

Child-Centred Urban Resilience Framework: a tool for inclusive city planning

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Plan International and Arup developed the *Child-Centred Urban Resilience Framework* to involve vulnerable groups in planning processes. The framework guides organisations to design, plan and implement community resilience activities in urban settings.

Cities are transforming because of demographic and social changes, inequity and environmental risk. In response, signatories to the *New Urban Agenda*¹ made commitments focusing on vulnerable urban groups, including children. Child-centred organisations acknowledge they need to respond by increasing efforts to build resilience and align these efforts with global declarations, such as the *New Urban Agenda*. The *Child-Centred Urban Resilience Framework* (CCURF) was developed to assist the work of these organisations to build resilience in cities in support of children. The completion of the CCURF coincided with the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat-III (October 2016) and was launched at Habitat-III by Gillian Bird, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations.

Approach

The CCURF is guided by urban systems thinking and aligns child and human rights and gender-sensitive approaches with urban development and promotes children as agents of resilience. The CCURF sets out four strategic action areas:

- Sustaining life for children by improving access to basic services, ensuring decent work and safeguarding survival and development.
- Mobilising the community to value the protection and promotion of child and human rights through increased security and protection (especially for girls) and calling for community and stakeholder involvement.
- Making safe places where children can live, play and grow by providing child- and gender-sensitive infrastructure as well as information that children can access.
- Promoting integration so that managing and planning cities is responsive to and inclusive of children.

Need

As global populations urbanise, poverty and vulnerability affects more people. As a consequence, the work of international development organisations (e.g. multilateral development banks, bilateral and multilateral donors and international non-government organisations) needs to be directed towards urban centres and towards the effects of climate change. For organisations working in urban areas, understanding the nature of urban poverty, the increasing risks associated with urbanisation (including climate change) and the complexity of the urban context is critical. While some international development organisations have access to resources to take a systems-approach to their work, others do not. This 'gap' in resources to work at a systems-level to address the impacts of climate change on cities was acknowledged by Plan International, which inspired the development of the CCURF.

The CCURF is a combination of research, experience and expertise, in particular, research undertaken by Plan International with IIED (Brown & Dodman 2014²) and Arup's work with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation on the City Resilience Index.³ While the City Resilience Index and other tools such as the 'The TEN Essentials for Making Cities Resilient'⁴ by UNISDR and the 'City Resilience Profiling Tool'⁵ by UN Habitat provide guidance for resilience planning at a city scale, there was a need for a simple tool for organisations working in urban communities with the poor and vulnerable that addressed the particular risks facing children. There was also recognition that each community, program and city was different due to local contexts and divergent shocks and stresses. Any tool needed to help users understand urban dynamics, stakeholders and areas of focus so as to maximise the impact on beneficiaries. The idea of the CCURF, and the framework, was to further international development efforts in urban resilience at local levels.

Development

The CCURF draws on the experience and expertise of Plan International and Arup. Participation was achieved through semi-structured interviews where gaps and challenges were identified. Country-level workshops explored the concepts of resilience and systems thinking with reference to specific country contexts. A regional-level workshop synthesised learning using a framework to draw out priorities for action.



Relevance

The CCURF reinforces the urban paradigm shift as called for by the *New Urban Agenda*, specifically the rethinking of the way cities and settlements are planned, financed, developed, governed and managed to include the perspectives of children. The CCURF reinforces the principle of 'leave no one behind' (one of the guiding principles of the *New Urban Agenda*) by including children as active agents resilience planning and implementation. Using the CCURF contributes to sustainable cities and communities in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, in particular, Targets 11.3 and 11.7.

Application to date

Plan International used the CCURF to review its urban disaster risk reduction programs in Indonesia, The Philippines and Myanmar and to identify how these existing initiatives were contributing to 'urban resilience building' as described by the CCURF. The CCURF was used to design and implement urban resilience programs in cities including Jakarta, Manila and Yangon. These programs engage with children as target groups. Plan International used the CCURF to advocate for inclusive national policies and frameworks to cater to the specific vulnerabilities and needs of children. Arup has used the CCURF to assess the contribution of disaster risk reduction in urban projects for children and to develop its

'Child-Centred Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' approach.

The CCURF has wider applications for humanitarian, international and community development organisations, especially child-rights organisations. As a framework, the CCURF helps explain city systems and the intersection with people, especially children. Its development is a collaborative partnership between like-minded organisations and the framework is an example of systems that put children at the centre of program design and implementation.

Application in the future

In Indonesia and the Philippines, Plan International is using the CCURF in conjunction with participatory-action-research approaches to include children in designing solutions. The CCURF will also be used to support capacity building of local governments in The Philippines to increase youth agency and participation in urban planning and governance activities.

In the rapidly growing cities of the Australasian and Pacific regions, children remain one of the most vulnerable groups (Brown & Dodman 2014). The CCURF is a useful tool for urban programming by organisations to bring together system-level thinking, child rights, gender-sensitive and strength-based approaches for collaborative and coordinated actions with and for children. As children's online and 'on-street' lives become increasingly intertwined, the CCURF may also support new designs for child protection and safety that reflect this reality. A child-centred approach to urban planning, safety and design helps tackle urban challenges in a holistic and integrated manner. This has all the potential to lead to inclusive, liveable and safer cities that work better for everyone.

For further information contact Plan International or Arup.

Plan International: www.plan.org.au.

Arup: www.arup.com.

1 New Urban Agenda, at: <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>.

2 Brown & Dodman 2014, *Understanding children's risk and agency in urban areas and their implications for child-centred urban disaster risk reduction in Asia*. Asian Cities Climate Resilience Working Paper Series 6: 2014. At: <http://pubs.iied.org/106521IED.html>.

3 New Urban Agenda, at: www.cityresilienceindex.org/#/.

4 The TEN Essentials for Making Cities Resilient, at: www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/toolkit/article/the-ten-essentials-for-making-cities-resilient.

5 City Resilience Profiling Tool, at: <http://urbanresiliencehub.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CRPT-Guide.pdf>.