Tools and Methodologies for Urban Food Security Assessment, Targeting and Distribution

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Abstract

While interest and awareness of urban disasters is growing, recent humanitarian emergencies such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake show that urban-specific tools and methodologies are not consistently being used. This paper addresses the topic by asking whether existing tools and approaches are suitable for assessment, targeting and distribution in urban humanitarian response to food insecurity? The paper is based on a literature review as well as the author's experiences working with ALNAP to create the Urban Humanitarian Response Portal.

Urbanisation worldwide is growing and diversifying. No longer a dichotomy, urban and rural areas are best understood as existing on a continuum. While food insecurity traditionally has been seen as a rural problem, recent events have highlighted the relevance of this emergency for urban environments, so approaches must adapt in order to be effective. Disaster response tools are also mostly urban-specific, however the high likelihood of more mass-scale urban disasters in the near future mean humanitarians must be prepared.

Urban disasters are unique for a great number of reasons, including but not limited to scale, heterogeneity, chronic vulnerabilities, the challenges of slum areas and marginalised populations, new actors and community associations, dense and diverse populations.

Traditional approaches to assessment are not suitable for urban response as these methods are time and resource intensive and can't be scaled up to match the size of urban areas. The different communities, food sources and consumption, livelihoods and expenditures found in urban contexts all require adjustments for assessment tools and methodologies. While traditional assessments are unsuitable, there are several guides to assessment in urban contexts available, which need to be more consistently relied on in future urban food security response.

Traditional approaches to targeting the food insecure require adjustment to meet the needs of the urban context. Relevant urban features include the population's heterogeneity, lack of baseline data, a dense population with vulnerable individuals spread out, different understandings of households and community and many actors who seek to influence the

targeting approach. These all present challenges for targeting method and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Despite these difficulties, targeting is extremely important and should not be rushed or ignored.

Distribution for food security response has historically been in the form of physical food aid delivered through relief committees in mass dispersals of goods. Urban environments require a dramatic shift, and lots of work is being done on new distribution approaches These include cash programming, remote and mobile methods, and partnering with traders and financial institutions to deliver aid without disrupting urban markets.

In conclusion, while urban disasters present many challenges, there are ways to adapt and new methods and guidelines already in existence. Humanitarians must recognise the need for urban-specific assessment, targeting and distribution but don't need to reinvent the wheel for each new programme. Instead, they should take advantage of existing knowledge and continue to build upon these approaches in order to respond most effectively to urban disasters in the future.

Statement of Originality

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

Signed……Leah Campbell…………. (candidate) Date …25 January 2013………

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Acronyms

ACF – Action Contre la Faim/Action Against Hunger

ALNAP – Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance

CaLP – Cash Learning Partnership

CBT – Community Based Targeting

CHF – Community Housing Foundation

DEC – Disasters Emergency Committee

DFID – Department for International Development (UK)

ECHO – European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department

EMMA – Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation

FCS – Food Consumption Score

IASC – InterAgency Standing Committee

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

IFPRI - International Food Policy Research Institute

ILO – International Labour Organisation

JEFAP - Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme

ODI – Overseas Development Institute

RC – Relief Committee

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

USAID – U.S. Agency for International Development

WFP – World Food Program

WRC – Women's Refugee Commission

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the past few years, interest and awareness of urban disasters and the challenges they pose for humanitarian response has grown enormously. Numerous organisations and entitles have undertaken studies on urban issues. Evaluations of programmes in Haiti and other urban environments increasingly take note of the features of the urban context. As Ramalingam & Knox Clarke (2012, p. 22) note, 'The high risk of a massive urban disaster occurring very soon set against the low level of readiness, is a powerful argument for radically increasing attention to this area (urban disasters)'.

While all humanitarian response situations are unique, to be effective response must be based on tried and tested well-planned assessment, targeting and carefully considered methods of distribution. Assessment identifies the current needs and coping strategies of an affected population, targeting determines who is most in need and distribution addresses the type of aid and means of delivery. These areas are both interdependent and unique. Urban contexts have implications for all three areas, particularly when it comes to urban food security, which is increasingly challenging. Traditional rural methods to addressing food security are based on a very different environment than the urban context, as growing expertise shows us. This paper asks, are existing tools, methods and approaches for food security assessment, targeting and distribution appropriate for urban humanitarian response?

In this paper, traditional approaches to assessment, targeting and distribution relating to food security will be examined , as well as the features of the urban context and urban disasters, in order to see whether these traditional tools and approaches can be used in or adapted for urban humanitarian response. This work reinforces the growing acknowledgement of urban disasters as an urgent and poorly understood phenomenon and highlights practical examples of how the features of urban environments impact the assessment, targeting and distribution of humanitarian response relating to food security.

This paper argues that while there are some very useful guidelines and methodologies for urban response[1], organisations must make a more concerted effort to consult and use

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[1] See the list on page 52 for key documents.

these and continue to develop new tools for urban environments. 'The experience of the humanitarian organisations represented at the ALNAP 27th meeting suggest that there is a need for urgent and comprehensive action across the international humanitarian system in order to prepare for future urban disasters (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012, p. 22)'. While there are many documents available which explain the features of urban disasters, these understandings are not always used in practice when it comes to assessment and targeting (Clermont *et al.*, 2011). With the exception of cash programming, there is little discussion of urban distribution methods. This paper is a starting point for researchers and practitioners looking for practical approaches to food security in urban humanitarian contexts.

1.2 Significance

This research is significant because despite a culture within the humanitarian sphere which is increasingly focused on accountability to beneficiaries, experience in recent urban disasters shows organisations are not learning the lessons from the past. This is significant as you can't be accountable to individuals and communities without recognising their specific needs and context. Implementing traditional methods without acknowledging their rural bias (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012; Grünewald *et al.*, 2011) and considering the appropriateness of applying them to urban assessment, targeting and distribution is to ignore the wealth of knowledge available about urban contexts. While each situation is unique and there is far to go in learning what does work in urban response, the first step is cognition that urban disasters are a unique context requiring urban-specific solutions.

There has not yet been a comprehensive analysis of the three interconnected areas of assessment, targeting and distribution, within the context of urban disasters. While there is much more information available about assessment in these settings, there is little available about distribution. However despite this existing knowledge, urban solutions are not being implemented in urban response. A Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) lessons paper reflecting on the Haiti response explained that many agencies felt there was 'little difference' between urban and rural assessments (Clermont *et al.*, 2011, p. 4) and many claimed not to have time to perform an assessment. DEC evaluators commented in their report that assessments in Haiti seemed disconnected from resource programmes (Clermont *et al.*, 2011). This is problematic because needs of urban disaster response and guidelines of assessment were available pre-Haiti, which suggests practitioners are unaware of such resources or their

significance.

This research paper reinforces available knowledge of urban disasters and tries to use the specifics of assessment, targeting and distribution for food security in order to provide a more practical context to the well-established theoretical understanding that urban disasters are complex.

1.3 Aims and Overview

The aims of this paper are to:

- Identify traditional approaches to assessment, targeting and distribution for food security in humanitarian response

- Understand how the complexities of an urban context impact a humanitarian agency's assessment, targeting and distribution methodology and whether traditional approaches are appropriate.

- Contribute to the growing body of knowledge on urban humanitarian response and highlight existing key resources and best practises.

Following the introduction and research methodology, this paper will outline the emergence of urbanisation as a significant factor for humanitarian response by looking at trends of urban growth, the characteristics of the urban context generally, the shift to an urban focus for global food security, and the specific challenges of urban disasters.

The paper will then address assessment, targeting and distribution in turn. For each, it will look at existing tools and methodologies for food security interventions, the needs of the urban context, and assess whether these tools and approaches are appropriate for urban humanitarian response. Finally, the paper will address both the gaps and best practises for urban assessment, targeting and distribution.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

This paper focuses on the aspects of urban environments and urban disasters that relate to assessment, targeting and distribution for humanitarian response. Urban environments present many other challenges not specifically relevant to these areas which are beyond the limitations of this paper[2].

There are many issues relating to certain methods and approaches discussed in paper that are not urban-specific concerns or challenges. It is therefore out of the scope of the paper to address them meaningfully. Where possible, topics outside the scope of this paper are noted in footnotes, which guide the reader to further resources addressing such topics.

This paper was written using desk-based methods, based on the research and experience of others. While it has tried to be as expansive as possible, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive understanding of these issues within these pages.

1.5 Research Methodology

The intent of this research is to examine existing knowledge and experience of food security assessment, targeting and distribution in general, as well as in regards to urban disasters, to determine what resources, tools and methodologies were available and how they were being used in urban contexts. Then, to compare this to the specific documented needs of urban humanitarian response to see how these meshed, in theory and in practice.

The guiding questions for this research were:

- What tools and approaches already exist in these areas?
- What are the needs of urban disasters and appropriate response?
- What do evaluations of urban food security programmes say about assessment, targeting and distribution?
- What gaps exist between urban needs and urban practice?

This research is based on desk research starting with a literature review of relevant

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[2] For more in-depth works, see the list of key resources on page 52.

publications, particularly existing guidelines for assessment, targeting and distribution and evaluations of methodologies used in urban settings. The researcher's experiences working for six months collecting over 1,500 resources for a new ALNAP and UN-Habitat Urban Humanitarian Response Portal[3], as well as providing research support to the ALNAP lessons paper 'Responding to Urban Disasters: Learning From Previous Relief and Recovery Operations[4], was instrumental in both recognising the need for an examination of urban assessment, targeting and distribution methods as well as providing a base of information to begin research. The existing knowledge available on urban disasters makes a convincing argument about the topic's relevance and timeliness. The literature review was undertaken within this context.

Chapter 2: Urban Disasters

2.1 Urbanisation Trends

Over 50% of the world's population now lives in urban areas, mostly in lower and middle income states. A third of this urban population worldwide live in slums and informal settlements (Field, 2011). While the world's poor used to live predominantly in rural areas, poverty is increasingly urbanised (Ravallion, Chen and Sangraula, 2008). People are lured to the city for a range of reasons, including fleeing conflict, improve their living conditions, and access the opportunities urban life is believed to bring (Ferris, 2011). An increasing population puts strain on government and infrastructure (WFP, 2002) and leads to more pressure for scarce land and resources (Field, 2011), which can lead to conflict (Ferris, 2011). Continued conflict in urban areas may detract from government's ability to provide services and maintain order, which complicates humanitarian work (WFP, 2002).

