Environment&Urbanization Brief – 36

The urbanization of humanitarian crises

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SUMMARY: Disasters and conflict mean that ever larger numbers of people around the world are being displaced from their homes. These displaced people increasingly live in established urban areas rather than more traditional camp settings. Humanitarian actors have struggled to engage with the complexities of the urban context, and what these imply for effective crisis response. Knowledge gaps include the ways in which humanitarian crises affect different groups, institutions and systems within cities. At the same time, urban settings can offer opportunities for effective responses that draw on the strengths and capacities of affected populations (both displaced and hosting), local organizations, and city governments.

Approaches to urban humanitarian crises need to adopt a more developmental approach, particularly given the increasingly protracted nature of many crises. This in turn needs to be informed by how crisis responses can foster this, while recognizing pre-existing needs and deficiencies within cities, particularly those affecting low-income and other marginalized groups. Humanitarian responses can be an opportunity to foster existing capacities and strengthen urban systems, meeting emergency needs while supporting a more sustainable urban future.

I. INTRODUCTION – THE URBANIZATION OF HUMANITARIAN CRISES

From "natural disasters" causing large-scale destruction, to slow-onset crises such as droughts, through to conflict and persecution, the number of people around the world needing humanitarian assistance is growing – and increasingly, they are found in urban contexts. This Brief highlights why there is a pressing need for the humanitarian sector to adapt its crisis response to urban settings, and for urban actors to be better prepared to deal with crises, whether chronic or acute.

The world has higher numbers of forcibly displaced populations than ever before. The 2017 *Global Trends*[1] report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) counted 65.6 million people forcibly displaced globally in 2016, of whom 10.3 million were newly displaced that year. Of this total, 40.3 million are internally displaced, remaining within their country's boundaries, with the remainder being refugees and asylum seekers. Not only is the number of displaced people growing, but this displacement is also increasingly protracted: the average duration of refugee displacement is now estimated to be 26 years.[2] Increasingly, the proportion of displaced people moving to urban areas is growing – in 2016, 60 per cent of refugees were living in urban areas.[3] At the same time, in a world where more than 50 per cent of the population lives in urban areas, the effect of disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons is increasingly going to be felt by urban populations.

For humanitarian agencies, which typically provide emergency response, there are particular challenges to operating in an urban context, as compared to a more traditional camp setting. While displaced and disaster-affected populations require targeted support to meet their immediate needs and rebuild their lives in the longer term, the effects on their hosting populations must also be addressed. This is particularly so in urban contexts where displaced and host populations may be intermixed, and may have very similar immediate needs for shelter, healthcare, food and sanitation, creating targeting challenges.

a. Understanding the challenges of an urban response

In 2016, a number of global agendas emerged that acknowledged the need to address urban humanitarian crises. The lead-up to the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 saw the development of a set of Urban Recommendations, which culminated with the launch of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises at the summit. This Global Alliance is a collaborative, inter-disciplinary network of urban and humanitarian actors committed to improving urban preparedness and crisis response. The New Urban Agenda emerging out of Habitat III specifically calls for the protection of displaced populations' rights, and support to local governments in facilitating these populations' integration into existing city systems and structures.[4]

1. UNHCR (2017), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016*, Geneva.

2. UNHCR (2016), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*, Geneva, page 20.

3. See reference 1.

4. UN General Assembly (2016), *New urban agenda*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December, 71/256, New York, clause 28.

This Brief draws on the Editorial in the October 2017 issue of *Environment&Urbanization* on "The urbanization of humanitarian crises".

5. http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/transformation/59.

6. Brown, D and C Johnson (2015), "Setting a new research agenda for urban crisis and humanitarian response", IIED briefing paper, London.

7. See the paper by Peter Mackie, Alison Brown, Kate Dickenson, Eid Ahmed, Saeed Ahmed Hassan and Mohamed Ahmed Barawaani listed on the back page.

8. Flinn, B, H Schofield and L M Morel (2017), "The case for self-recovery", *Forced Migration Review* Vol 55, pages 12–14.

9. Campbell, L (2016), "Stepping back: understanding cities and their systems", Working paper, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action/Overseas Development Institute, London.

