**Case Study 1**

**Support to settlement-based response and recovery planning in Bangui**

**About the case study:**

* **Urban centre:** Bangui, covering 4 neighbourhoods of Bangui (Fondo, Gbaya Ndombia I and II, Bloc Sara (Banga Sara I and II as well as Poto Poto Souma) and the Cité Boeing
* **Project timeframe**: February – July 2017
* **Type of project**: Settlement Based Assessment and planning, support to local authorities
* **Project partners**: IMPACT, CUF/UCLG, ACTED (AGORA)
* **Coordination framework**: HCT, in support of local authorities and OCHA, NGOs and other relevant humanitarian actors
* **Agency submitting the case study**: IMPACT, on behalf of the AGORA initiative

**Context:**

Since 2013, a major political-military crisis has been affecting the Central African Republic and its capital Bangui, with wide-spread violence and insecurity, persistent communal tensions and population movements. This crisis has generated massive needs among affected populations, with rising poverty and declining economic activity, destruction of housing and infrastructure and disruption of basic services.

Thanks to the recent political transition and the hopes for future stability, the proportion of internally displaced persons has declined steadily since 2016, with increasing level of returns to certain regions, including over 20,000 people returning to Bangui in 2016 and 2017. Within this context of stabilisation of Bangui and returns, humanitarian and development actors have upscaled their programs to support affected populations in Bangui and enable a peaceful return and reintegration. Despite this increase in focus, there still a limited understanding of displacement dynamics, neighbourhood-level vulnerabilities and capacities, and a still very limited engagement of local authorities and local actors within the neighbourhoods of return.

AGORA, a newly launched joint initiative of IMPACT and ACTED, in partnership with CUF/UCLG, conducted a pilot project to support a more integrated and efficient response to the returns in Bangui, through settlement based assessments and response plans. This approach was piloted in 4 neighbourhoods of Bangui and Cite’ Boing, with funding of the European Union, through the establishment of an urban-level Working group inclusive of local and international actors, the implementation of a settlement-based assessment and of settlement-based response plans, and a capacity building component in support of local authorities in partnership with UCLG/CUF.

**Project overview:**

The project was rolled out in 5 phases, as follows:

**Key achievements**

1. *Strong engagement of community representatives at neighbourhood level*, including neighbourhood Mayors, civil society representatives and informal community leaders in the definition of needs and response priorities.
2. *High level of engagement from humanitarian actors*, including INGOs, key UN Agencies (UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, etc.), and Clusters in the development of the response plan and the coordination through the urban Working Group.
3. Settlement-based assessments and response plans enabled a *shared prioritisation and planning across sectors / clusters and between international / local actors*, resulting in a joint understanding of the context and of response priorities.
4. Focus on promoting the *engagement and building the capacity of local authorities*, also using a *municipality-to-municipality peer support scheme* through CUF and UCLG
5. The settlement-based assessment findings and the subsequent response plan was *used by donors for funding allocation and prioritisation*. Specific donors (EU, Humanitarian Fund and others) requested partners to engage in the urban Working Group as a condition for funding to ensure Bangui-level programs are coordinated through the urban Working Group.
6. The urban working group and the settlement-based response plan were a good practice to *link humanitarian and development response*. Short, medium- and long-term priorities were identified through a joint prioritisation process, enabling linkages between local and international actors on the one hand and development/stabilisation and humanitarian actors on the other hand.

**Main Challenges and Shortcomings**

1. *Linkage with existing coordination platfroms*: A lot of time was required to clarify the link between existing Clusters and inter-cluster systems and the Urban working group, causing delay in project implementation.
2. *Local capacities* *and resourc*es: Local actors were not very familiar with the humanitarian architecture/system and had limited and thinly spread resources to engage in coordination. This caused delays in the launch of the Urban WG, and has been identified as a key component for support in the framework of the CUF/UCLG deployment.
3. *****Geographical coverage:* as this program is a pilot, the assessment was conducted in only 4 most affected neighbourhoods of Bangui. While gathering information on these 4 neighbourhoods created a momentum for a better response, there is a risk in only having the capacity to focus on certain areas as other areas – also affected – might be neglected due to simple lack of information and context understanding.

**Project Outputs**

* Assessment and Settlement-based Response Plan report at this [link](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/car_agora_banguineighbourhoodresponseplans_may2017_0.pdf)
* Lessons learned document available upon request

**Key Lessons learnt**

* Engagement of local and international actors for joint prioritisation of response activities
* Use of neighbourhoods as settlement-units for assessment and planning of response
* Engagement of both humanitarian and development actors for joint planning of short and long term activities within the city of Bangui, linking humanitarian to development responses and plans
* Peer to Peer support model for Municipality capacity building as an efficient way of increasing acceptance of support from local municipality stakeholders

For more info, visit [**www.impact-initiatives.org/agora**](http://www.impact-initiatives.org/agora), or contact: gaia.vanderesch@impact-initiatives.org