Recent urbanisation trends are different than past urban growth in several ways. Firstly, the scale is unprecedented. This is the first time in history urban growth far exceeds growth in rural areas. This expansion is occurring at a rapid pace, particularly in lower income countries. Secondly, due to globalisation the world is interconnected, and

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[33] http://www.urban-response.org/

[4] http://www.urban-response.org/resource/7772

interdependent, like never before. Finally, the traditional distinction between rural and urban is becoming redundant (Cohen, 2004 p. 27). Urban and rural is no longer a dichotomy (World Bank, 2009), rather it's best understood as a 'continuum held together by their degree of economic and social integration (USAID, 2008 p. 2).' See figure 1.1 below, which illustrates this point. On the urban side of that continuum, there are a range of urban environments, from megacities to smaller cities to peri-urban areas, and all of these are interconnected and interdependent (USAID, 2008; World Bank, 2009). The labels of urban and rural no longer capture the complexities of today's world and 'they mask the many ways urban and rural overlap and intertwine, as well as the variety of livelihood strategies within urban or rural areas (IFPRI, 2005 p. 2)'. This interconnectedness is important because you can't consider a city without its impact on other cities and rural areas (World Bank, 2009 p. 199).

Figure 1.1 shows this new understanding of the urban/rural continuum (source World Bank, 2009 p. 51).
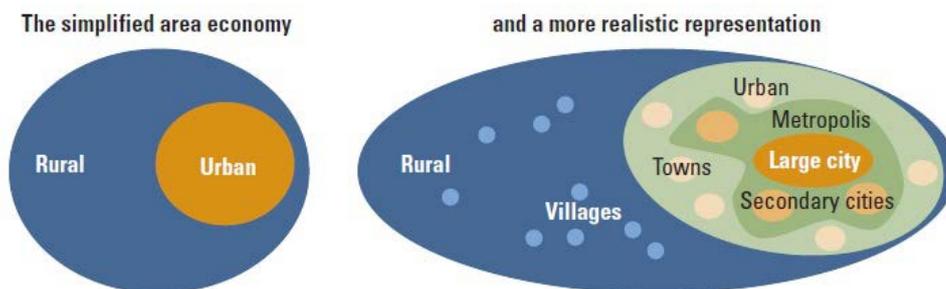
The fact that different places define urban populations according to dissimilar administrative boundaries (Cohen, 2004) further complicates urban response, as it's hard to establish baseline data and make comparisons when one urban area varies greatly from another. There's an uncertainty when it comes to numbers of all sorts in urban areas (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012), from the population to various statistics, and this has serious implications for organisations trying to conduct assessments.

Recognising the complexities of defining urban areas, this paper will use the term urban to include a range of areas along the continuum, from peri-urban towns to mega-cities in order to have a consistent understanding throughout[5].

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[5] For more on defining urban, see World Bank, 2009 and World Bank, 2009.

2.2 The Urban Environment

Urban environments have numerous characteristics which are important for humanitarian response. Following are some of these features, though the list is nowhere near exhaustive[6].

Urban environments:

- Are densely populated, crowded and fast-paced (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012; IASC, 2010c). Simply put, in a city, 'everything is big' (Grünewald *et al*., 2011 p. 20).
- Have a concentration of infrastructure and resources (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012) which can create tension and conflict (IASC, 2010c).
- Have a well-developed market-based system where food and water are rarely free (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012).
- Have a concentration of vulnerabilities, hazards and risk (Bull-Kamanga *et al*.,2003; Grünewald *et al*., 2011).
- Include a diverse populations with different needs and skills (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012) as well as varied and complex livelihoods (World Bank, 2009; O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009; WFP, 2002; Kelly, 2003; USAID, 2008).
- Include huge disparities, the biggest being in slums where populations are chronically over-crowded in poor quality settlements that are under-served (World Bank, 2009, p.66).
- Lack experts; urban knowledge is patchy, informal and still largely undocumented (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012, p.10; IASC, 2010c).
- Include a growing marginalised and sometimes invisible population, including IDPs and refugees[7] (IASC, 2010c).
- Willingly or not, host the challenging phenomenon of slums. These informal settlements lack services and infrastructure, which increases vulnerability to disasters (IFRC, 2010). 'The growth of slums in major cities is characteristic of rapid urbanisation. Because rapid population growth cannot be satisfactorily accommodated, slums and shantytowns grow bigger and more visible. This contributes to wide and increasing geographic divisions in well-being within urban areas (World Bank, 2009, p.67).' Today, it's not uncommon for a fourth of a developing country city's population to reside in slums (World Bank, 2009 p.67).

As well, there is a wider range of actors at play in urban environments, including governments who play an important role before, during and after disaster events (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012; Clermont *et al*.,2011; IASC, 2010c). In these areas, the role of international humanitarians must be to support these primary actors and fill in

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[6] See Cross and Johnson, 2011 for a more in-depth table of urban versus rural characteristics.

[7] For more information on this issue, see the box on pages 31-32.

where there are gaps (Zetter and Deikun, 2010). This is unfamiliar territory for humanitarian organisations, who are used to being the lead responder. It can be a challenge to identify actors and develop strong partnerships, but it is essential to do so. 'Community leaders in urban settings may be government-appointed representatives, school or church officials, community-based organisations, leadership or business leaders. Communities may coalesce around schools or livelihood types rather than around geographic location (Cross and Johnston, 2011p.xii)'.

2.3 Myths

There are several myths about urban environments which interfere with effective response to urban disasters. These include that urban populations are better off than rural areas, urban areas have lower malnutrition rates and better dietary diversity, there are more jobs in urban areas and also more crime (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012 p.30). The difficulties in collecting data on the urban poor contribute to these misconceptions, as the problems are dispersed throughout a wider population (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012). Contrary to these beliefs, cities have larger disparities when it comes to malnutrition rates, even between households in the same area (Grünewald *et al*.,2011 p.37). These myths mean that sometimes urban areas receive less attention when it comes to food security, even though the crises may be just as severe as in rural areas (WFP, 2002).

2.4 Opportunities

While many of these characteristics may seem negative, urban areas also contain a wealth of opportunities. As Macauslan with Phelps (2012 p.54) explain, 'Urban areas present a range of opportunities for action that may not be available in rural areas, including a higher concentration of educated people, information and communication technologies, monetisation, better developed markets, better service provision, and so on. In addition, there are new technologies available (such as GIS, remote sensing imagery, mobile technology, money transfer technology, digital data gathering, and so on) that could be more productively used in urban areas'. These opportunities are significant for humanitarian response in urban areas because, 'Different kinds of tools to access disaster victims and displaced persons may be available in an urban setting; text messaging and the Internet, for example, may be used to complement more 'traditional' means such as local media and community organisations.

(Zetter and Deikun, 2010, p.3)'[8].

Urban areas have a 'concentration of services, skilled people, elites and services (Clermont *et al*., 2011 p.5)'. This is in contrast to the traditional humanitarian approach, which assumes most of these things are not available. Not recognising these differences can mean, for example, health care services are brought into an urban area as part of a humanitarian response, that takes work from existing health services in the region which are capable of providing services (Clermont *et al*., 2011). Humanitarian practitioners need to recognise the wealth of experience and skills available in urban areas, and find ways to work with and through the various existing structures (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). This will help to ensure that time, effort and money is distributed efficiently and effectively, where it is most needed.

2.5 Urban Food Security

In the 1970s, global food security was mainly concerned with worldwide and national supply of food. Foods security was understood as the global availability of enough food to feed the world's population. In the 1980s, there was a shift in focus from food supply focus to food access. Food security was then understood as a need for access by all people to enough food to sustain their lives (Haan *et al*., 2006 p.33). The difference between access and availability is that access refers to economic and physical factors such as distance to shops, mobility, social supports, and financial resources whereas availability is the physical availability and price of food (De Rose *et al.,*2011 pp.8-9). Organisations used indicator-based systems to understand food security, looking at rainfall, prices and nutrition levels. In the 1990s, the focus was on poverty rather than food security. Food security was understood as the ability of a household to produce for themselves and not be threatened by a shortage of food. Assessments used access-based information, livelihood baselines and indicators. Moving into the 2000s, livelihoods and vulnerability were the focus, along with early warning systems, monitoring and analysis (Haan *et al*., 2006 p.33).

In urban areas, food insecurity is often an invisible problem, compared with more

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[8] How these opportunities can be advantageous to urban distribution is discussed further on pg 48 and onwards.

visible issues like overcrowding and lack of services (Crush and Frayne, 2012). This combined with the history described above means food security has predominantly been seen as a rural problem, where farmers need to increase production (Crush and Frayne, 2011). However, the green revolution[9] will not address problems of urban food insecurity, which can no longer be ignored (Crush and Frayne, 2011). At a 2003 conference about food security in complex environments, participants noted that there is an insufficient emphasis on urban areas (FAO, 2003). Participants noted, 'Interventions are often designed without passing through a deliberate policy process which examines current knowledge on the context to be addressed and evaluates options for programme objectives, methods, content and duration. As a result, programme responses to food insecurity tend to be short term, standardised, inflexible and unresponsive to changing contexts (FAO, 2003, p.iii)'. This is why assessments and targeting are so important in urban settings, so programmes can be urban-specific right from the start.

Factors which contribute to urban food insecurity includes things like unemployment, inadequate access to health care, high cost of living, high level of persistent health hazards and others (Bonnard, 2000)[10]. These are features of the urban environment make urban food security distinct. Levron (2010, p.8) notes that, 'in a context where the local economy is based on extreme monetisation of exchanges, food crises in urban areas do not result from a lack of food, but from an inability to afford food or basic services such as water, health care, sewage and transport'. While food may be more diverse and plentiful in cities, it is far from being accessible to all (Crush and Frayne, 2011 p.538). For these reasons, food security in urban areas is best understood as an issue of access rather than availability (Grünewald et al., 2011; Levron, 2010; USAID, 2008; USAID, 2008). The effects of food insecurity are also different in urban areas. Where in rural areas lack of food results in famine, in urban areas it results in economic decline and social unrest, as seen in Jakarta after the Asian markets crash (Bonnard, 2000, p.3).

