and budgeting⁶⁷.

Entry point 3: Support good leadership through improving accountability mechanisms, performance monitoring, transparent budgeting, public asset management and public reporting of information, responsibilities and mistakes in order to strengthen trust in government institutions. Support for citizen’s capacity to hold government and political leaders to account through social accountability approaches is also important.

Entry point 4: Improve data gathering through local co-production of data (collection and analysis) between urban residents and local governments disaggregated by sex and age, including within informal settlements, to support local planning and monitoring of urban development.



For examples of governance programs in cities see the Cities Alliance⁶⁸ (Box 10), a multi-donor fund that provides support for policy framework development such as national urban policies, settlement upgrading,

* According to the Start Network (a network of 42 national and international aid agencies), in 2015, the proportion of aid channelled directly to national and local NGOs accounted for only 0.4% of all international humanitarian assistance across the rural to urban spectrum.



improvements to basic services and infrastructure, and mechanisms for improving governance. Also see a case study on Apia, Samoa⁶⁹ where a systems approach was developed for understanding urban management as a tool to improve services while implementing new institutional, policy and legislative arrangements.

B O X 1 0

The Cities Alliance, a global and country and city-based initiative

Since 1999, the City Alliance has been bringing together organisations with expertise on cities to achieve the goal of well run, productive cities that offer opportunities for all. Its member base is made up of multilateral development organisations, national governments, local government associations, international NGOs, private sector and foundations, and academia. The 30-member Alliance provides direct operational support to programmes that reduce poverty and gender inequality through country/city projects and global projects focused on the areas of equitable economic growth, resilience, gender and migration with a particular focus on secondary cities. The Cities Alliance is a grant-making mechanism and works with large donors such as the World Bank.

Social protection

Social protection in urban areas provides poorer urban people with access to safety nets, social services, housing and job opportunities. Evidence shows that in many cases, social protection is in its first iteration in urban environments and requires greater adaptation in order to better connect with the spatial, economic and social systems⁷⁰. Social protection is often run through coordinated efforts between municipal and national governments.

The following entry points have been identified as priority activities for support within urban social protection programming:

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Entry point 1: Support adaptations to targeting that include questions about whether access to basic services exists, rather than assuming it does, specifically in regard to proxy means tests (where information on household or individual characteristics are correlated with welfare levels).

Entry point 2: Support outreach for social services and communications, taking care to tailor the design to each urban neighbourhood. To ensure inclusion is achieved, special consideration of the elderly and working poor who are often not adequately accounted for is essential. Mobility, including seasonal migration, is also important to account for. Additionally, consider how to support people lacking documentation of residence.

Entry point 3: Support research on urban social protection in order to generate evidence on how social protection can better target non-traditional vulnerability in towns and cities, displaced persons, host communities and migrants, amongst more traditional themes of health care, education and income support in development and humanitarian settings. Such efforts should include linking evidence to policy and program development processes.

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Examples of urban social protection case studies on housing, informal employment, rural-urban migration social safety nets in China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam can be found in UNESCAP's *Social Protection in Asian Cities* report⁷¹. A case study on Bangladesh's National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) and its link to humanitarian response in urban areas can be found on the Humanitarian Practice Network's recent online article entitled *Using Social Protection Mechanisms to Respond to Urban Shocks*⁷².



Rapid urban growth across Cambodia places significant demands on town and city governance structures.
Image: Philippa Smales



STRATEGY 6 :

Let inclusivity be a measure of successful urban management

The SDGs seek to ‘leave no one behind’ and ensure that the goals apply to all persons in society. Well-managed cities can promote cultural diversity, combat destructive stereotypes and radicalisation, and provide interactions that respect the rights of every inhabitant. As a provider of services, local governments are often at the forefront of connecting with populations who might be at risk due to their age, disability, health or gender. It is anticipated that by 2050, two billion people, or 20% of the population is expected to be over the age of 60⁷³. Equally, there are expectations that by 2050, 15% of people living in urban areas will have disabilities⁷⁴.

Yet, older people and people with disabilities are often excluded from decision-making and community activities. The ability to live comfortably is for many, restricted due to a lack of secure income or no income and inaccessible or inadequate spaces and services such as transportation, housing, social protection, streets, parks and social and health facilities⁷⁵. From an economic standpoint, the costs associated with the exclusion of a single group from the labour force including in low and middle-income countries, including those with disabilities, could lead to a loss of between one and seven per cent of national GDP⁷⁶. This is due to a lack of support for disabled people to be productive and the costs associated with benefits and pensions related to both the families and the carers. When investing in towns and cities, there are particular opportunities to reshape mobility, accessibility, safety and security, the distribution of services, community buildings, public spaces and social mixing⁷⁷.

