



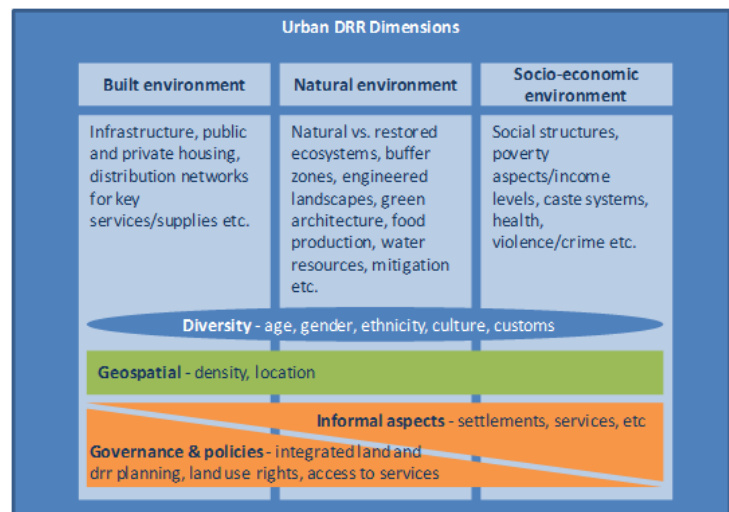
Face-to-Face event 2016

Urban DRR and Urban Resilience

6th to 8th December 2016

Over the past years, the importance of cities has drastically increased as more than 50% of the global population live in cities, and urbanization is further on the rise with the most rapid urbanization expected to occur in mid-sized towns and cities in Africa and Asia. Although urbanization brings along economic, social and ecological benefits and opportunities, unplanned urbanization can result in considerable risks for the population. Cities are often located in areas that are highly exposed to natural hazards, such as on floodplains, coastal belts and fault lines, resulting in a high density of assets and people being highly vulnerable to disastrous effects should an extreme event strike. Interventions to reduce risks in urban areas face different challenges than those in rural settings such as increased density, diversity and complexity, in terms of structures, actors and processes.

- Disaster risks in cities are shaped by the built, the natural and the socio-economic environment, which are influenced by urban specific factors such as diversity, geospatial aspects, informal aspects and governance and policies (as shown in the Figure on the right).
- Compared to disasters in rural contexts, urban disasters are mainly influenced by the built environment, density and informal aspects, whereas the higher density of structures and people in cities increases the risk of cascading effects of adverse disaster impacts.



- Cities are dynamic places where investments of the private sector, other institutions and individuals concentrate. Risk reduction is thus – even more than in rural areas – to be directed towards risk informed investments resulting in acceptable levels of risk, avoiding disasters as a result of development failures.
- Disasters in urban areas affect informal settlements more often and to a larger extent, as authorities do not recognize their “duty to protect and provide” and legislation generally considers such settlements illegal which results in inadequate or lack of support and services by the authorities and unacceptable high levels of risk for the inhabitants in such areas. Under such circumstances, self-governing approaches and advocacy for formal recognition of informal settlements can be considered key strategies to manage urban risks.
- Urban Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) requires non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work across scales as well as to coordinate and collaborate with a myriad of stakeholders, recognizing that local governments are in the driver’s seat and intervening in informal settlements can be highly politicized. The space and niches for NGOs to effectively contribute to sustainable DRR in urban areas, building on existing structures and processes, need to be clearly identified.
- DRR frameworks tend to relate more to the state’s overall role and responsibility in ensuring DRR and resilience and are therefore less applicable in informal fragile urban areas where non-state actors take on more responsibility in DRR due to the absence of government.

A Face-to-Face (F2F) event is organized by the Swiss NGO DRR Platform to bring in different perspectives from a number of practitioners and experts to shed light on disaster risks in urban areas and provide insights into different approaches and practices in urban DRR and resilience building. The event will draw on resources within the Platform as well as from external and will start with a two-day workshop introducing and discussing approaches and case studies followed by a half-day public event that will broaden the thematic scope towards urban resilience.

The workshop will address key questions on the scope of DRR in the urban context also with regards to urban development and urban resilience, the commonalities and differences between DRR in rural areas and urban areas and how learning from rural DRR interventions can be leveraged for urban DRR, as well as the shaping the engagement of NGOs in urban DRR and their role in contributing to resilience building in cities. The workshop will be structured along four thematic blocks: *Disaster risks in the face of increased urbanization* (Block I), *Understanding urban disaster risks* (Block II), *Interventions for urban disaster risk reduction* (Block III), and *The space and strategy for NGOs in working on urban DRR towards resilience* (Block IV). The event will conclude with a public event on urban resilience with inputs from representatives from different sectors.

Date and Venue

Workshop: 6th – 7th December 2016 at Freienhof Thun, Switzerland

Public Day: 8th December 2016 at Hotel Kreuz in Berne, Switzerland



Cape Town, participant in the Resilient Cities Campaign (source: UNISDR)