ZURICH Foundation

The Urban Climate Resilience Program

ACTION REPORT
November 2026

Scaling what works to build climate resilience that lasts

C40 CITIES · ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability · IFRC · PLAN INTERNATIONAL · RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK · ZURICH



Students engaging in gardening activities in raised beds constructed as part of the Urban Climate Resilience Program in Izmir, Türkiye. Photo credit: ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability



Contents

Foreword **03**

Introduction **04**

Where programs are delivered **06**

1. Australia – Western Sydney **10**
2. Malaysia – Kuala Lumpur **13**
3. Malaysia - Melaka **16**
4. Türkiye - Izmir **20**
5. Italy - Milan **23**
6. Spain – Madrid and Valencia **26**
7. UK – Greater Manchester **29**
8. Colombia – Soacha, Barranquilla **33**
9. Ecuador - Guayaquil **36**
10. US – Boston, Houston **39**

Conclusion **42**



Charlotte Stemmer

Head of Adapting to Climate Change,
Z Zurich Foundation

Foreword

I stood in Barranquilla in May. The intense heat had arrived well before it was expected to, and it was set to climb higher still over the weeks to come. A few hours inland, on the edge of Bogotá, the problem is floodwater running through polluted channels and into people's homes. Two hazards plague the same country.

Climate change is not a future event. It is here, and it is touching every city on the planet. What differs is not the hazard so much as who can absorb it. Affected communities are already adapting, just as they always have. But a household with the means to cool a room, replace damaged belongings, or take a day off work will be able to recover; a household without that buffer will not. It is those with the least protection who are set back furthest, but it is also they who are already organizing, already helping one another, already leading.

That is what I have seen since joining the Foundation. In Barranquilla, mangrove rehabilitation is being designed to support livelihoods, so restoration also generates income. In Soacha, communities that had restored wetlands were the ones governing them and working with the mayor so the learning could travel. In Higher Folds, Greater Manchester, local residents helped design and implement nature-based solutions to address recurring flooding. In all these cases, the solution belonged to the communities affected by climate risks and reflected their specific needs and priorities.

This is how the Urban Climate Resilience Program (UCRP) works. We start with what communities already know, we identify how to close the gaps, and then we look for the institutions that can home the solution. Philanthropic funding is there to de-risk that first mile: to prove a schoolyard can become a cooling refuge, or that heat-reflective paint can bring indoor temperatures down, so that a city can put public finance behind the first, and a supplier can take the second to neighborhoods we could never reach alone.

A single organization can only go so far, we can do exponentially more when we work together. That is why the program brings together philanthropy, public and private sector partners, and collaborates closely with Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich)'s local offices. Each contributes their own expertise, resources and influence. They convene networks that implementing partners cannot always access, and they help lift what is working off the ground and into the rooms where plans and budgets are made. But, most importantly, the program champions people first and foremost. Rather than embracing a traditional top-down financing model, the UCRP embodies a Public-Private-Philanthropy-People Partnership model. It's a community-led process that transforms the lives of the most vulnerable. It empowers us and our partners to relearn and engage with diverse groups of people united by their goal of building a resilient future.

Across the world, communities are already showing that effective climate adaptation is possible. What is still needed is the connection between solutions that work and the finance that would take them to scale. This report is written as a snapshot of what we now know works. After three years, proven approaches are moving beyond the pilot stage. We are seeing measures adopted into government and business strategies. That shift from a tested intervention to a sustainable system is the story of this report.

But it is also a call to action. Cities have the authority to turn local evidence into policy and investment. The private sector has the expertise, influence and resources to accelerate adoption. Philanthropic donors can provide the catalytic funding that helps proven approaches move from pilot to system-wide practice.

Resilience is not something we deliver to communities. It is something they are already practicing. Our job is to help create the conditions in which they can keep going — and in which many more people can benefit from what they have already shown is possible.