Urban agriculture is a contested approach. Macauslan with Phelps (2012) argue this approach is not likely to have a major impact during a disaster situation due to the amount of

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[9] Programmes that focus on increasing food production for small-scale farmers (Crush and Frayne, 2012).

[10] For more, see (Bonnard, 2000 p.7)

time it takes to set up. Others argue urban agriculture is important for urban food security as it can be a key source of food production and income and can help to mitigate the impact of seasonal vulnerabilities (WFP, 2002). Bonnard (2000) notes it is standard practice in some cities, but not common in others. The fact this debate exists is evidence of the complexities of urban food security, as well as a lack of urban knowledge.

2.6 Urban Disasters and Tools

The features of the urban environment, including a dense population in often hazard-prone areas with poorly regulated building standards make large amounts of people highly vulnerable to even moderate disaster events (IASC, 2010c, p.3). The scale of urban disasters makes humanitarian response in these contexts far more complex than rural situations (IFRC, 2010). Urban disasters take place in the context of pre-existing problems like poverty and lack of services as well as various groups competing over scarce resources (IASC, 2010c).

As Bull-Kamanga *et al*. (2003, p.197) explain, 'Disaster studies have tended to be dominated by an interest in hazard-prone areas and in engineering and structural solutions. These generally ignore the scale and nature of vulnerable populations, and he complexity of urban processes and their capacity to increase or decrease risks from disasters. There is still a tendency to see an earthquake or flood as the disaster rather than as the catalyst for the disaster'. While urban areas face earthquakes and floods at an incredible scale, they also face new, urban disasters including armed conflicts and chronic urban emergencies. This means in urban areas, hazards and risks are intensified as disaster events have a higher likelihood to become complex situations. Urban populations face competition for scarce resources in conflictual environments, while exposed to multiple hazards (O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009; Field, 2011; Kelly, 2003; IFRC, 2010; Zetter and Deikun, 2010). These factors present new challenges for humanitarians, who must reassess their role and ability to respond (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012).

What makes urban disasters unique?

- They occur in a massive scale, attracting a huge range of actors, which brings the challenge of coordination (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012).
- Existing chronic vulnerabilities make it hard to distinguish effects of an urban disaster (Kauffmann, 2012; Ferris, 2011) and difficult to notice the effects of response. It is easier to measure success in rural areas, and harder to have a clear exit strategy in urban areas (Clermont *et al*., 2011).
- Often occur in hazard-prone, infrastructure-deprived slums (IFRC, 2010). In a disaster response, the lack of land tenure and documentation of individuals living in slums as well as an absence of active local government increase the difficulty in responding (IFRC, 2010) increasing the need to be proactive, rather than reactive.
- They cannot be addressed without multi-stakeholder coordination (Clermont *et al*., 2011). This is due to the multitude of actors in the urban sphere (see figure 2.0 below) as one agency is not likely to be able to serve all in need (Cross and Johnston, 2011). However organisations must recognise some actors have political allegiances and navigating this can be complicated (Zetter and Deikun, 2010). Agencies must engage with several levels of government and other agencies (Ievers and Pacaigue, 2010; Cross and Johnston, 2011). While it can be frustrating and time-consuming to work with governments, 'failing to work with and through national authorities can undermine their role and capacity to act (Clermont *et al*., 2011, p.7).' Establishing relationships and designating responsibilities pre-disaster helps to ease these tensions before they cause problems (IASC, 2010c).

Figure 2.0: This diagram from the Shelter Centre (2010) shows some of the many stakeholders in urban environments, their power and interest in urban disaster response.
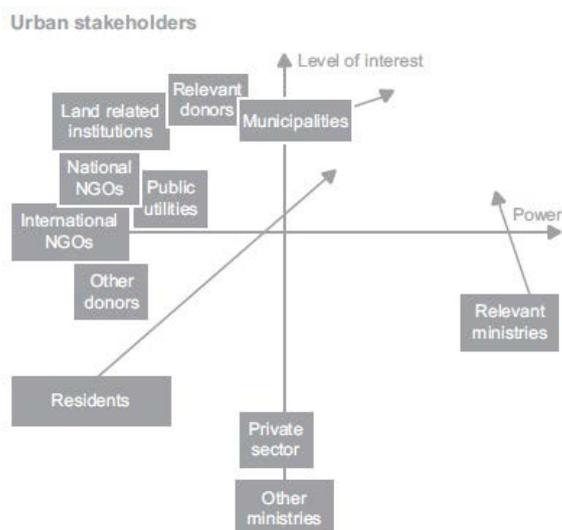
Within the next ten years, the DEC (2011) predicts the world will face 3 to 5 big urban disasters. There is an urgent need, therefore, to understand that these urban disasters require a reconsideration of the tools, methods, assumptions and approaches currently used by humanitarians (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012). Though humanitarian work in urban settings has been conducted for decades, there has been little strategic focus on this topic until recently (Grünewald *et al*.,2011). The IASC (2010) and others (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012) point out there is a lack of urban expertise in the humanitarian sector, although this is slowly changing. ALNAP's 27 Annual Meeting, urban lessons paper (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012) and new urban portal[11] have increased the profile of urban disasters. Many humanitarian organisations are now making urban disasters a key focus area, including CHF, UN-Habitat, ODI, Groupe URD and others.

There is widespread recognition that there is a lack of urban-appropriate tools for assessment, targeting and distribution (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012; IASC, 2010a; Zetter and Deikun, 2010; Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012; Field, 2011; Shelter Centre, 2010). Because of this, Grünewald et al (2011) refer to urban humanitarian work as 'a tightrope walk without a safety net (Grünewald *et al*.,2011, p.8)'. Many existing tools were created for rural humanitarian response (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012; Grünewald *et al*.,2011; Brown, 2012; Kelly, 2003) and may not suit the urban context. The 2010 Haiti earthquake showed that the international humanitarian community must seriously review its preparedness for urban response and work on developing the skills, tools, knowhow and partnerships to be able to work in urban contexts (Field, 2011; Oxfam, 2007).

Chapter 3: Assessment

3.1 Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to obtain sufficient information about the needs of an affected area in order to be able to decide whether to respond, what the nature and scale of that response will be, how resources will be prioritised and allocated, and what shape programme design and planning should take (Darcy & Hofmann, 2003, p. 2). It is important

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[11] http://www.urban-response.org/

to have guidelines and common standards in humanitarian response, as this ensures activities are done according to the international legal framework, and that activities are equitable, consistent and appropriate (Shelter Centre, 2010, p.109) to the context. As Darcy & Hoffman (2003, p.2) explain, 'Good practice assessment is about having enough relevant information on which to base sound analysis and judgements about response. What constitutes 'good enough' may depend on the context and the level of risk that people face.'

This section will outline relevant features of the urban context for food security assessment and then look at how these features impact tools and methodologies of urban assessments. Some examples of specific urban food security assessments will be provided, followed by and examination of how livelihood strategies can be adapted to the urban context.

3.2 Urban Assessments

As the IASC (2010, p.3) recognise, 'Conventional methods of needs assessment do not adequately distinguish between the on-going chronic needs of poor urban households and the more acute vulnerability provoked by a disaster'. Remarkably, many key documents in the humanitarian space addressing emergency response do not include any mention of urban disasters, including UNICEF 424-page Emergency Handbook (UNICEF, 2005).

Recognising that existing tools were rural in focus, the WFP developed guidance for urban food security assessments (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009). This document is extremely helpful and should be the first step, along with USAID's (USAID, 2008) when planning a food security assessment following an urban disaster. As the WFP (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009) document explains, rural tools have rural-specific categories which will not work considering the diversity of the urban environment.

As food security assessments are such a wide topic, and there are urban-specific tools and guidelines, as well as evaluations, available, this section will not outline the how-tos of conducting an urban food security assessment. Instead, it will focus on a few key differences between urban and rural assessments, and some examples of how approaches can be adapted.

What urban features influence assessment?

- The population is fluid and constantly moving in and out of the city (Kelly, 2003; O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012; Oxfam, 2007; IASC, 2010a) which makes it difficult to understand the dynamics of an area and can complicate assessment.
- To be effective, assessment must involve the community however there are more complex actors and relationships in an urban areas (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009; Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012; Ferris, 2012; WFP, 2008a; WFP, 2008a; Zetter and Deikun, 2010).
- The population is interwoven, making it hard to determine who is vulnerable and where they might be (O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009).
- Urban households are smaller but often include more dependents (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009).
- Traditional assessment methods are costly in urban areas, considering the scale (Kelly, 2003) and the amount of data required in an assessment (Brown, 2012).
- The commonly understood definition of household in rural areas (those who share a common cooking pot) is irrelevant in the urban context where many eat outside the home (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009). In addition, the standard assessment practice of categorising food by ingredient is made difficult by consumption of street foods (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009).
- As households are so diverse, it is hard to make the broad conclusions that traditional assessment takes for granted (ICRC and IFRC, 2008; DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009).
- There is less information available about pre-disaster vulnerabilities (IASC, 2010a).
- Land and property rights are more informal (O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009).
- It is important to identify marginalised and invisible groups, including those who are undocumented, however assessments must do this in a way that does not stigmatise them or fuel conflicts (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012). Food security assessments in urban areas have found it particularly difficult to work with these populations (WFP, 2008a)[12].
- Commonly used tools for assessment such as the seasonal calendar are rural-specific (ICRC and IFRC, 2008).
- Urban situations are more complex, in that there are more levels of government present in an urban situation, as well as other institutions, who all have their own needs, processes and expectations (Shelter Centre, 2010, p.111).
- Assessments will need to be continuously reassessed due to the changing dynamics in urban areas (O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009; Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012).
- Urban assessments must recognise vulnerable individuals will not necessarily live side by side in easily identifiable areas. In urban areas, wealth and poor households live in close proximity (Kelly, 2003; O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009).
- Urban livelihoods are more complex (Kelly, 2003). Verifying informal employment which common in urban areas is particularly challenging (Kauffmann, 2012).
- In urban environments, there are a lot of variables and a 10-30% error margin when it comes to assessment data (Grünewald et al., 2011, p.22).

