



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Madagascar Fostering Urban Resilience through Preparedness Activities in Southern Africa

CONTEXT

Located in the Indian ocean, Madagascar is an island exposed to recurrent natural hazards, whose impacts are heavily felt in urban areas. Between 2021 and 2022, five tropical cyclones (Ana, Batsirai, Dumako, Emnati) caused immediate damage to both the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities, as well as to key productive assets. More than 960,000 people were affected by these storms and cyclones, of which WFP assisted 370,000.¹ With their homes and crops destroyed, many turned to the country's urban areas for refuge and better prospects for livelihood opportunities. This rural to urban migration is one of the main drivers of Madagascar's rapid urbanisation, along with population growth and inter-urban migration, paving the way for new hazards.

Leaders in Madagascar face the unique challenge of managing a growing urban population while addressing more frequent and intense natural disasters driven by climate change. Yet, limited opportunities in urban areas have left the poor and displaced living in precarious conditions and highly vulnerable to shocks. The rapidly changing landscape of disaster risk management (DRM) and humanitarian response in Madagascar calls for a better understanding amongst stakeholders of **who** is vulnerable in urban areas and **why**, and **who** should be involved in preparedness and response.

URBAN MADAGASCAR

At a glance

38.5%

of the total population lives in urban areas,² a number projected to increase to 61.5% by 2050³

81%

of Madagascar's population lives below the poverty line (with less than USD\$ 1.90 a day)⁴