About the Urban Climate Resilience Program

Resilience is about responding to adversity and managing risks over time so that people can continue living, learning and thriving.
Often, this doesn't require reinvention. For communities all over the world, the question is no longer whether to adapt, but how quickly they can put what already works into practice. Much of what communities need to withstand climate stress are proven measures, tested in very different places, waiting to be applied at the scale the risk demands. From shaded streets and schoolyards, drainage that holds water where it falls, restored wetlands and mangroves, to early-warning systems people understand and trust, and neighborhood networks that check on those most at risk, communities hold the evidence of what works and what is needed. Climate resilience is about empowering them to lead and sustain their resilience-building initiatives.

What holds them back is rarely the absence of a solution. It's a disconnect between those who hold the evidence, those who hold the authority, and those who hold the resources.

Resilience is multidisciplinary and multilevel. It requires close collaboration so that local action can influence the systems that impact communities.

Climate adaptation sits across public health, housing, drainage, education, employment and urban design at the same time. It also sits across levels: what a neighborhood learns, a city can codify; what a city proves, a national government or a sector can standardize and fund. Institutions at each of these levels have a distinct contribution to make in taking a local intervention and turning it into something that operates everywhere it is needed.

Communities are the starting point. They know which streets become impassable after heavy rainfall, which homes hold heat through the night, which residents will not hear a warning, and which of their own networks people turn to when something goes wrong. Tools such as the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRMC) exist to structure that knowledge and make it comparable, so that priorities are set by the people carrying the risk. When communities lead the design of a solution, they also sustain it long after a program ends — and that durability is what separates a pilot from a lasting change.

Cities hold the levers. They set planning rules, own public land, run schools and emergency services, and command the budgets that determine what gets built. This combination of authority, capability and convening power is why city partnership is the route from a single neighborhood intervention to a strategy that reaches an entire population.



Participatory workshop for local climate mapping, in the Ayora neighborhood, Valencia. Photo credit: Spanish Red Cross

UCRP's scaling story – from local action to lasting impact

We look at impact through three connected lenses: depth, sustainability and scale. Depth is the difference made in communities. Sustainability is the extent to which those changes can last. Scale is how impact can grow through influencing and scaling successful approaches.

Impact begins in communities, but it does not have to end there. What works locally can influence others, inform new approaches and create opportunities to scale. We therefore look at both the impact already delivered and the potential for that impact to grow over time.

UCRP's Public-Private-Philanthropy-People Partnership (PPPPP) model combines the strengths needed to create lasting change. Communities bring local knowledge and priorities; public institutions can embed successful approaches into local systems and policies; the private sector contributes expertise, networks and resources; and philanthropy provides catalytic funding to test approaches, build evidence and create opportunities for wider investment and scale.

Our implementing partners help turn this collaboration into action, bringing technical expertise and strengthening local capacity. The Z Zurich Foundation provides philanthropic funding, while local Zurich Insurance Group Business Units can contribute through local connections, volunteering and in-kind support.

The journey is far from over. As climate risks increase, we invite cities, funders, businesses and other organizations to build on what works, mobilize further investment and help proven approaches reach more communities.



Impact to date since 2023:

822,000+
lives positively impacted

directly through community programming and indirectly through influencing/scaling outcomes.

Projected impact until 2029:

12 million+
lives positively impacted

directly through community programming and indirectly through influencing/scaling outcomes.

Where programs are delivered



Global UCRP partners

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

IFRC

C40 CITIES

ZURICH

Program overview



21 new
local partnerships since 2025

UCRP is in **50+** communities, in **16** cities and **10** countries.

Extreme heat and flooding are the **two primary climate hazards** covered by the program.

Scaling what works: key resilience themes

The UCRP operates across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America to produce a pathway from neighborhood intervention to the system that will maintain and scale it. It empowers communities to own the change, and cities to make it happen.

This year, **three main climate resilience themes** cut across all case studies, geographies and partners

1. **Heat:** Heat is emerging as the hazard that most directly and immediately threatens life. While many countries still do not routinely track heat-related deaths, a recent report from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) estimates around 13,000 people died annually from heat-related causes across 17 countries between 2012 and 2021. The good news is that, today, heat is being treated as a health emergency with named institutional owners, not as a comfort problem. From Australia to Kuala Lumpur, and Melaka to Boston's Chinatown, heat has become a primary focus in paramedic training, restaurant kitchens, and Ministerial agendas.