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[12] More on this in special box on page 31-32.

Young et Al's (2000) description of Oxfam's food security assessment process for emergencies shows how urban disasters are not sufficiently understood. They are lumped in with traditional assessment methods, with the odd mention of urban areas however none of the unique characteristics of the urban context described in this paper are not considered. Granted, these guidelines were written in 2000 and a lot of knowledge has surfaced since, but (Bonnard, 2000) shows that knowledge of the urban environment was around at that time.

Given the aforementioned characteristics of urban environments, assessments in these areas require changing traditional approaches. While there is not sufficient space to detail the specifics of undertaking an urban assessment[13], following are some examples of tools and methodologies which require urban adaption.

3.3 Different tools

Wealth ranking – The standard practice of three to four wealth groups will include tens of thousands of people each, due to the scale of the urban environment. While there is great variety in terms of income and resources, having a group for each of these situations is impractical to manage (Kelly, 2003; O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009). Therefore it is important to find new approaches to wealth ranking.

Food sources – Urban assessments need to expand the understanding of 'food source'. In rural assessments, buying food at a market will be almost an inconsequential category (Grünewald *et al*., 2011). In urban, it's how most food will be bought and doesn't provide an understanding of the stability of the food source, transportation needed to get there, etc. WFP suggest differentiating between food bought with cash, credit, or borrowed, which adds an understanding of access to safety nets to the assessment (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).

Income and expenditure – It's hard to calculate incomes in urban settings as many change day-to-day. Whereas rural households have a seasonal income pattern of one or two harvest per year, urban families earn throughout the year. This makes it hard to gauge food security based on income looking into the future (Grünewald et al., 2011), as things can

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[13] For detailed guides on urban assessment, see key resources page 52.

change in an instant. Better indicators are coping strategies and food consumption
(Grünewald *et al.*, 201, p.37). As poor families tend to spend similar amounts on dissimilar
things, regardless of their diverse income sources, it is easier to focus on expenditure than
income when doing urban assessment (Boudreau, 2008, p.219). Urban assessments should
expect around six income sources for most households, and must expand categories such as
'self-employed' or 'wage labour' in order to capture the diversity of these categories. This is
because 'the way in which these activities differ from one another may have important
ramifications for food security such that use of these categorises not only likely to mask
income source diversity, but confound attempts to identify vulnerable groups based on
income sources (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009, p.6)'. However, separating these categories
by specific activity would result in unmanageable numbers, provide little analytic value and
create confusion (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009, p.6). Therefore, it is best to create sub-
categories based on degree of stability (such as temporary, seasonal, stable). (DFID, ECHO
and WFP, 2009, p.7) has a sample questionnaire for use as part of urban assessments.

Indicators – Cross and Johnson (2011) point out that a good way to understand
context-relevant vulnerability indicators is to conduct focus groups with community leaders
and service providers to understand what people in a specific area understand as poverty and
vulnerability. However, this provides insufficient data to be useful for targeting and
organisations are still left with the problem of trying to figure that out (Macauslan with
Phelps, 2012).

Unit of analysis – Self-sufficient households used to be the main unit of analysis for
intervention. However in urban areas, families do not own their own land, produce their own
food, or have individual water sources (Brown, 2012). In urban areas, individuals are more
likely to eat outside the home. This is problematic because it means one person in a
household won't know food consumption data required by many assessment tools. It means
direct comparisons cannot be made, a common approach using the WFP's FCS (Food
Consumption Scores) tool, as household information will vary greatly (DFID, ECHO and
WFP, 2009). For these reasons, a household-level approach is inappropriate for urban
assessment. The standard FCS assesses household consumption in and outside of the home,
based on interviewing one household member. In urban settings, it's more appropriate to
focus on individual consumption, particularly where household members eat most food

outside the home. If this is not possible, assessments can look solely at food consumed in the home, which can be useful as it's easier to gauge than the information used in a standard FCS (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009).

3.4 Different methodologies:

Coordination – While international humanitarian organisations may not be used to working with many partners, in urban environments collaboration with governments, other NGOs and the private sector is a must (Zetter and Deikun, 2010, p.2). Organisations must learn how to harness the capacities of governments. This lesson is particularly evident given the poor engagement with government during the Haiti earthquake response (IASC, 2010a). Also in Haiti, beneficiaries became tired of multiple assessments by various organisations all working in the same environment, each focusing on a particular sector or issue (Clermont *et al*., 2011). Organisations must recognise that while they might be used to working in sector-based clusters, urban environments require a coordinated, multi-sector approach (Boyer, Hettrich and Letourneur, 2011, p.3).

Resources – Agencies need to allocate more resources for assessment and include this in response planning. Urban assessment is costly, time consuming (Kelly, 2003) and yet hugely important. Rather than fight these complexities, organisations need to approach assessment in urban areas with relevant knowledge and be prepared to follow through with assessment plans. If urban food security assessments are not done well, there's a risk of misstating the severity of problem, which will impact targeting and programming down the line (Kelly, 2003).

Data – 'In urban contexts, the best information aid agencies can often obtain is no more than an extrapolation of limited observations and working hypotheses (Grünewald *et al*., 2011, p.23)'. Organisations need to change their expectations of quantitative data and find new methods of gaining information which are functional for urban environments. Cross & Johnston (2011) recommend conducting focus groups to define targeting criteria by gaining an understanding of the specific context (ross and Johnston, 2011). However, an urban food security assessment in Tajikistan found focus groups unhelpful, as these groups were not openly sharing information (WFP, 2008b).

Technology – Real-time information gathering and crowdsourcing through mobile devices are useful in Urban environments. In Haiti, an analysis of mobile phone usage showed much fewer people moved out of the city than was originally estimated after the earthquake (Grünewald *et al*., 2011, p.23). Snowball sampling uses social networks to identify additional households and individuals to participate in an assessment (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009), which is most easily coordinated through mobile devices.

3.5 Urban Food Security Assessments

The limitations of food security assessments in urban areas are shown in a WFP assessment of urban Afghan refugees in Iran. This study found itself unable to include non-registered refugees in its assessment, due to government stipulations (WFP, 2008a). This case highlights two challenges of doing assessments in urban settings, one being the need to work more closely with multiple stakeholders including government. The other being the difficulties in understanding the needs of unregistered and undocumented individuals, like urban refugees.

An urban food security assessment in Tajikistan found vast differences between towns in terms of food security, making it difficult to provide average statistics. The assessment found income level was key to food security, considering the Urban reliance on markets for food. Food expenditures were a significant expense for households, who also had to manage costs of health, education, clothing and heating fuel (WFP, 2008b).

Organisations responding to the Haiti earthquake noted the difficulty differentiating between chronic poverty and damage caused by the disaster. This made it difficult to have clear entry and exit criteria (Young and Henderson, n.d., p.13). It also highlights how humanitarian and development work overlaps and lines are especially blurred in complex urban settings. Zetter & Deikun (2010, p.3) explain, 'Bridging development and humanitarian work accordingly constitutes a vital contribution to meeting humanitarian challenges in Urban areas in order to promote durable, sustainable interventions which minimise future urban vulnerabilities'.

An urban food security assessment in Tajikistan used both deliberate and random sampling, focusing on household and neighbourhood income levels. They mainly focused on

more populated towns due to resource constraints, and relied on assessment staff's prior knowledge of the areas as well as interviewing key informants including private sector traders. Due to the vast differences in information, they were unable to ensure heterogeneity of information (WFP, 2008b). Overall, this assessment used the same methodology as typically used in rural environments. They found it difficult to get sufficient information from focus groups or do purposive sampling due to resource constraints (WFP, 2008b).

3.6 Urban Livelihoods

What influences urban livelihoods?
- Dependence on cash income and functioning markets (Brown, 2012) and less reliance on agriculture and the natural environment (WFP, 2002)
- In rural areas, one type of cash crop can dominate an area so the region shares the same vulnerabilities. Urban livelihoods are more diverse so risk is spread unevenly through the population (Bonnard, 2000), making it hard to generalise.
- Low wages, insecure informal jobs, women working outside the home (WFP, 2002)
- Inadequate water, sanitation and health facilities (WFP, 2002)
- Arriving refugees must adapt to cash economies (Shelter Centre, 2010)
- Weak social safety nets, communities not geographic (WFP, 2002)
- Squatter settlements in dangerous locations to be close to livelihoods (Shelter Centre, 2010), do not have access to services or government social safety nets(WFP, 2002)
- Shocks and stresses range from illness, conflict, economic downturn, poor governance, price fluctuations (Tawodzera, 2011)

A traditional approach to assessment in emergencies is to look at livelihoods. The Livelihood Assessment Toolkit (FAO and ILO, 2007) is a tool used to assess the impact of disaster events on livelihoods using a baseline inventory, immediate and rapid assessments. A livelihood approach assumes people make choices about their needs and how to use their available resources, and is therefore more comprehensive than examining food security on its own (Boudreau, 2008). This assessment should be done jointly with market assessments (FAO and ILO, 2007). While the tool is not exclusively rural, it relies on several assumptions which would make it difficult for use in urban situations. While it does mention urban contexts, there is no guidance provided for how to appropriately adapt the tool for urban disaster response.

Livelihood zones are areas 'within which people share broad common livelihood-sustaining activities and goals (FAO and ILO, 2007, p.14).' In a rural area, livelihood zones are established in order to distinguish areas with certain production and market characteristics which allows baselines to be generated (Boudreau, 2008, p.218). However the homogenous nature of urban environments requires a different approach (Grünewald *et al*., 2011). Livelihood zones may not be possible in urban areas (FAO and ILO, 2007; Kelly, 2003). In a 400-page report outlining the approach, there are no clear guidelines on how to adapt it to urban settings, other than the recognition that zoning should be 'tailored according to local circumstances (Boudreau, 2008, p.221)'. While livelihood zoning is not appropriate in urban settings, a livelihoods approach is well-suited to the complexities of the urban environment. A livelihood approach considers interconnected factors including nutrition, access to services, social relationships, economic resources and institutional frameworks (IFPRI, 2000, p.18). 'The value of the livelihoods approach is that it directs attention to the contextual and systematic factors that contribute to the occurrence of poverty and ultimately food insecurity within households, as well as the assets available to households themselves (Boudreau, 2008, p.504-505)'.