61.5%

of the urban population lives in slums and informal settlements

1.64M

people in urban areas are food insecure⁵

1/2

of the urban population is comprised of internal migrants⁶

18.5%

of the young urban population between 20 - 24 years old is unemployed⁷



Funded by
the European Union



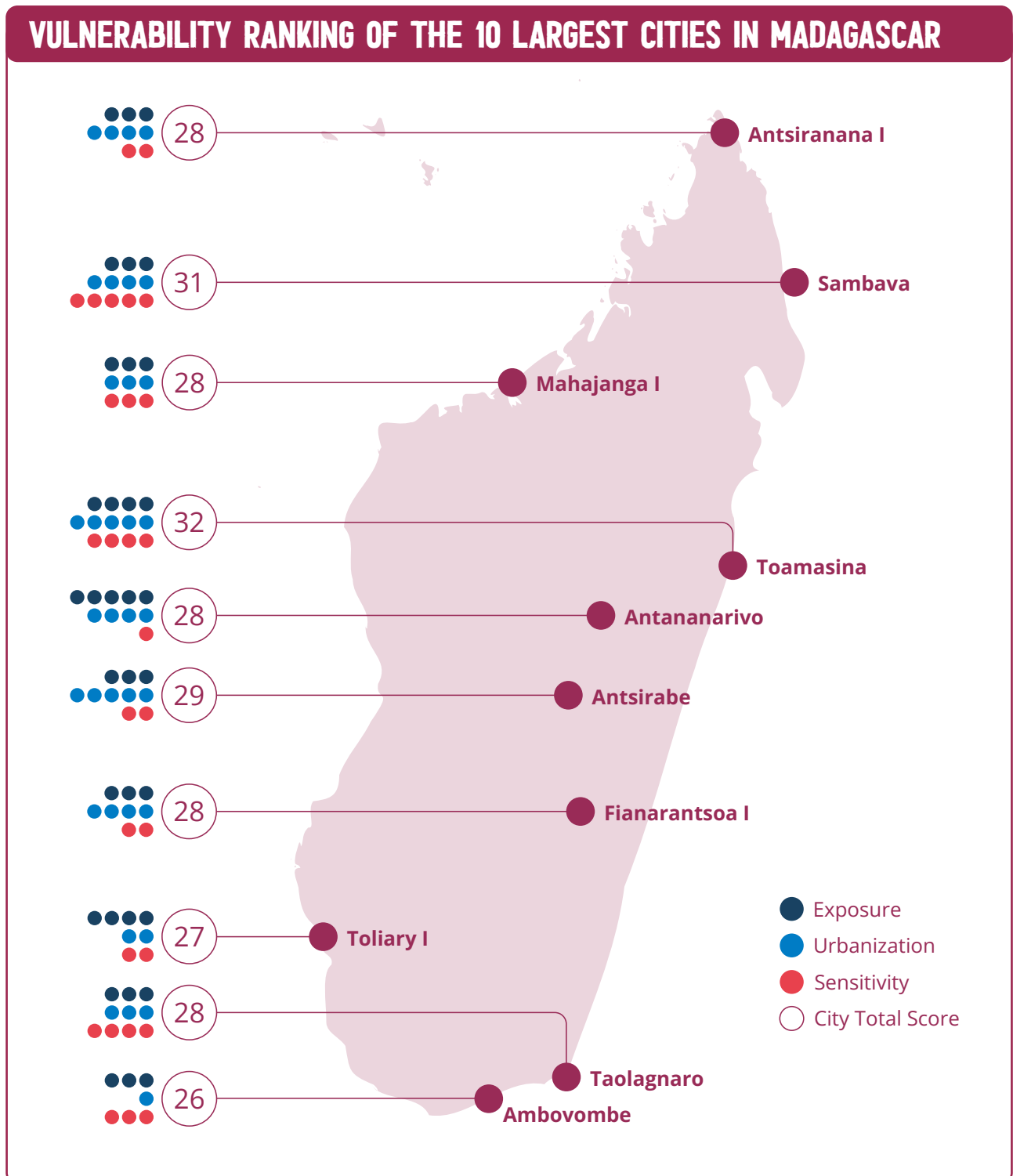
June 2023



THE REGIONAL URBAN PREPAREDNESS PROJECT IN MADAGASCAR

The Regional Urban Preparedness Project is being implemented by WFP in partnership with the National Bureau of Disaster Risk Management (BNGRC - Bureau National de Gestion des Risques et des Catastrophes) and the Municipality of Antananarivo (Commune Urbaine d' Antananarivo) with the goal of building a common understanding amongst stakeholders of the specific characteristics of urban vulnerability and essential needs.

Analyses were conducted in three arrondissements (circonscriptions) of the city of Antananarivo using a participatory approach involving community members, local governments, social protection and DRM authorities, and international and non-governmental organisations. The project has provided partners, local governments, and national institutions with a set of tools to better prepare for responding to shocks in urban areas—while building on existing communication and coordination procedures already in use by them.



FINDINGS #1

Emergency coordination. The National Risk and Disaster Management Office (BNGRC) coordinates DRM activities, working with other ministries as well as local and international humanitarian stakeholders. The BNGRC produces annual DRM contingency plans used at the national and local levels. The Madagascar Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), established in 2015 and housed under the BNGRC, regularly collects information on socio-economic vulnerability, livelihoods, and nutrition in the country; yet only one urban assessment has been carried out in Antananarivo, dating back to 2019. The Ministry of Population, Social Protection, and Promotion of Women (MPPSPF) is responsible for social protection programming. In the face of these serious challenges, Madagascar's investment in social protection remains among the lowest in the world, at around 0.7 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the great majority of urban poor remain practically invisible to the social safety nets.

Stakeholders identified that more cross-sectoral coordination is needed for improving urban response, as well as strengthening of the Local Teams for Risk and Disaster Management (ELGRC) responsible for implementation on the ground. When both Ana and Batsirai hit the island, authorities in the 2nd arrondissement of Antananarivo activated public schools and large halls of the fokontany (a

Malagasy neighbourhood) as temporary shelters, and communicated information on risk areas via radio, television, and SMS alerts.

Despite significant efforts at the local level, obstacles such as a lack of financial and human resources and inconsistent awareness-raising campaigns were identified as key aspects hindering effective urban preparedness.



FINDINGS #2

Urban vulnerability dynamics. Urban food insecurity is influenced by a wide range of spatial and socio-economic factors, including people's access to quality housing, land tenure, source of income, and access to infrastructure and basic services.

From a monetary perspective, a group of households that does not have sufficient income to meet their basic needs and that, therefore, remain highly susceptible to the city's economic fluctuations, repeated and cyclical economic crises, political changes, and health conditions, is classified as vulnerable. Urban food insecurity is caused by insufficient household income. However, action on income growth alone does not solve this problem.

More than 60% of the urban population in Madagascar lives in slums and informal settlements,⁸ many of which are prone to flooding risks associated with heavy rainfall

and cyclones. With only 38% and 14% of the urban population having access to respectively safely managed drinking water and improved sanitation services, food insecurity is inevitably related to unhealthy and unsafe living conditions.

