Why is social resilience important?

Social resilience is the capacity of a social entity, community, or society to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, and recover from the effects of hazards, shocks, and stresses in an agile, caring, and efficient manner.

It recognizes the importance of human and social capacities to access and make use of resources and services, adapt, collaborate, express themselves, and participate in decision-making.

Cities and metropolitan spaces face different shocks, stresses, and challenges. When one of these threats impacts the urban system it increases poverty and exacerbates existing inequalities.

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Local and metropolitan governments need a deep understanding of the socio-demographic dynamics of local communities with a detailed analysis of:

- Demographic indicators (gender, age, ethnicity, households with disabilities)
- Complex indicators (environmental hazards, economic stress, social exclusion, health coverage, access to services and public utilities, poverty, etc.)
- Communication networks, languages skills and many others clearly identified challenges faced at a local context.

A resilient society requires the equal valuing of all people

Communities are often forced to manage emergencies themselves.

In these contexts, their capacity to respond and collaborate with each other can vastly affect the impact a hazard has on them.

Women are confronted from achieving the highest leadership positions.

Only the 36% of elected members in local deliberative bodies are women.

In 2020, the pandemic-induced new poor globally was between 119 and 124 million people.

A majority of the new poor will be living in urban areas, thereby presenting an additional burden to local governments especially in the global south.

When building urban social resilience, cities and metropolitan spaces have to:

- Implement a socially inclusive perspective that stimulates political and civic participation, while promoting feminist leadership across institutional spaces.
- Guarantee equitable access to public space and contribute to reducing air pollution and congestion.
- Safeguard the right to basic urban services (drinking water, sanitation, education, public housing, universal health care and welfare benefits, energy, telecommunications).
- Identify neglected groups and address vulnerabilities within specific segments of the population.
- Safeguard human rights, especially women and girls’ equal rights and opportunities, so they can live free of violence and discrimination.
- Foster cohesion, social protection, social interaction, empowerment, participation and inclusiveness, as they can enhance populations’ ability to negotiate a variety of economic, ecological, social, and cultural challenges in a more coordinated, cooperative, and supportive manner.
- Build trust through transparency and efficient risk communication strategies.
- Ensure cultural rights and promote artistic expression and innovation.

This information, when integrated into geo-referenced databases, can also map the concentration of risks and vulnerabilities.

From the results of the diagnostic, it is necessary to develop a design proposal and implementation of actions targeted to mitigate risks and reinforce inclusion in a visible, visible, and sustained manner.

Building Urban social Resilience reduces patterns of inequality, improves the wellbeing of the population and contributes to improving the communities’ ability to cope with various stresses and shocks.

Creating enabling environments for communities to have a level of trust, familiarity, and social cohesion, alongside some knowledge of the risks they face is essential to ensure people’s wellbeing and ability to thrive.