In urban assessments, zoning is less about defining different livelihoods and more useful to understand the layout of the city. Dividing the city in terms of the wealth of an area is more useful, as it allows decisions to be made about which areas are most important to visit (Boudreau, 2008, p.218). However, in urban areas, rich and poor often live side by side and it is difficult to isolate these areas of need (Boudreau, 2008). In other words, there is not as much homogeneity within urban areas. Indeed, 'There is often a wider range of income sources for an one wealth group, and earnings are also less regular than in the countryside (Boudreau, 2008, p.219)'. Still, mapping the city is still very useful as it can help to identify slums, existing infrastructure, and give agencies a base of understanding.

Marginalised and Invisible Groups

Urban areas contain diverse populations, who have differing needs and priorities. One challenge for urban humanitarian response are the growing number of refugees, IDPs and other marginalised groups. Many existing refugee policies are based on camp situations and remote areas, however more and more refugees are now living in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009). Only 10% of the world's displaced population now live in camps, the rest are UN urban and rural non-camp settings (WRC, 2009). This can be a challenge for humanitarians as they are faced with greater input from governments in urban areas, who may demand refugees and other groups are excluded from assistance, based on these policies.

Aiding refugees and displaced groups in urban settings requires a different approach than methods used in camps, where a uniform approach is possible (WRC, 2009). Urban situations are different, as vulnerabilities and needs vary greatly. While there is a danger of viewing all migrants as a single vulnerable group, this oversimplifies the situation (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012, p.19). Refugees and IDPs have different needs and protection concerns which can include a fear of harassment, detention or eviction (Zetter and Deikun, 2010, p.3). Refugees and migrants face particular challenges living in urban environments. They lack the relationships and cash needed to manage in the urban market economy, and lack skills suitable for the urban labour market (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012, p.19). As UNHCR (2009, p.1) explains, 'Refugees who live in urban areas are often confronted with a wide range of legal, administrative, financial, cultural and social barriers in the exercise (of their rights)…and in their efforts to live a dignified and productive life despite the shocks and losses they have gone through'.

UNHCR points out the importance of including refugees and other marginalised groups in existing food security programmes, or if this is impossible to ensure these groups have a way to address their food security needs after an emergency. UNHCR advocates refugees are included in existing social safety net programmes (UNHCR, 2009) however humanitarian organisations may not have the capacity to do this. Refugees and displaced people have unique vulnerabilities in urban settings, and it is crucial that governments address these issues in policy and practice. Humanitarian organisations can advocate for the inclusion of these groups (WRC, 2009). This is one area where humanitarian and

developmental actors in urban settings need to establish more effective ways of working together (Ferris, 2011).

As an IFRC (2010, p.54) report underlines, 'Unless disaster aid quickly learns to work with the untitled, the unregistered, the unlisted and the undocumented, it can support and even reinforce the inequalities that existed prior to the disaster (IFRC, 2010, p.54).' Humanitarians working in urban environments must be aware of these challenges, particularly when it comes to assessment, targeting and response.

These populations are spread out and not want to be identified, so it's hard to know the size and needs of this population (UNHCR, 2009) when conducting an assessment. Humanitarian crises increase the vulnerability of marginalised groups like the urban poor and displaced persons because governments don't have the capacity to provide services like water and situation, poverty leads these populations to reside in hazardous areas and these conditions expose them to multiple hazards at once (Zetter and Deikun, 2010, p.2). 'Vulnerable groups who cannot voice their needs can very easily be left out, such as those affected by disability and those excluded for economic, ethnic and religious reasons (Grünewald et al., 2011, p.21)'. Assessments based on data provided by local government may not include these groups as they are not included in existing social safety nets (WFP, 2002).

Traditional targeting methods can overlook slums, IDPs and other socially marginalised groups (Cross and Johnston, 2011). Individuals may not be able to be, or want to be, registered or documented on aid lists. For these reasons, some recommend self-targeting to be best when trying to address the needs of these populations (USAID, 2008; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012).

Chapter 4: Targeting

4.1 Purpose of Targeting

Targeting is a process which uses clear criteria in order to make humanitarian assistance fair, accountable and to make the best use of scarce resources (JEFAP, 2003). The main objectives of targeting are to prioritise the needy in order to allocate limited resources

and maximise impact efficiently and effectively (Taylor and Seaman, 2004), and in doing so minimise future dependency (Sharp, 1999, p.3). Targeting is important because it's not feasible to provide assistance to everyone (JEFAP, 2003). While simple to describe, targeting is more complicated in practice. Each situation is unique and it's hard to prescribe rules (Taylor and Seaman, 2004). These objectives are sometimes in conflict with one another (Sharp, 1999) or with the context itself.

This section will outline four traditional approaches to targeting, as well as the specific features of the urban environment which complicate targeting. Then, each approach will be discussed for its application to urban targeting, followed by a look at some gaps in current targeting approaches.

Targeting seeks to reduce both exclusion errors (where eligible individuals do not receive aid) and inclusion errors (where those receiving aid are not eligible to receive it) (Taylor and Seaman, 2004, p.5).

Figure 3.1: The following figure illustrates inclusion and exclusion errors, as well as coverage (eligible individuals who do receive aid) (Source: Taylor and Seaman, 2004).
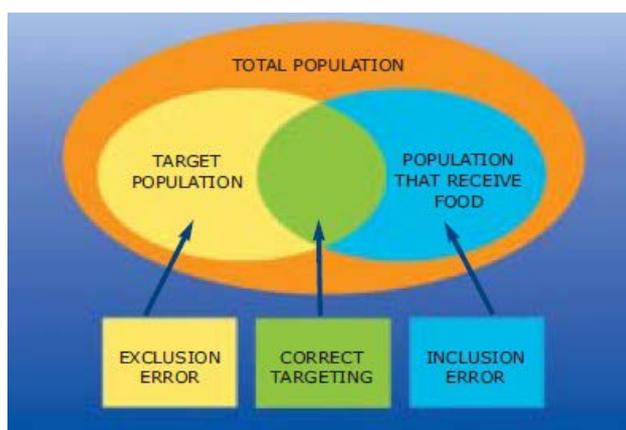
Despite successful targeting, sometimes dilution (where non-targeted individuals benefit from sharing aid with targeted individuals) and diversion (where beneficiaries use aid for unintended purposes) (USAID, 2008). Dilution and diversion do not mean targeting has failed, and can still contribute to the objectives of the programme.

Targeting is a challenging exercise no matter what the context, and there are many common problems with targeting in general, including that a community may have different ideas of who to target than an organisation or may believe in equal distribution due to their culture or religion. While these are important issues to include when planning targeting, they are beyond the scope of this paper and will not be discussed in detail[14].

There main methods of targeting humanitarian aid are administrative targeting, geographic targeting, self-targeting and community-based targeting. These will be elaborated below.

4.2 Types of Targeting:

Administrative targeting involves beneficiaries being selected by an outside organisation or individual using a set of objective and standardised pre-defined criteria (Sharp, 1999). This method places a lot of power in the hands of external decision makers (Sharp, 1999). Some administrative targeting is done through observable criteria, which is called proxy targeting. Other times criteria is means-based, where income and expenditure are considered (USAID, 2008). With administrative targeting, verification is important to ensure targeting criteria were carried out correctly and to ensure information provided is correct. Cross & Johnston (2011) recommend verifying at least 10% of households.

Geographic targeting is a type of administrative targeting, where criteria relate to an area rather than to individual households. Similar is **institutional targeting**, where criteria is based on membership of an organisation such as a school (USAID, 2008). Geographic targeting is appropriate when there are identifiable differences between those targeted and the rest of the population, those targeted are a clearly defined group who are easily recognised, and the community agrees with this targeting strategy (Taylor and Seaman, 2004, p.4).

Another type of geographic targeting is **blanket targeting**, whereby everyone in a specific place or affected by a specific event are included. Blanket targeting by location is less time-consuming than dealing with individuals or households, and is commonly used in urban environments (Grünewald *et al*., 2011) and sudden onset disasters (IASC, 2010a)

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[14] For one example of this difficulty, see Maxwell and Othowai, 2012.

where various factors make it difficult to identify the most vulnerable, particularly when an entire area has been severely impacted by a disaster event.

There is a greater risk of inclusion and exclusion error with this type of targeting (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012; Cross and Johnston, 2011) and it would be difficult to undertake in a large area where the number of people affected exceeded an organisation's response capacity. As well, some vulnerable individuals may be excluded if they are not able to wait in lengthy queues, including older people, women with many dependents and people with disabilities (IASC, 2010a). However, it avoids the costs of administrating criteria-based targeting and thus can be useful when an entire population is affected and an agency has the capacity to respond.

Self-targeting is where a programme is designed to appeal only to those most in need, where individuals choose to seek out the programme should they wish. It is less costly to run than administrative targeting, but it must be set up carefully using a sound analysis (Sharp, 1999) in order to decrease inclusion error. Self-targeting may allow marginalised groups to access a programme if self-targeting is done at a safe house. However, this approach may mean it is harder to spread information, so those without access to communication or community networks may lose out. It can be harder to spread information in urban areas (Oxfam, 2007) when technology may be damaged and traditional methods of communication through word of mouth are unfamiliar to the urban population.

Community-based targeting (CBT) is when a community selects beneficiaries themselves. It is usually less standardized and more subjective than other forms of targeting (Sharp, 1999). CBT is traditionally organised through relief committees (RCs), who are a mixed group of volunteers agreed by the community who determine beneficiaries based on transparent and fair criteria (JEFAP, 2003). It is easiest when organisations have a long-term presence and the programme is directed to livelihood support rather than acute emergency relief (Mathys, 2004).

When used in a drought response in Kenya in both urban and rural areas, CBT ended up being more of a blanket approach as so many were affected and communities shared resources. The community felt that because all were affected, all should receive aid (Maxwell

and Othowai, 2012). The project's evaluation noted that CBT increased community participation, encouraged transparency and accountability to the community. However, not all the community were interested in participating and those who did, had a lot put on their shoulders (Maxwell and Othowai, 2012).