Lack of formal education represent a further obstacle, especially for women, to access decent employment in the ultra-competitive employment environment in urban areas. The proliferation of informal activities is taking ground in urban Madagascar, with people working as washerwomen, plastic collectors, small traders (of vegetables, legumes, and other daily goods), and peddlers, among others. Furthermore, project results pinpoint that working in the informal economy is both a result of being in a vulnerable situation and a driver of vulnerability as it may induce more vulnerabilities around livelihoods and employment.

WHO ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE?

Dimensions of urban vulnerability in Madagascar

	EXTREMELY VULNERABLE				VULNERABLE		
DEMOGRAPHICS	Child-headed households	Elderly household heads (65 and above)	Households headed by single women	Households with > 8 members	Household headed by old persons (65 and above)	Household with > 5 members	
LIVELIHOOD	Casual jobs (domestic work) earning little income	Waste pickers	Sex work	Not working	Street vending	Farm in flood zones	Formal employment with low incomes
HEALTH	Cannot access medical care when sick	Disabled household members			Chronically ill household members		
EDUCATION	Children not attending school because of lack of school supplies	Children do not complete primary education			Children completing above primary education	Children dropping out of school	
WASH	No pit latrines (open defecation)	No access to clean drinking water			Households sharing toilets	Limited access to clean drinking water	
ASSETS & FOOD STOCKS	No food stocks	No productive assets			Small food stocks	Limited productive assets	
HOUSING	Shacks built in informal floodplains	No electricity			Dwellings made of mud	Struggle to pay rent	

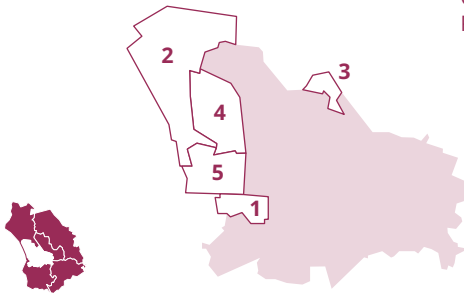


WHERE ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE?

Urban vulnerability hotspots in the 6 Arrondissements of Antananarivo

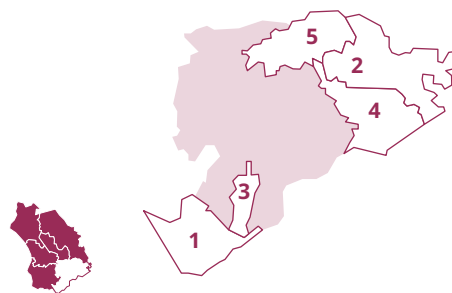
1er arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



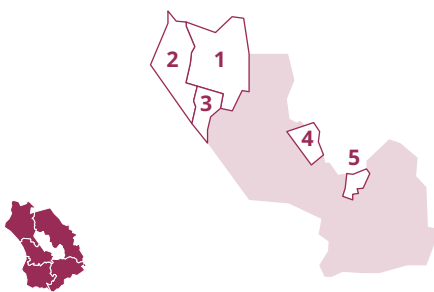
2e arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



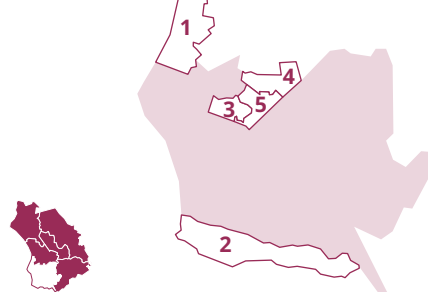
3e arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



4e arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



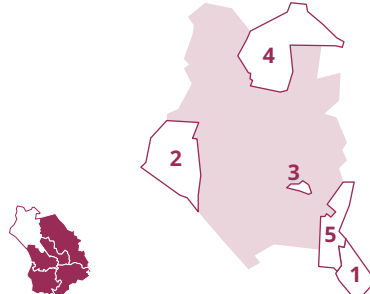
5e arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



6e arrondissement

1-5
Order of
Prioritization



HOW VULNERABILITY MATERIALIZES FOR OLDER PERSONS

Reduced mobility, socio-economic status and the onset of various chronic diseases make the elderly more vulnerable to shocks. The problems of exclusion from assistance during the response to an urban shock directly affect older people. Economic shocks, among others, result in an inability for old people to prepare for and access aid before and after other kind of rapid onset shocks. Price volatility in the

CUA market, for example, affects the meager pensions of the elderly. Reduced purchasing power and reduced mobility result in lack of access to aid: there has been a wave of drought in Antananarivo over the past two years. Water tanks were distributed by NGOs and community organisations. Lack of funds and long queues have prevented the elderly from accessing the water from the tanks.