10. See the paper by David Sanderson listed on the back page.

11. Maynard, V and E Parker (2015), "Humanitarian response to urban crises: a review of area-based approaches", IIED working paper, London.

12. See reference 11, page 12.

13. https://www.iied.org/urban-crises-learning-fund.

This last point highlights an ongoing discussion in the humanitarian sector: the need for localization. One of the five core responsibilities emerging out of the World Humanitarian Summit is that *"the international community should respect, support and strengthen local leadership and capacity in crises and not put in parallel structures that may undermine it"*.[5] All too often, the emergency nature of humanitarian responses encourages an expert-led or engineering approach rather than allowing the time to develop an understanding of local needs and capacities.[6] In many instances, affected populations "self-recover".[7] For example, only 30 per cent of the world's refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are housed by humanitarian agencies, and the rest stay with family, with friends or in makeshift accommodation. The majority of households affected by disaster rebuild their homes themselves[8] – and humanitarian actors need to be able to support, rather than shape, efforts by affected populations to rebuild their lives.

However, when crisis response leads to a massive influx of humanitarian agencies, the priorities of local authorities and local communities may be subsumed. At the same time, many local governments lack the capacity to respond effectively and rapidly to a crisis situation. Cities may already be facing deficits in provision of basic services to their existing populations, particularly those living in informal settlements, and may be further challenged by having to also serve displaced people. Thus, there is an opportunity here for local governments to work with humanitarian actors to meet local needs, but this requires humanitarians to better understand the existing urban systems and their interlinkages.[9] One example of this is a growing interest in using area-based approaches, as described by a paper in the special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* on humanitarian response urban crises.[10] Area-based approaches focus an intervention on a defined geographical area rather than individuals, allowing for integrated, multi-sector and participatory action.[11] Humanitarian agencies can step away from service delivery towards an *"engaging, advocating and supporting approach"*,[12] which opens up the door for more sustainable and longer-term solutions.

b. Building an evidence base for change

The special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* emerges out of a programme of work funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), which has sought to identify barriers and approaches to effective urban response. This programme has been led by two organizations, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). IIED, through an "Urban Crises Learning Fund",[13] has sought to generate new evidence and foster ways of working in order to increase urban and humanitarian stakeholders' knowledge, technical capacity, and commitment to working in partnership. The special issue brings together some of the research carried out as part of this initiative.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CONTEXT

One of the key findings from the papers presented in this special issue – and, indeed, generated by the broader evidence base associated with this programme of work – is that while certain broad principles are relevant for responding to humanitarian crises in urban areas, the application of these principles needs to be strongly informed by a deep understanding of the local context. Indeed, one of the few features shared by all urban areas around the world is their complexity and distinctiveness. The responsibilities of local authorities, the relationships between service providers, and the features of local civil society movements all vary greatly from place to place, making the production and use of guidelines and handbooks – which so often form the basis for humanitarian response – problematic if they are not sufficiently adaptable to differing contexts.

14. Paragas, G, A Rodil and L Pelingon (2016), "Tacloban after Haiyan: working together towards recovery", IIED working paper, London.

15. See the paper by Moritz Schuberth listed on the back page.

16. de Boer, J (2015), "Resilience and the Fragile City", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* Vol 4, No 1, Art 17; also Muggah, R (2014), "Deconstructing the fragile city: exploring insecurity, violence and resilience", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 26, No 2, pages 345–358.

Some of these differences are related to the type of crisis experienced: cities affected by disasters, cities with large displaced populations, and cities directly affected by conflict have very different issues to deal with. Urban disasters can occur in places with relatively well-organized and well-resourced local authorities – as was the case with Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.[14] In these settings, one of the challenges for urban humanitarian response is to work with and to support local authorities in rebuilding their functionality. In other disasters, the authority of local government was already weak, leading to challenges in responding and providing relief in settings where armed groups had high levels of power. This was the case following the 2010 earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.[15]

For urban areas directly affected by conflict, or receiving displaced people, other features may be preeminent. Cities with large numbers of displaced people may have appropriate local government structures – although these may be at risk of being overwhelmed by the need to provide basic services to a rapidly growing population. Others may have capacities that are already overstretched by existing needs. And in smaller towns, or in situations of armed conflict, local government may not exist at all.