The following entry points⁷⁸ highlight opportunities for designing inclusive cities that specifically factor in age and disability (see the next section for gender):

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Entry point 1: Support local planning initiatives to develop dense, walkable and mixed-use neighbourhoods. In particular, invest in streets to ensure they have wide and well-maintained pavements that can be used by all, including people with disabilities, and public transportation that is adequate, affordable, safe and accessible for people of all ages, abilities and gender.

Entry point 2: Support street-based livelihood activities by improving street safety (reduced traffic flow and speed, car no-go zones) through formal planning and urban design initiatives that engage in participatory planning with street vendors.

Entry point 3: Support the design and maintenance of public space, including green spaces that encourage social interaction and physical activity.

Entry point 4: Support integrated approaches to housing that are inclusive as well as building standards, laws and enforcement mechanisms to ensure accessibility, availability and affordability of housing and public services⁷⁹.

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A street vendor in Bangkok, Thailand. Image: Pamela Sitko

Examples of good practice for inclusivity include the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Database for Age-Friendly Practices⁸⁰. The database features examples at a municipal level that embody multi-sectoral action from a demand-driven side instead of starting with the supply side of service provision. It can be searched by country, community size and intervention.

Gender

The built environment is shaped by the social constructs of gender and associated social norms and relations. In urban areas, gender inequality and bias are commonly found in economic activities (through work participation rates and wage gaps), in inadequate infrastructure and access to services (manifesting as time poverty, safety and security issues, lack of access to opportunities and unpaid work) and in violence against women that can occur in public (or indeed private) spaces. At a national level, gender equality is often captured within the constitution; at municipal and local levels it is generally not prioritised in policies or plans⁸¹.

The following entry points provide opportunities for effectively addressing gender aspects in urban contexts⁸²:

Entry point 1: Develop ways to reduce the rate of gender-based violence in public spaces (for example through improved lighting, safe sanitation facilities, police patrols). Additionally, address safety and security issues related to public transport in order to enhance women's safe mobility and increase access to opportunities.

Entry point 2: Support gender-sensitivity training and women's rights training for municipal and urban actors such as police, transport workers and land officials. In particular, sharing 'do no harm' thinking and approaches with such actors.

Entry point 3: Support advocacy and campaigns for the repealing of outdated laws and policies to ensure international obligations are incorporated, for example, women's equality of access to land and property.

Entry point 4: Facilitate partnerships between the municipality and local women's groups to promote both 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' gender-inclusive urban planning and encourage the ability of women who are poor or vulnerable to participate in urban planning.

Entry point 5: Support governments to identify and address obstacles faced by women in regard to business regulations when starting and developing their own businesses. Promote networks between female-led enterprises and access to tailored business development support.

For examples of gender responsive programming in cities, see the activities undertaken by local government gender and development learning hubs in the Philippines⁸³, recognised by the Philippine Commission on Women in 2018. Examples include: strengthening monitoring and regulatory functions to ensure gender-responsive programs and services in Davao City; the role of child minding centres in improving women's productivity and working conditions, also in Davao City; multi-sectoral and community-based approaches to ending gender-based violence (GBV) within Naga City; women's economic empowerment programs by local governments in Iloilo Province; and gender-responsive health services in local governments in Quezon Province.

Conclusion

This paper underscores the need for urbanisation to be accompanied by good practices in development and disaster risk management to create an overall sense of productivity, liveability and resilience in towns and cities in Asia and the Pacific. The interconnectedness and complexity of better managing urbanisation has resulted in an overall hesitation by aid agencies to engage in urban development activities. The six strategies in this paper aim to demonstrate that aid agencies, donors and other partners are already taking steps to support municipalities in their urban development agendas, and that more can be done.

The suggested 'entry points' for action are starting points for entering into complexity. The entry points are complementary to one another and at their core, restate the centrality of good governance. The breadth of the entry points is designed to speak to numerous organisations with a wide range of mandates, areas of specialisation, skills and capacities, and levels of experience in relation to managing urbanisation. It is hoped that the entry points spark new ideas, innovation, partnerships and activities that result in better outcomes for managing urbanisation in towns and cities across Asia and the Pacific.

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