What is needed:

Cities need heat action that begins before temperatures peak:

- Locally relevant risk data
- Trusted and multilingual communication
- Trained frontline responders
- Accessible cooling options
- Protection for workers and vulnerable households
- Mental health promotion and prevention of heat-related harm, helping people and communities understand and manage heat's physiological and psychological effects
- Clear integration into public health, emergency management, housing and urban planning systems.

Scaling what works: key resilience themes

2. **Nature-based solutions:** Where interventions work with ecosystems rather than against them, they tend to deliver more than one benefit. From a community nursery supplying native plant material for restoration of wetlands in Colombia, to the expansion of an urban farm in Malaysia to provide shade, nutritious food and local work opportunities; Nature-based solutions are not acute responses to crises, they are investments in long-term and sustainable resilience. However, only USD 220 billion found its way to nature-based solutions in 2023, with private finance contributing just USD 23 billion, according to UNEP. The same report concluded that investments in nature-based solutions must more than double to USD 571 billion annually by 2030 to meet global biodiversity, climate and land restoration targets.

What is needed:

Nature-based solutions require:

- Secure land access
- Community involvement from design through maintenance
- Ecological and social evidence
- Assigned operational responsibility
- Long-term financing
- Links to wider city plans

> **Scaling should preserve local ownership while connecting pilots to municipal investment, environmental authorities, utilities and private or philanthropic finance.**

3. **Adaptation governance:** Changes in governance often yield the most durable outcomes. Izmir's inaugural Municipal Climate Resilience Curriculum brought together four municipal departments and is piloted across two community centers and four schools, reaching over 1,000 people. In the UK, Greater Manchester's Community Resilience Framework is set to be adopted in 2027 and operationalized in 2028, covering 2.8 million residents. Worldwide, the case studies reveal the same pattern: local evidence is most powerful when it reaches the institutions that can act on it.

What is needed:

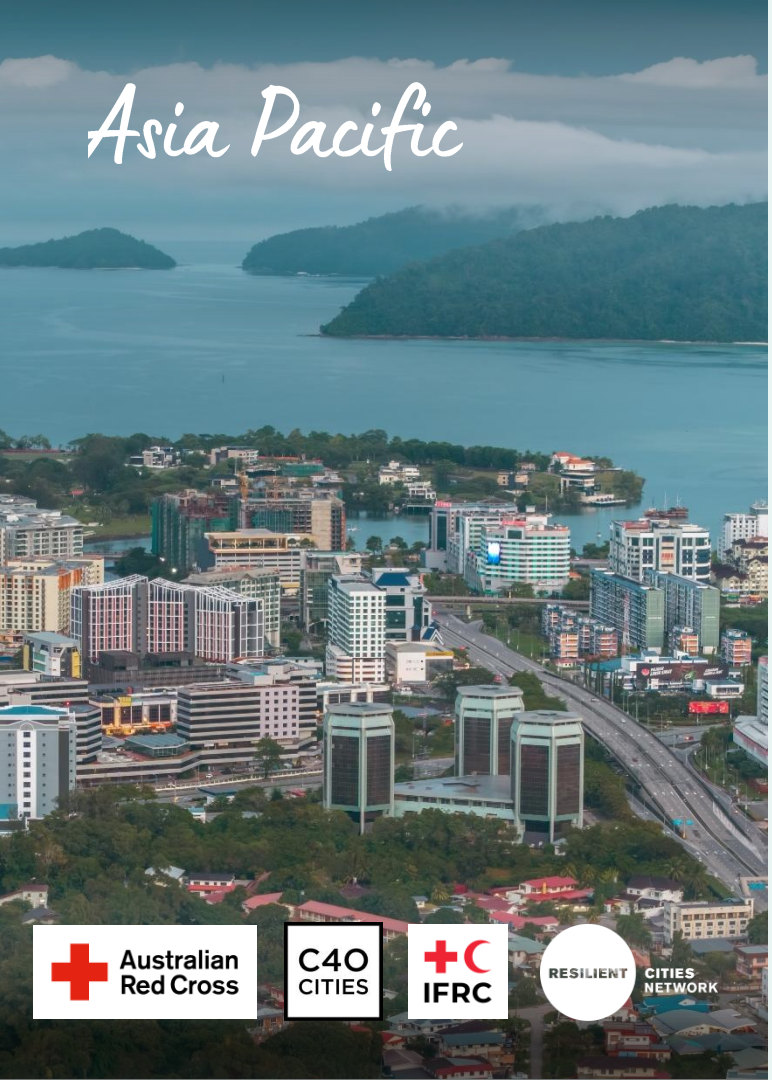
Adaptation governance needs more than consultation. It requires communities to have:

- A meaningful role in decisions
- Cross-departmental and cross-sector mandates
- Locally grounded evidence
- Trusted conveners and institutional champions
- Explicit pathways into plans, budgets, staffing and routine delivery.

> **Pilots scale when institutions own the framework, communities own the change and financing sustains both.**



Asia Pacific



Australian Red Cross | C40 CITIES | IFRC | RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK



Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur
C40 Cities

Malaysia
Melaka
Resilient Cities Network

Australia
Western Sydney,
Australian Red Cross, IFRC
Greater Melbourne - New program added in July 2026

Australia | Western Sydney



Extreme heat

IFRC | Australian Red Cross

Location:	Greater Western Sydney, Australia
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat
Program duration:	Phase 1 2023-2026, Phase 2 2026-2029
Grant partner:	Australian Red Cross, IFRC
Strategic partners:	Sweltering Cities, Zurich Australia
Main focus:	Heat and health

Making heat preparedness a public priority

78%
of Australia's extreme weather-related injury hospitalizations from 2014 to 2024 were caused by extreme heat.

(Source: https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/extreme-weather-injuries)

AUD 135–423 billion
in economic output could be lost by 2063 as heat exposure affects worker productivity.

(Source: Reference: Commonwealth of Australia (2023). Intergenerational Report 2023 Australia's future to 2063. https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/p2023-435150.pdf)

The challenge:

Australia's deadliest disaster is getting hotter

Extreme heat is Australia's deadliest natural hazard. In Greater Western Sydney, rising temperatures are putting lives at risk, disrupting daily life, and increasing pressure on health and emergency services.

Older people, people with health conditions, outdoor workers, people experiencing homelessness, and households with limited access to cooling are among those most exposed. Yet community research found that many people were acting only once a heatwave had arrived, rather than preparing in advance. Without earlier action and more coordinated planning, preventable harm will continue to grow as extreme heat becomes more frequent and intense.

The response:

Uniting a nation around heat preparedness

Using community insights from the UCRP, Australian Red Cross and its collaborators worked to better understand how people experience extreme heat and what prevents them from preparing before temperatures rise.

This evidence informed the launch of Australia's first national Extreme Heat Awareness Day (EHAD) in 2025, which expanded in 2026. The campaign brought together community groups, councils, emergency services, health organizations, businesses, researchers, and public leaders around a shared goal: helping people prepare before extreme heat strikes.

The campaign combined public awareness, practical tools, community activities, media outreach, and policy dialogue. It gave organizations clear resources they could adapt and share through their own networks, making heat preparedness messages more consistent, accessible, and locally relevant. The initiative also drew on global experience and learning from the IFRC's annual Global Heat Action Day on 2 June, adapting proven approaches, methods, and awareness materials to help shape and strengthen the development of EHAD in Australia.

Zurich Australia strengthened these efforts by mobilizing employee volunteers, contributing strategic communications, and leveraging corporate and community partnerships to extend the campaign's reach beyond traditional resilience audiences.

> By connecting community action with national engagement, the initiative continues to make heat preparedness a more consistent part of public communication, planning, and decision-making.

The results:

EHAD has grown from a public awareness campaign into a nationally recognized platform for action on heat resilience.