One way of conceiving of the underlying level of risk in a city is through the concept of "fragile cities," a state arising from an aggregation of risk.[16] For cities that are already fragile, a relatively minor natural hazard or small number of displaced people could prove to be a tipping point that makes the city cease to function effectively. A spectrum of violence also exists within cities: there are relatively peaceful urban

17. Yazdani, M, D Bercovitch and J Charles-Voltaire (2014), "Knowledge transfer on urban violence: from Brazil to Haiti", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 26, No 2, pages 457–468.

18. See the paper by Schuberth listed on the back page.

19. See the paper by William Monteith and Shuaib Lwasa listed on the back page.

20. Satterthwaite, D and D Dodman (2013), "Towards resilience and transformation for cities within a finite planet", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 25, No 2, pages 291–298.

21. Maynard, V, E Parker, R Yoseph-Paulus and D Garcia (2018, forthcoming), "Urban planning following humanitarian crises: supporting urban communities and local governments to take the lead", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 30, No 1. This is available online now.

22. See the paper by Monteith and Lwasa listed on the back page.

23. Smith, G and L Mohiddin (2015), "A review of evidence of humanitarian cash transfer programming in urban areas", IIED working paper, London.

24. See the paper by Schuberth listed on the back page.

25. Turner, J F C (1976), *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments*, Pantheon Books, New York.

26. See the papers by Sanderson and by Monteith and Lwasa listed on the back page.

27. See the paper by Sneha Krishnan listed on the back page.

28. See the paper by Sanderson listed on the back page.

29. See the paper by John Twigg and Irina Mosel listed on the back page.

areas; those that have ongoing levels of violence and crime (e.g. Port-au-Prince[17]); and those that are directly experiencing armed conflict. The paper by Schuberth[18] makes a clear case for the potential and limits of transferring approaches and methods from one context to another in cities with high levels of violence, drawing on experiences from Rio de Janeiro ("Viva Rio") to explore their relevance and applicability in Port-au-Prince.

In addition, it is important to recognize the differences in experiences and situations for neighbourhoods and communities within cities. A paper on refugees and IDPs and their access to markets in Kampala, Uganda[19] shows clearly how even among different displaced groups, there is a wide variety of experiences that should inform the types of responses to assist and support them. There are also both commonalities and differences between host and displaced populations. While they frequently share many drivers of vulnerability related to exclusion, marginalization and poverty – including poor levels of access to shelter and basic services – there are also distinctions that warrant particular attention by humanitarian responders.

III. A DIVERSITY OF ACTORS

Perhaps the single most distinctive feature of the urban context that ought to inform the nature of humanitarian response is the existence of a large range of actors with complex and frequently overlapping responsibilities, and whose relationships may be deeply entrenched and politicized. While the following sections highlight the roles of these different actors in responding to crises, perhaps the most important feature is the relationships between these actors and the way agencies seeking to respond to crises engage with these diverse actors.

Local or municipal governments play a critical role in contributing to and responding to crises. First, factors such as the level of stability and capacity of local authorities will shape the underlying features that make a city vulnerable or able to respond effectively. This includes the quality of provision of basic risk-reducing infrastructure such as water, sanitation and drainage; and citizens' access to healthcare, education and the rule of law.[20] Much of this is underpinned by the extent to which residents of low-income and informal settlements are recognized as legitimate citizens who enjoy the rights and opportunities provided by urban life. Unfortunately, however, there is much better documentation of how local authorities' lack of stability and competence contributes to risk and impedes responses to crises than there is of how effective local governance can reduce risk and generate more positive outcomes.

Second, competent and well-resourced local authorities can play a significant role in responding to crises of various kinds. Local authorities that are able to engage with external actors in delivering services can contribute their knowledge of the local situation, and can help to ensure that interventions lead to longer-term development (rather than undermining the systems that will be needed to support urban function in the longer term). Where local governments have good relationships with national government, they can benefit from guidance, frameworks and even funding for recovery and reconstruction processes, such as land titling and urban planning.[21]

There is an emerging recognition, although as yet insufficiently supported by evidence, of the importance of the private sector in responding to crises in urban areas. But even more essential is the importance of markets (both the physical spaces and the systems of exchange, as the paper by Monteith and Lwasa details[22]) and the private sector in providing the essentials for urban livelihoods and productivity: shelter, water, food, education and healthcare. Cash-based approaches[23] to humanitarian emergencies are one way in which the local private sector, including small- and medium-sized enterprises and utilities, can be reinstated at the centre of the urban economy after a humanitarian crisis.