4.3 Targeting in Urban Environments

Targeting involves difficult decisions in all situations, but is a particularly challenging process in urban disaster situations (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).

What makes urban targeting challenging?

- The sheer scale and heterogeneity of the urban context make targeting both more difficult and more important (USAID, 2008; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012; IASC, 2010a; WRC, 2009). Different groups may need different things at different times (Shelter Centre, 2010, p.33). As the population is homogenous and the vulnerable are Dispersed (WRC, 2009), it is hard to generalise about an area or community.
- Different understandings of community and households (Sharp, 1999; Grünewald *et al*., 2011; ACF, 2007; USAID, 2008; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012) make it hard to work through relief committees and change the unit of analysis.
- Different understandings of vulnerability and poverty (USAID, 2008; Grünewald *et al*., 2011) means indicators are not as clear-cut and take time to cross-check (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012).
- A lack of pre-disaster baseline data and pre-disaster vulnerabilities (IASC, 2010a) as well as the existence of chronic severe vulnerabilities, makes it difficult separate impact of a specific event on specific people (IASC, 2010a).
- The multiple stakeholders involved, including the complex motives and relationships they may have, make targeting in urban environments a more time-consuming effort (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012) due to more red tape and regulations (Oxfam, 2007). Community leaders may have their own motives and expect to be involved (Oxfam, 2007; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012), or may not have accurate, timely data at their fingertips (Cross and Johnston, 2011).
- A large vulnerable population makes it difficult to identify who are the most needy (ACF, 2007) and to locate them as they're spread out amongst a dense population (Zetter and Deikun, 2010; Crush and Frayne, 2012; IASC, 2010a; Cross and Johnston, 2011) and often in slums (WFP, 2002). As Cross & Johnston (2011) explain, 'In urban areas, haves and have-nots reside in proximity, which is a difficult dynamic (Cross and Johnston, 2011, p.xi).
- Urban environments are at risk of fraud and corruption (Cross and Johnston, 2011). Urban people are more street-wise and there are less community taboos about cheating, so 'people intent on exploiting loopholes in the verification process are more likely to succeed in town than in rural areas (Oxfam, 2007, p.19).' This makes verification hugely important, despite its high costs.

4.4 Targeting Approaches in Urban Areas

Administrative targeting involves predefined criteria which assumes pre-existing knowledge, which may be difficult to obtain in urban areas. When based on means-based criteria, the urban phenomenon of informal work can make it difficult to accurately measure income (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). Malnutrition is not as easily visible in sudden onset emergencies (Crush and Frayne, 2012) so proxy criteria[15] may not be helpful in these situations. While defined criteria may help to reduce fraud and corruption, organisations may not have the resources to conduct verification which undermines the effectiveness of this approach.

Effective **geographic targeting** requires vulnerable persons within an area to be easily identifiable, which is not the case in complex urban disasters where those in need can be spread throughout a densely populated area. In major urban disasters, the entire population will be affected in some way and without more specific targeting focused on resources and coping mechanisms, agencies may struggle to be able to address the scale of need. The lack of clearly delineated livelihood zones complicates things (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). Also, the highly mobile urban population may move in and out of a geographic catchment area (Oxfam, 2007). One useful urban approach is to identify underserved areas and prioritise mapping neighbourhoods in order to be as well-informed as possible (Cross and Johnston, 2011).

Blanket targeting may be best in the early stages of response in an urban area, as an initial response while time is taken to assess the specifics (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012). It saves costs when the majority of a large urban population requires assistance (USAID, 2008; IASC, 2010a; WRC, 2009; Maxwell and Othowai, 2012; Macauslan with Phelps, 2012) but there is a high risk of inclusion error if vulnerable individuals are spread out. It is also important to have a clear exit strategy (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012), or blanket targeting can create dependencies or lead organisations to be unable to fulfil stated commitments.

In Haiti, Oxfam faced high costs validating specific targeting criteria and later found

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[15] Observable characteristics (USAID, 2008).

that blanket targeting may have been more efficient, considering the number of people in need (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). Blanket targeting can also be useful in urban areas where there are different communities with different priorities (Cross and Johnston, 2011), as these complexities can be somewhat bypassed. However, if will not suit a large-scale response where needs outweigh an organisation's resources.

Self-targeting is common in urban environments (Grünewald *et al*., 2011). It is recommended as it saves costs and avoids the exclusion of vulnerable groups. However, the benefits must be set low enough to attract only the poorest, which requires some local knowledge (O'Donnell and Smart with Ramalingam, 2009). This is difficult, given the lack of accurate baseline data available in urban environments (IASC, 2010a) and because local administration may not have accurate records (Cross and Johnston, 2011) given the ever-changing urban context. Self-targeting may be time and cost effective, but there is a risk of inclusion error (USAID, 2008) without clear objectives and monitoring. It is perhaps best used as part of a wider targeting strategy involving a range of targeting methodologies.

CBT is a popular method in rural environments because it empowers communities, uses community knowledge rather than outside assumptions and raises awareness of inequalities (JEFAP, 2003, p.18). However, it is quite difficult to organize in urban contexts. This is because it requires accountable and representative community structures (JEFAP, 2003), which are often difficult to identify in urban areas (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).

One issue that often occurs with CBT is that communities often have a different understanding of vulnerability, poverty and household than the humanitarian organization or donor (Sharp, 1999; Mathys, 2004; Grünewald *et al*., 2011). Christian Aid faced this when they tried to involve an urban community in targeting following Typhoon Ketsana. The community disagreed with criteria relating to age, gender and disability, pointing out that a disabled man with children overseas was not vulnerable (Ievers and Pacaigue, 2010). The very understanding of community is also different in urban settings, where 'geographic proximity does not equal community (WFP, 2002, p.10)' and communities may be based widely dispersed and based on faith, occupation or other factors. CBT attempted in this context could increase tensions between groups and increase confusion rather than empowerment.

ACF working in urban Haiti tried to use local committees to select beneficiaries for a cash for work project clearing drainage channels. They gave the committees lists based on ACF-defined vulnerability criteria and hoped by using CBT, the project would be embraced by the community, the process would be transparent and the project could be easily monitored. However, they found in the large urban population, there was little sense of community and disagreements about who should be representatives. The number of people wanting to be involved in the project far exceeded the project's allocated number of beneficiaries, which created tension which bordered on violence. The start of the project was even blocked by arguments over false claims and inappropriate community representatives. There were other problems with the CBT method not unique to the urban environment (ACF, 2007)[16]. The evaluation advised a wider targeting criteria[17] in similar situations, as that is easier to administer (ACF, 2007). However, it's unclear how that would resolve the problem of too many beneficiaries wanting to be involved.

This is not to say CBT has not been used successfully in urban environments. Organisations in Haiti found working with local groups was the key to undertaking beneficiary selection, which they found time-consuming and highly politicised in the urban Haiti context (Young and Henderson, n.d.). A CaLP case study in urban Zimbabwe described the use of CBT to identify beneficiaries to participate in a cash for work programme to address food security issues. Communities allocated 75% of the available 1,000 positions to the poorest families, while 15% were reserved for families with limited ability to participate in the labour market. As the project required identification for funds to be issued, community leaders helped identify beneficiaries without identification so they could participate in the programme (Gourlay and Creti, 2012). The evaluation of this project did not identify any challenges for targeting, so it's hard to know whether any were faced in this case.

Macauslan with Phelps (2012) point out that CBT is possible in urban environments, but it's run differently than traditional rural environments. A community approach, indeed, means something different in urban areas, where communities are 'less cohesive and coherent (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012)'. Rather than using committees, organisations rely on key

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[16] For more information see ACF, 2007 for complete details on this programme's challenges.

[17] Such as blanket targeting, or more flexible criteria.

community leaders such as health workers as informants (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). This seems to be the case with the CaLP Zimbabwe case, which may explain its success. However, some believe there is still a question of whether CBT is appropriate for urban settings in any manifestation (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012).

4.5 Gaps for urban targeting

Targeting in an urban setting is an incredible challenge, as each situation is complex and unique. There are several guides which address targeting in urban areas[18]. Despite the existence of guidelines such as these, agencies conducting targeting in urban areas are starting from scratch each time. This means key lessons and approaches are not taken advantage of, which adds financial and time costs to a project. While targeting needs to be tailored to each situation, it's important to learn the lessons of past responses in order to continually improve humanitarian work.

Due to the time and costs involved, targeting often gets abandoned, or is not given the required follow through to be effective. There is a severe lack of recognition of the importance of targeting. If targeting is not done well, it might as well not be done at all. If it's not done, it is hard to match objectives to results and have the intended effect.

Targeting is one area in particular where it is very difficult to establish strict guidelines and methods, as each situation is so unique. Particularly in urban contexts, there is no one-size-fits-all approach (IASC, 2010a, p.14) because each situation has a multitude of factors which come into play. The scale and diversity, of a dense yet spread out population which includes multiple stakeholders and numerous in cohesive communities, which is rapidly changing and moving negating the possibility of baseline data work together to create the most challenging situation possible for targeting.

Despite these challenges, targeting is incredibly important. In a complex urban environment, there is a risk that organisations will decide to use blanket targeting throughout a project to save time and resources, and because the sheer scale is overwhelming (Cross and Johnston, 2011). However careful targeting is essential in order to eliminate inclusion and

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[18] Some of which are included in the 'key urban resources' section on page 52.

exclusion errors. Recognising targeting in urban environments is especially complex, Cross & Johnston (2011) argue, 'Failure to target those most in need, or lazy targeting and beneficiary selection, will result in use of scarce humanitarian resources for populations that may be able to cope with the disaster effects without outside assistance and leaves those who cannot cope well without assistance.' In addition, poorly defined targeting can lead to confusion and security problems (Grünewald *et al.*, 2011) including violence if it is perceived to be unfair (Cross and Johnston, 2011).

Chapter 5: Distribution

5.1 Purpose of Distribution

Distribution involves the methods, forms and means of getting assistance to those identified by targeting as most in need. Distribution to address food security in rural emergency situations has traditionally taken the form of physical food aid, distributed through relief committees in the form of a few, large mass dispersals of food according to seasonal needs. This formula for distribution has been a steady constant for decades. However, these methods do not meet the needs of the urban humanitarian response. This section will discuss the traditional approach to food aid, followed by the challenges of an urban environment relating to distribution, new approaches that are helpful in urban response and finally, an analysis of gaps when it comes to distribution related to food security in urban areas.