In 2026, the campaign:

- Engaged an estimated **6.8 million people** through media and communications activities.
- Brought together **100+ organizations and councils**, helping expand the reach and consistency of heat preparedness messaging.
- Created opportunities to raise heat resilience in national policy conversations.



Australian Red Cross and Zurich Australia representatives pose for a photo with Allegra Spender, MP for Wentworth (NSW) at the Extreme Heat Awareness Day event in Parliament House in Canberra. Photo credit: Australian Red Cross

WESTERN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

How you can take action

- Cities and funders can back local heat action to expand access to tools, events, and preparedness support.
- Cities can embed heat preparedness into urban planning, public health, emergency management, housing, transport, and community services.
- Councils and businesses can use their data and expertise to identify heat risk and inform better planning.
- Businesses can support local delivery through funding or in-kind resources such as expertise, venues, volunteers, translation or transport.

It's so important for our community to learn about extreme heat, first and foremost for their own safety. The consequences can escalate quickly from heat stress to heat stroke, which is extremely dangerous. We know it's getting hotter every summer, but by working together and combining Red Cross resources and workshops with local community engagement, we can help make communities safer, stronger and more resilient."

Ivon Sebastian,
Environmental Sustainability Officer at the City of Canterbury Bankstown Council



Representatives from Australian Red Cross and the Bureau of Meteorology pose at the pop-up stand in Sydney CBD on Extreme Heat Awareness Day, 2026. Photo credit: Australian Red Cross



The contents of the cool kit which includes an insulated cooler bag, a thermometer, a cooling towel, an ice block and resources to support preparedness. Photo credit: Australian Red Cross



Malaysia | Kuala Lumpur

Extreme heat | Flooding | C40 CITIES

Location:	PPR Beringin, Kampung Pasir, Kuala Lumpur
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration:	Phase 1 2023-2026, Phase 2 2026-2029
Grant partner:	C40 Cities
Strategic partners:	Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), Zurich Malaysia
Main focus:	Heat and health, nature-based solutions

Cooling a concrete neighborhood

All blocks in PPR Beringin sit within an extreme heat caution zone (32°C–41°C), with outdoor peaks reaching

42.6°C.

64%

of households in PPR Beringin include a chronically ill or highly vulnerable resident.

Only 31%

own air conditioning and **38%** find electricity bills highly burdensome.

The challenge:

Inescapable heat in dense, low-income neighborhoods

In high-density, low-income neighborhoods around the world, extreme heat is often described as an invisible wall. Concrete surfaces radiate heat around the clock, poor ventilation traps it in and only some can afford to cool down with air conditioning. These conditions turn ordinary summers into health emergencies.

PPR Beringin, a high-rise public housing estate in Kuala Lumpur, is a clear example. As temperatures climbed to record levels, the community reported heatstroke cases on an unprecedented scale. The residents most exposed were the ones least able to afford relief.

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

The response:

"Dingin in Beringin": cooling that costs nothing to run

Rather than waiting for large infrastructure investment, the UCRP worked with residents to design low-cost, high-impact interventions that could deliver relief immediately. Under the Community Resilience Implementation Plan (CRIP) – launched by Kuala Lumpur Mayor Maimunah Mohd Sharif in May 2025 – the "Dingin in Beringin" ("Cool in Beringin") pilot focused on affordable, "no-regret" actions.

It converted a community space into a Cooling Center with dedicated shading and expanded urban farms to provide shade, food and local work. It repainted a children's play area in cooling blue tones to transform a dull concrete square into a space people wanted to spend time in.

Central to its design was Che Roziani binti Mohd Shariff, a 23-year resident and community leader, whose advocacy helped translate technical planning into a project residents recognized as their own.



A range of the interventions (Mural, Shading and Green Space Enhancement). Photo credit: Karya Puteh

The results:

The physical transformation has changed the social life of the neighborhood as well as its temperature.