But not all the actors in urban areas are so well-intentioned. In many situations, disasters or displacement take place in situations where the rule of law is fragile – or where the state's capacity to maintain law and order is eroded by a crisis. As Schuberth shows,[24] armed groups may control large areas of urban territory, and fulfilling humanitarian mandates to save lives may require difficult decisions about whether and how to engage with criminal actors and organizations.

Because of this, humanitarian actors need to take new approaches to working in urban areas. One starting point is engaging with long-established and well-documented practices that have worked in improving urban livelihoods and attracting urban investment. Mackie et al. argue that John Turner's[25] description and analysis of self-help are relevant for understanding the city in post-conflict settings. Sanderson and Monteith and Lwasa[26] make the case for humanitarian actors to learn from previous urban development efforts.

Much of this will be based on the creation of working partnerships between these diverse actors. Collaborating and forming consortia requires ongoing effort, which ideally should be fostered in the long term, and in anticipation of crises (as argued in a paper on consortia in Eastern India[27]). This may require new ways of working. Area-based approaches show particular promise in this regard.[28] It will also require partnering with non-state actors, including volunteers or "emergent groups". As shown in a paper on spontaneous response,[29] these are often the first responders to any crisis and contribute greatly to rescue efforts, yet they are often poorly integrated into later and more formal responses. These partnerships may

30. See the paper by Patrick Daly, Sabin Ninglekhu, Pia Hollenbach, Jennifer Duyne Barenstein and Dori Nguyen listed on the back page.

31. See the paper by Krishnan listed on the back page.

32. See for example Boonyabancha, S (2009), "Land for housing the poor- by the poor: experiences from the Baan Mankong nationwide slum upgrading programme in Thailand", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 21, No 2, pages 309–329; and d'Cruz, C and P Mudimu (2013), "Community savings that mobilize federations, build women's leadership and support slum upgrading", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 25, No 1, pages 31–45.

33. Parker, E and V Maynard (2015), "Humanitarian response to urban crisis: a review of area-based approaches", IIED working paper, London; also Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010), *IASC Strategy: Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas*.

34. See the paper by Mackie et al. listed on the back page.

35. See the paper by Monteith and Lwasa listed on the back page.

36. Saliba, S (2016), *Finding Economic Opportunity in the City: Lessons from IRC's Cash and Livelihoods Programmes in Cities within Lebanon and Jordan*, Internal Rescue Committee.

37. See the paper by Monteith and Lwasa listed on the back page.

38. See the papers by Daly et al. and by Krishnan listed on the back page.

39. Macarthy, J, A A Frediani, S Kamara and M Morgodo (2017, forthcoming), "Empowerment and Urban Humanitarian Responses: Exploring the impacts of humanitarian response in the empowerment outcomes of residents of Portee-Rokupa in Freetown, Sierra Leone", IIED working paper, London.

40. See reference 20.

41. See the paper by Twigg and Mosel listed on the back page.

42. See the paper by Schuberth listed on the back page; see also British Red Cross (2016), *British Red Cross' Haiti Urban Reconstruction and Regeneration Program (URRP) Final Evaluation (full)*.

43. See the paper by Sanderson listed on the back page.

44. See the paper by Mackie et al. listed on the back page.

45. Nesbitt-Ahmed, Z (2017), "Women's Economic Empowerment and Cash Transfers in Kathmandu Valley Post-Earthquake", IIED working paper, London.

emerge despite a continued focus on centralized crisis management through national disaster management agencies, which in practice have been shown to function without meaningful local engagement.[30]

In all the above approaches, the power relations between different actors are worth further examination. International agencies may fail to appreciate the legitimate role of local authorities; local authorities may not recognize the potential contribution of civil society groups. International NGOs struggle to achieve scale without engaging the support and knowledge of local implementing NGOs, but funding mechanisms and project cycles give these local organizations insufficient room to shape initiatives and continue their work in the long term.[31]