Historically, humanitarian aid regarding food security typically came in the form of physical food rations. A 2002 manual on food and nutrition needs in emergencies published jointly by WFP, WHO, UNICEF and UNHCR assumes the distribution of physical food rations throughout and includes sections on how to assess nutrient needs and the types of rations available (UNHCR *et al.*, n.d.). A 2001 Oxfam guidance document about food security in emergencies includes only two paragraphs on non-food interventions, mostly market interventions involving fixing prices or subsidising food (Young *et al.*, 2001). This focus on physical food is due to a number of reasons. One, donor countries had excess food and wanted to protect their agricultural markets so giving away surplus suited their needs. Two, famines were considered situations of no food and food security was defined as the

availability of food. Finally, there was and still is an assumption that in a disaster, normal food distribution channels and markets are disrupted (ACF, 2007).

Distribution of food aid has traditionally been organised through local relief committees (RCs) who also participate in targeting (JEFAP, 2003). RCs increase accountability and transparency, but are only feasible when all stakeholders share common objectives, no groups are marginalised within the area, there are cohesive social groups and the emergency has not yet reached a crisis level (Taylor and Seaman, 2004 p.20).

In rural areas, food aid has typically been delivered in the form of mass distribution of bulk food items and wet feeding centres. This involves food aid arriving to a central distribution point in a community, organised by the RC, and offloading large quantities of items like maize, pulses, oil, corn and soy. Beneficiaries travel to the central location and organise their own transportation of these items back to their homes (JEFAP, 2003). This distribution takes place according to an easily predictable (due to seasonal agricultural patterns) schedule which allows organisations to accurately estimate need over the next few months and distribute food aid accordingly.

5.2 Urban Distribution Needs

Urban disasters, as highlighted in previous sections of this paper, involve complex challenges which mean the traditional approach is not always transferable to the urban environment. There are a number of ways in which this is true when it comes to urban distribution.

What are the urban-specific needs for distribution?

- Distribution must be integrated with the existing market (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012).
- Commonly distributed food items do not suit the dietary habits or needs of an urban population (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).
- Protection and security issues can interfere with distribution (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012; USAID, 2008; IASC, 2010a).
- Populations are cash-dependent[19], highly diverse, mobile and vulnerable persons are not gathered in one area (Practical Action & IFRC, 2010b; Cross and Johnston, 2011).
- Physical food aid is not always the most appropriate intervention for urban environments (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).
- Financial and technological infrastructure make mobile distribution methods such as M-Pesa possible (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012).

In urban areas today, food insecurity stems from a lack of access rather than a lack of availability (Grünewald *et al*., 2011; Levron, 2010; USAID, 2008; USAID, 2008). Simply put, 'People die because they cannot afford the food which is there' (ACF, 2007, p.17). In urban areas where few people produce their own food, access comes down to cash. Urban populations require cash to access not just food but also water, cooking fuel, transportation and other expenses (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012) that contribute directly to their food security, that rural households are not faced with. Providing physical goods to urban areas also raises issues of logistical possibility, and agencies must consider what is an appropriate humanitarian response. While trucking in water may be accepted humanitarian work, what about rebuilding a neighbourhood's sewage system? (Ferris, 2012, p.1). Today, disasters are much more prolonged events and if anything, people are displaced to urban areas with even greater access to local markets (ACF, 2007).Markets are incredibly important to urban areas, and care must be taken by humanitarians to ensure they are supported rather than disrupted. Market assessment tools like EMMA allow efficient and accurate understandings of markets, which eliminates doubt about whether markets will be able to manage need[20].

Another factor is that urban areas have different types of communities than rural areas, a key difference being they are less likely to be geographically-based. Communities and neighbourhoods are not necessarily the same thing (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with

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[19] Reliant on cash in hand to purchase items required for basic needs; as compared to rural areas where the same needs (water, food, shelter) are either free or self-produced.

[20] For more information about EMMA, see Powell, 2012.

Campbell, 2012, p.10). Communities may be faith-based, or centre around ethnicity, profession or common interests (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012). It's common for one area to include many different people, with different vulnerabilities and coping abilities which may conflict with one another. Putting together a relief committee in this type of environment is extremely difficult. While local knowledge generated in close-knit communities is a key reason to work through RCs in rural areas, due to the complex and rapidly changing population in urban areas, local authorities may not have accurate data for the area (Sivakumaran, 2011) and it may be difficult to find one individual who can be representative of such a diverse area (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012). This means the criteria for an effective RC (Taylor and Seaman, 2004) are not met in urban settings. As well, marginalised groups are more spread out and easily hidden in urban areas (Cross and Johnston, 2011), making effective targeting even more important. Finally, there are multiple actors in urban areas who may have contrasting interests. Organisations may find these groups want influence in targeting selection, and must decide what their priorities and objectives are. The Lutheran World Federation moved their programme from an urban area to a rural one in Haiti after local gangs and government pushed to have influence in beneficiary selection (Sivakumaran, 2011).

In traditional rural agricultural contexts, it would be easy to predict a food shortage in an upcoming season, and a suitable intervention would be to supply a community with one or two mass deliveries of a handful of staple food items. In urban environments, a whole range of disasters can result in food insecurity and things are much more difficult. Infrequent large scale distribution of physical items requires households to travel to a distribution point and arrange transportation of the items. In urban disaster situations, transportation links may be disrupted and if they are accessible, beneficiaries may not be able to afford them. Additionally, they may not have cooking fuel and facilities to prepare meals at home or the space to store a large quantity of food items. Large distribution of physical aid is simply impossible, due to a combination of security and logistical concerns, not to mention a rapidly moving population (Oxfam, 2007). Moreover, the needs of an urban population are both diverse and ever changing. Urban areas do not follow agricultural seasons the same way rural areas do, and while some jobs may be cyclical, most income is unpredictable. Getting a large amount of physical resources to a densely populated area would be very difficult, and wouldn't suit the needs of the urban population. Much smaller but frequent distributions may

be better suited in this situation.

5.3.0 Urban Distribution

Due to the complexities of urban humanitarian response, many traditional distribution approaches for food security do not suit the urban context. ACF (2007, p.45) has created a decision tree to help humanitarians determine which factors are relevant in setting up a distribution and USAID (2008, p.10) have created a chart of distribution options including examples of use in urban contexts which is helpful, but not evaluative in nature.

There are three methods growing in practice that both academics and evaluators recommend for urban distribution. These are, cash transfers, partnering with private institutions, and mobile or remote distribution. These will be discussed below.

5.3.1 Cash Programming

While food aid has been the traditional response to food insecurity in emergency contexts, the needs of urban humanitarian situations cannot be met by physical distribution of food. Cash programming (including cash grants, cash for work and vouchers) are highly recommended for humanitarian aid distribution in urban areas for many reasons, such as flexibility, empowerment, supporting local trade and markets, and time and cost efficiency (CaLP, n.d.; IASC, 2010a; Skoufias *et al*., 2011). Cash is an ideal response to the urban population which has diverse needs (ACF, 2007), is spread over a large area, where there is an issue of food access not availability and where the population is cash-dependent. Cash has been identified as a way to address multiple needs in various sectors (Kauffmann, 2012) while empowering a population and ensuring dignity (ACF, 2007). It has added benefits regarding safety and efficiency (ACF, 2007), positively contributes to the economy without disrupting local markets (ACF, 2007), and is useful in reducing dependency as it's easier to plan an exit strategy (Mohiddin, Sharma and Haller, 2007).

ACF found that cash is most appropriate when markets and banks are functioning and necessary goods/services are available, the population has few other income sources and there is a lack of cash in the economy, speed of response is an issue, the population has diverse needs, there is appropriate security, and there is a low risk of inflation. Conversely,

food aid is best when there is accessible transportation for goods, beneficiaries have other income sources to meet other needs, a thorough assessment has determined beneficiaries have uniform needs, there is high inflation, there is time to arrange a supply, markets are not working and there is a lack of availability of goods (ACF, 2007, p.42). Looking back to the characteristics of urban disaster situations previously identified, cash is the most appropriate choice for urban environments.

Some have doubts about cash as a distribution method. There are fears cash can be poorly used or more easily diverted from beneficiaries, or that it will lead traders to raise prices for scarce goods (ACF, 2007; CaLP, n.d.). However, a 2006 study in Sri Lanka which compared the impact of cash and food aid in the same context found that where markets were functioning, cash was the more appropriate response. Fears about an adverse social impact or gender inequity were not realised, and cash allowed beneficiaries to priorities their own needs (Mohiddin, Sharma and Haller, 2007).

Research shows that with good assessment and targeting, cash is used for intended needs (CaLP, n.d.). A 1999 evaluation of projects dealing with drought-induced food insecurity found that the poorest and neediest beneficiaries sometimes sell food rations in order to meet other immediate needs (Sharp, 1999). Cash distribution in that case would have avoided them having to sell part of their aid, usually at a lower than market price (Sharp, 1999). There's no evidence that cash is more prone to corruption or dependency than other forms of aid (CaLP, n.d.). Some assume cash distribution is more of a security risk, however this is not necessarily the case. Distribution of food can be a security concern as well, and cash is easier to hide and can be distributed remotely (CaLP, n.d.).

Cross & Johnston (2011) have identified best practises for cash transfers in urban markets. They stress the importance of accurate assessment and targeting, and note that in urban contexts particularly, humanitarians must deliberately include isolated and marginalised groups. They point out the importance of a clear objective, which must pair up with methods used and note that a response must match the scale of the disaster, and cash helps in this regard. CaLP have produced a toolkit alongside resource (Cross and Johnston, 2011) which includes 19 documents relevant to urban humanitarian contexts, including focus group questionnaires, an urban assessment template and various other useful documents for

setting up an urban cash distribution.