FINDINGS #3

Cash-based responses in urban areas. An estimated 50.3% of the urban population in Madagascar faces multi-dimensional poverty,⁹ further compounded by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the pandemic response, WFP supported the urban delivery of the emergency cash transfer programme Tosika Fameno (“complementary support”), led by the MPPSPF. In 2022, WFP worked with the BNGRC and the MPPSPF to deliver cash-based assistance to urban households in Antananarivo during the cyclone season, as well as in the drought-affected districts in southern Madagascar.

Urban households reported spending most of their monthly income on food (80%) and therefore having to resort to informal labour to be able to cover other essential needs including housing, medical care, and basic goods.

The biggest challenge in Madagascar for an urban cash response is the current Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) value, i.e., what a household requires to meet their essential needs, used by the national government and on which the assistance transfer value is then calculated.

The current national MEB, calculated based on the food needs of rural populations solely, is set to slightly more than USD\$ 40 per household, with a household transfer value nationally set at USD\$ 25. This value turned out to be very low to cover the essential needs of urban families during the post-cyclone responses. Furthermore, national protocols, limiting assistance, in the case of a sudden onset shock (cyclone/flood), to the time in which families are able to return to their own dwelling, have consistently delayed the delivery of cash assistance, given the absence of simultaneous water drainage and shelter rehabilitation.



The average **monthly MEB** for an urban household in Madagascar to be able to meet food and other essential needs is **USD\$ 87.4**, or **USD\$ 18 per person**.

The average (food and non-food) gap is set at **41%**, being the percentage of the basket that vulnerable households cannot meet. The project has identified a **theoretical transfer value** (e.g., purely resulting from the mixed method analysis) for an urban response in Antananarivo to be corresponding to this percentage, equivalent to **USD\$ 37 per household**.



WAY FORWARD

The multi-sectoral nature of urban vulnerability addressed in the project has brought together stakeholders in Madagascar to address barriers in coordination, including through the establishment of the **Urban Technical Working Group** to facilitate the consultative discussion on an integrated Standard Operation Procedure that could link coordination, vulnerability, and cash-based response in the urban area of the Greater Antananarivo. The project has also laid the foundation for WFP to explore new partnerships, such as the collaboration with the Municipality of Antananarivo to collaborate on linking the national to the local level of preparedness.

Going forward, WFP has identified three entry points to continue supporting country capacity strengthening for better urban preparedness and response. First, support to primary data collection to test the newly proposed indicators for urban vulnerability assessment, related to multidimensional vulnerability, exposure, and informal labour. Second, advocate for the establishment of a digitalised urban social registry, to be organically included into the national one. And third, the development of awareness-raising campaigns on contingency plans and anticipatory action with and for communities, to harness local knowledge and better support them in urban preparedness and response.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

WFP is implementing a Regional Urban Preparedness Project in **Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe**, focusing activities in 12 urban areas. Funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), the project, titled “Fostering Community Resilience through Preparedness Activities in Southern Africa,” aims to build a common understanding on the specific characteristics of urban vulnerability and essential needs, and provide partners, local governments, and national institutions a set of tools to better prepare for responding to shocks in urban areas.

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For more info on the project

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Photo credits

Photos page 1, 6 (family photo), 7 (kids photo):
WFP/Aina Andrianalizaha
Photos page 3, 6 (city photo): WFP/Arianna Francioni
Photo page 7 (food distribution): Commune Urbaine de Antananarivo/Nick Razafimahefa

Endnotes

- 1 WFP, 2022
- 2 UN-Habitat, 2020
- 3 UNDESA
- 4 The World Bank, 2019
- 5 WFP, 2020
- 6 RGPH-3, 2018
- 7 RGPH-3, 2018
- 8 Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, 2022
- 9 MICS, 2018