IV. HOW AFFECTED POPULATIONS RESPOND

Individuals and communities affected by humanitarian crises respond to these in multiple ways. One central lesson emerging from several of the papers in the special issue is that supporting these responses, rather than imposing externally driven approaches, is the most effective means of rebuilding rapidly and effectively. As discussed above, this can include learning from approaches routinely applied in complex urban settings. One highly relevant example of this is the urban upgrading adopted widely as a means to improve shelter and basic services by residents of low-income and informal settlements around the world.[32] Upgrading frequently draws on community-managed resources to take a holistic approach to developing low-income neighbourhoods. Similarly to the area-based approaches now being widely recommended for humanitarian responses,[33] these do not address sectors (such as water, energy and transport) in isolation, but as part of an integrated whole.

One key element for affected populations (whether in situ or displaced) is recovering their livelihoods. This matters both in post-conflict settings[34] and for refugees and IDPs[35]: individuals need to transition away from war and disaster economies. In many cases, this requires moving from survival tactics and short-term coping mechanisms (such as petty trading and daily labour, or relying on cash assistance[36]) into longer-lasting and more substantial livelihoods. One way to achieve this may be supporting the integration of refugee livelihoods in urban markets, by providing space, capital and services.[37] However, this needs to be undertaken in a way that builds on an understanding of the pre-existing local informal sector, so as not to undermine the livelihoods of other groups.

The participation of affected groups also matters. While there is often strong rhetoric about decentralization, this may not be matched by reality[38]: positive framings around "accountability" and "engagement" may mean very little in practice. While many agencies recognize that supporting bottom-up initiatives can be an effective way of supporting the delivery of relief materials, arrangements for responding to humanitarian crises may help or hinder individuals and communities in their rebuilding efforts, and in their long-term prospects for development. For example, Macarthy et al.[39] show that the responses to Ebola in Freetown, Sierra Leone simultaneously drew on, contributed to, and eroded community capacity in several key ways. Community engagement may be particularly tricky where local populations are traumatized or grieving, including community leaders – and it can take time for new leaders to gain local trust.[40]

Humanitarian agencies have developed some approaches to working with first responders and "spontaneous" volunteers,[41] but this often remains tokenistic. There is an opportunity to move beyond an "effectiveness" approach (seeing local organizations and citizens as implementing partners) to more of an "empowerment" approach (which would contribute to longer-term development for vulnerable and marginalized groups). The localization commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit's Agenda for Humanity support this potential by making the case for more funding to go directly to national and local actors rather than through international agencies. At the same time, there are some local actors with whom engagement, although necessary, can be very challenging, particularly in contexts where violence prevails.[42]

Responses to humanitarian crises in cities need to recognize differences within affected groups (and between them). These differences may be due to age, pre-existing illness, exposure to trauma during the crisis, or levels of access to resources (including financial resources). The gendered dimensions of impacts and responses are likely to be significant, but the impact on women may be less well addressed.[43] Crises such as conflicts can have positive effects on women's economic empowerment, but they may need extra targeted assistance to develop their livelihood opportunities fully.[44] Other research shows that the design of humanitarian programmes needs to be informed by the realities of gendered roles and norms – for example, cash for work opportunities need to fit in with women's existing care and domestic responsibilities.[45]

V. A NEED FOR CONTINUED EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

While recent work has strengthened the body of evidence on responses to humanitarian crises in urban areas, there remains a substantial need for further knowledge of the underlying drivers of these crises; of the ways in which these crises affect different groups within cities; and of the most effective means of

responding that draw on the strengths and capacities of affected populations, local organizations, city governments, and international humanitarian assistance.

The papers in the special issue point to a range of research approaches that can be used to achieve this. Central to this is gaining the perspectives of the people who have been directly affected, through focus group discussions[46] and surveys and life history interviews of local populations.[47] Mackie and co-authors[48] demonstrate how this can be done even many years after a particular event has taken place. All too often, it is far more straightforward for researchers simply to engage with "key informants", including staff of responding agencies, rather than directly with women and men in low-income neighbourhoods who may have been most severely affected, including the host populations.