5.3.2 New Partnerships

Traditional food aid distribution through relief committees are not appropriate for urban settings. New partnerships and strategies are required. One key partner group in urban areas are traders and private enterprises, such as banks. Urban populations are dependent on markets for their basic needs including water, fuel, health, education and transportation (53). Reliance on markets means the population is more vulnerable to price fluctuations, and harder to mitigate this risk (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). Working with these organisations will ensure markets are supported rather than challenged, and working with markets is the quickest way to kick start recovery (Cross and Johnston, 2011, p.xvii).

A thorough and up-to-date understanding of local markets is essential for all food security disasters, particularly in urban areas (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012; DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009). The EMMA (Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis) toolkit is useful in both rural and urban environments to understand the state of local markets after a sudden onset disaster, and uses this information to generate recommendations of how to involve markets in humanitarian response activities (Powell, 2012). Especially through cash programming, volatility of prices can have a severe impact on an urban population. Partnering with traders allows for a thorough understanding of the market and makes it possible to better regulate prices and adjust the aid given if necessary (Grünewald *et al*., 2011).

There are several examples of a market-style intervention in an urban setting involving private partners. Meals were delivered through small restaurants during the Haiti response (Grünewald *et al*., 2011), rather than setting up separate feeding centres. In urban areas of Zimbabwe, sorghum was introduced as a low-cost food item to be sold through existing markets. It led to a sustainable livelihood for millers and traders as well as an affordable food option. (Allen, 2004). While this is unsuitable for sudden-onset disasters, it highlights the importance of markets in urban contexts. In Afghanistan, WFP subsidised urban bakeries, addressing both food security and livelihoods (Grünewald *et al*., 2011). This urban bakeries project worked well when the city was full of IDPs and existing livelihoods had been destroyed. However, the project never undertook an assessment of the context and

had no baseline. After several years, it was found that ration cards for bread were traded on the market, and despite a lengthy involvement, there was little possibility most of the bakeries could become self-sustaining. This led to the project eventually being cancelled (WFP, 2004, pp.29-30). This example reinforces earlier points about the importance of assessment in urban areas.

Partnering with traders can be an intensive process to establish initially, but it allows schemes to be set up such as vouchers which are a good compromise between beneficiary need for flexibility and donor need to have some control over expenditures (Macauslan with Phelps, 2012). Access to these partnerships is one useful feature of working in urban environments. Whereas in rural areas, international aid organisations may be the only competent response agencies, UN urban areas there are networks, organisations, and the private sector who all have relevant knowledge and experience to bring to the table (Zetter and Deikun, 2010, p.2). Cross & Johnston (2011) consider partnering with the private sector including banks, mobile companies and traders a best practice for urban environments.

5.3.3 Mobile and Remote Solutions:

As Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke (2012 pp.18-19 explain, 'Urban populations tend to form communities around common interest or pursuits, rather than co-location. As a result, models of aid targeting and delivery which involve a single large agency office working as a hub and village committees conducting activities for 'their' community may not be appropriate in many urban environments'. Small offices around the city organising distribution of small amounts of aid on a regular basis are more appropriate for urban response (Ramalingam and Knox-Clarke, 2012).

While traditional methods of distribution aren't appropriate in urban humanitarian response, the urban environment does have advantages including access to banks, prevalence of mobile phone use and availability of traders to set up voucher distribution (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009). Security concerns in urban environments combined with easier access to technology and institutions make remote and mobile distribution most appropriate for urban environments. Large distribution centres can be a focal point for violence, and mobile delivery is an effective solution (Sanderson and Knox-Clarke with Campbell, 2012, p.9). Electronic transfers are more efficient and secure than queuing outside banks (Cross and

Johnston, 2011, p.xii)[21].

Cash for work was used in urban areas of Zimbabwe in 2008 after a cholera outbreak amidst a conflict situation. The project included low-intensity activities so that everyone, including vulnerable groups like older persons, could participate. The project first used a security company to distribute the cash which was safe and quick but costly to administer. Smart cards were later set up by partnering with a local bank, which allowed beneficiaries to purchase small items (which was difficult at the time due to cash-flow problems in Zimbabwe) (Gourlay and Creti, 2012).

5.4 Gaps for Urban Distribution

While there is a growing understanding of the needs of appropriate distribution after an urban disaster, there are still gaps in knowledge and a need for increased attention to this area. Unlike assessment and targeting, there are very few guidelines or evaluations which look specifically at best practice for distribution, in urban situations or otherwise.

Despite growing recognition that cash distribution is best for urban environments (Practical Action & IFRC,2010b; Cross and Johnston, 2011 among others), and a wealth of information gathered by CaLP[22], there is a lack of knowledge and preparedness of how to implement cash transfers on a large scale. This can add delays to distribution, as experienced in Haiti (Kauffmann, 2012) where organisations had to improvise.

Another gap centres around security. While there is widespread recognition of the security concerns in an urban environment (USAID, 2008), there is a lack of information about how to address security in urban distribution. 'Population density in urban areas heightens the need for security and crowd management at sites where food is distributed (USAID, 2008, p.8).' This is where cash transfers, new partnerships and remote distribution can work together to reduce security risks. Beneficiaries can receive small, frequent cash transfers through remote mechanisms like their mobile phone, and use this to purchase

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[21] For further information on remote and mobile distribution, see the CaLP Resource Library at http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library.

[22] http://www.cashlearning.org/

essential items as they would normally do, without singling them out. This preserves dignity and ensures security.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This paper has sought to identify traditional approaches to assessment, targeting and distribution for food security and compare them with the demands of urban humanitarian response, to determine gaps and best practice in these areas. It has found that each area has its own concerns, which will now be elaborated.

Urban assessment requires a very different approach than traditional rural-focused methods allow, but there comprehensive guidelines available on urban assessment. The differences for urban environments include what information is relevant for assessment, what indicators are significant and a recognition that baseline data is hard to come by. Also, the scale of urban environments means assessment can be very costly and time-consuming. However, agencies need to accept this as part of their approach as ineffective or poorly conducted assessment means ineffective programmes which are out of touch with beneficiary needs.

For targeting, four main approaches were identified: administrative, geographic, self-targeting and CBT. The paper looked at urban factors specific to targeting including the heterogeneity of the population and that chronic issues can mask sudden impacts. No one approach is suitable for all urban targeting contexts, each requires its own form of urban tweaking. Targeting must be made urban-specific to avoid wasting resources or creating tension and conflict.

Existing approaches for distribution are vastly different than what is possible for urban environments. From a different understanding of community to the density of the population and infrastructure, it is clear that a physical distribution on a mass scale coordinated by relief committees is not possible. So, urban distribution requires new approaches that are suitable for its features. Cash is increasingly common and is recommended as a best practice for urban humanitarian response. While RCS are not appropriate, there are many new partners available, which is an advantage the urban environment brings. Mobile and remote strategies will reduce security and logistical troubles

and are in line with the shift to cash and new partnerships. There is a lack of documented knowledge about these new approaches, which deserve as much attention as assessment and targeting.

Despite the existence of guidelines, evaluations and articles outlining the needs of the urban environment and providing relevant, updated tools and approaches to urban humanitarian response, humanitarian actors continue to approach urban disasters such as Haiti without this knowledge. While there is growing recognition of urban disasters, there are guidelines and approaches for urban response that have been around for over a decade, which are not being used. Bonnard (2000) is an example of an extremely helpful tool for urban assessment. In over 80 documents reviewed for this study, including numerous food security assessments in urban areas, only one referenced it (DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009). There are more recent documents published just two years before Haiti[23], and agencies there still proceeded with rural-focused method. It is echoed often in the humanitarian field that we need to learn from past response, and this is especially true in the urban field considering growing urbanisation and the potential scale of future urban disasters. Agencies cannot approach urban disasters alone or without these tools.

Whether by adjusting targeting methodologies to suit urban specifics or finding new technologies to enable mobile distribution, it is imperative that urban humanitarian practitioners recognise the unique features of the urban environment and the challenges specific to urban disasters. This requires ensuring tools are relevant to urban contexts. If approaches are not matched to the context, particularly when so much knowledge and experience is available, humanitarians will be ignoring the needs of the situation.

Further work should be done to document the strengths and weaknesses of assessment, targeting and particularly distribution methodologies in urban contexts. When evaluating programming, special attention should be given to how agencies went about conducing these activities, what worked and what didn't. While there is a growing body of knowledge on urban disasters in journals and reports , there is still a lack of recognition and practical use by humanitarian practitioners.

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[23] DFID, ECHO and WFP, 2009; USAID, 2008

Key Urban Humanitarian Resources

Urban Disasters:

Urban Humanitarian Response Portal: ALNAP and UN-Habitat www.urban-response.org/

Acute food insecurity in mega-cities: Issues and assistance options. Benfield UCL Hazard Research Centre, Disaster Studies Working Paper 7. Kelly, 2003.

Designing appropriate interventions in urban settings: Health, education, livelihoods, and registration for urban refugees and returnees. UNHCR, 2009.

Humanitarian aid in urban settings: Current practice, future challenges. Groupe URD, 2011.

IASC Strategy: Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas. 2010.

Responding to urban disasters: Learning from previous relief and recovery operations. ALNAP Lessons Paper, 2012.

Synthesis paper case studies: Manila, Nairobi, Eldoret and Haiti. 78th working group meeting, 10-12 November 2010. IASC.

Urban disasters – lessons from Haiti: Study of member agencies' responses to the earthquake in Port au Prince, Haiti, January 2010. DEC, 2011

Urban food insecurity: Strategies for WFP food assistance to urban areas. WFP, 2002..

Assessment:

Assessing urban food security: Adjusting the FEWS rural vulnerability assessment framework to urban environments. USAID FEWS Project, 2000.

Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) and nutrition assessment. 2010

Identification of vulnerable people in urban environments: Assessment of sustainable livelihoods and urban vulnerabilities. ACF International, 2010.

Urban food security & nutrition assessments technical guidance sheet, 2009.

Targeting:

Targeting food aid in emergencies. ENN Special Supplement 1, 2004.

Emergencies in urban settings: A technical review of food-based program options. USAID, 2008.

Emergency food security and livelihoods urban programme evaluation. Oxfam, 2012.

Distribution:

Comparing cash and food transfers: findings from a pilot project in Sri Lanka. Field Exchange 30, 2007.

Cash transfer programming in urban emergencies: A toolkit for practitioners. CaLP.

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