46. See reference 44.

47. See the paper by Monteith and Lwasa listed on the back page.

48. See the paper by Mackie et al. listed on the back page.

Several clear knowledge gaps exist that should be addressed in future research. Overall, the literature is much more focused on identifying challenges and **what** should be done about these, rather than on **how** improvements can be made and by whom. There is stronger information on managing disaster reconstruction in cities than there is on devising post-conflict responses (or interventions during conflicts and urban sieges themselves). And while the issues affecting cities and displaced populations in the Middle East are well recorded, the significant (and rapidly growing) challenges that displacement poses in East Africa are less well documented. Finally, and as highlighted above, issues of differences within affected populations warrant much more significant investigation.

49. See reference 20.

An emerging research agenda on urban humanitarian crises should also engage with opportunities for integrating responses with other important issues facing city residents and governments. This includes considering how to support participatory urban planning in a time-pressured context, where the planning professionals as well as local populations might have been affected by the crisis.[49] In conditions where the majority of affected populations will drive their own recovery, the question of how to implement interventions to support their efforts, while also benefitting the city at large, remains. Given the likely impact of climate change on cities, approaches that combine crisis preparedness and crisis response with climate resilience will have more far-reaching effects than keeping the issues separate.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, therefore, there is a strong need for approaches to urban humanitarian crises to adopt a more developmental approach, particularly given the increasingly protracted nature of crises. In turn, this needs to be informed by stronger understandings of urban systems and how crisis responses can foster these rather than displace them. Humanitarian actors also need to recognize the pre-existing needs and deficiencies within cities, particularly those affecting low-income and other marginalized groups. However, existing humanitarian assessment tools are not adapted for an efficient urban assessment that acknowledges the various particularities of an urban context and considers the social, political and economic aspects as well as the built environment.[50]

50. Meaux, A and W Osofisan (2016), "A review of context analysis tools for urban humanitarian response", IIED working paper, London.

51. http://www.iied.org/stronger-cities-initiative.

52. Sage, B, A Meaux, W Osofisan, M Traynor and T Reye Jove (2017), *Urban Context Analysis Toolkit*, London.

53. http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/transformation/61.

However, the humanitarian sector has started to recognize the need to do things differently in urban settings, and to fill some of the gaps highlighted above. For example, an urban context analysis toolkit has been launched by the Stronger Cities consortium[51] with the objective of being adaptable to different situations.[52] Ideally, an understanding of the local context would precede crises, through strengthened collaboration between local actors and those in the humanitarian sector. This would also require better linkages between humanitarian and development interventions, a goal that the Agenda for Humanity has recognized as relevant to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by shifting from "delivering aid to ending need".[53]

On the side of local actors, there is the opportunity to integrate crisis response with improved provision of services to both hosting and affected populations – which requires supportive policy frameworks and budgeting from national governments. Those implementing global frameworks also need to recognize the relevance and capacities of local authorities and put into place mechanisms for funding and other support to reach them directly. They can draw on previous efforts of this type, including the Healthy Cities movement, Local Agenda 21, and the "My city is getting ready!" campaign, to make cities resilient.

Finally, local populations' efforts to cope with and move on from crises must be supported in ways that enable them to have full access to basic services and safe and secure shelter as they rebuild their homes or integrate their new communities. The capacities of host populations must be recognized, while at the same time not being taken for granted. Humanitarian actors can facilitate recovery in urban communities by ensuring their interventions are tailored to local dynamics and targeted to foster self-recovery in an integrated manner, shifting away from service delivery as the prime means of support.

The papers in the special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* – and a growing body of work elsewhere – begin to identify the scale and nature of humanitarian response in urban areas. The fact that this work includes inputs from and engagement with many large humanitarian agencies is significant, in that it indicates the widespread recognition of a need to do things differently. The outstanding challenge, therefore, is in moving beyond this recognition towards developing and testing approaches that address both the needs of host populations and deep-seated urban development challenges.

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Pen/flash drives are available that include all the papers published in *Environment&Urbanization* from 1989 to 2014 and all recently published working papers by IIED's Human Settlements Group. The drives are available free to any teaching or training institution, NGO or researcher in low- and middle-income nations with little or no access to fast internet connections. To receive one, e-mail your postal address to **humans@iied.org**.

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