The program has:

- Converted dull concrete squares into vibrant community spaces where youth gather and elders rest.
- Expanded the Cooling Center's role beyond temperature relief into a hub for health check-ups and school kit distribution.
- Given 4,600+ local residents thermal relief and direct quality-of-life improvements without adding to electricity costs.
- Informed the city's wider Heat Action Plan, which aims to scale these interventions to other vulnerable neighborhoods across Kuala Lumpur, aiming to reach 550,000+ residents.

> **Community ownership proved decisive. By shifting from top-down technical planning to community-led design, the pilot built a space that residents actively use. It will remain permanently in the neighborhood, with DBKL assuming long-term responsibility for maintaining it.**

How you can take action

Community-led heat resilience is most effective when different actors contribute their own strengths:

- Cities can adopt and scale proven, low-cost interventions for heat-exposed neighborhoods.
- Technical and private sector partners can fund the deployment of more extensive nature-based solutions, such as expanding urban agriculture for shade, food and local income.
- Community organizations can lead the design and advocacy so interventions reflect what residents actually need.

[The community square] wasn't as vibrant before, now it's lively and calming. I hope there's a lot more blue color and a very cooling color and maybe a bumbung [roof/shelter] to hang out."

Zhulaiqa,
13-year-old resident, PPR Beringin

We have seen the most significant weather changes this year. As a leader in this community, there have been reports that some people experienced heatstroke like never before... we can see that we need to continue this effort, particularly on greening."

Che Roziani binti Mohd Shariff,
Chairperson of the Community Watch Association (KRT)



The courtyard transformation taking place with mural painting and shading installation around the children's play area. Photo credit: Karya Puteh



Malaysia | Melaka

Extreme heat | Flooding

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Location:	Pantai Peringgit and Kampung Morten, Melaka
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration :	Phase 1 2023-2026, Phase 2 2026-2028
Grant partner:	Resilient Cities Network
Strategic partners:	Melaka Historic City Council (MBMB), Monash University Malaysia, St John Ambulance, Zurich Malaysia
Main focus:	Heat and health

Heat-health training in the community

95.4%
of households in Pantai Peringgit and Kampung Morten experience extreme heat.

61.5%
report sleep disruption because of it.

(Monash University research)

81%
of flat housing residents in Pantai Peringgit say they could not cover a week's expenses in an emergency.

(CRMC household survey, 2024)

The challenge:

When heat is a footnote in first-responder training

Heat-related illness is only a minor feature of emergency responder training in Malaysia. Yet extreme heat is becoming one of the most common conditions they encounter.

Melaka, a UNESCO World Heritage city and major tourism destination, sits in a warming, humid climate. With indoor temperatures in heritage homes in Kampung Morten regularly reaching 34°C, elderly residents, heat-exposed households and visitors are at risk. Parakom, the Melaka state government's paramedic volunteer program, provides vital support. But without dedicated training, paramedics and community volunteers can miss the warning signs of a life-threatening but preventable illness.

MELAKA, MALAYSIA

The response:

Building heat expertise into an existing responder network

Since January 2026, the program has trained paramedics and Parakom members to recognize and respond to heat as a life-threatening health condition. Monash University Malaysia developed the training curriculum in collaboration with St. John's Ambulance of Malaysia, which coordinates the Parakom program, and MBMB as the local authority. It includes a 'train the trainer' element, equipping individuals to spread the knowledge throughout their respective organizations.

Monash also developed separate heat-awareness materials to help residents understand the risks and how to prevent heat-related illness. The second phase of the program will equip Parakom members to deliver them, extending their role from emergency response to community heat awareness.

The results:

- **36 volunteers** participated in the heat-health training.
- St. John's Ambulance of Malaysia has adopted the training as a standing supplemental course for volunteers who have completed basic first aid.
- The train-the-trainer model equipped nine tutors to deliver the curriculum independently, providing further capacity to scale the project.
- Community input on how heat affects daily routines, physical activity, work, energy costs and health directly shaped new, locally contextualized heat-awareness materials.

> **The training's institutional home was decisive. The new curriculum could be integrated into Parakom from day one rather than competing for space as a standalone initiative.**



Volunteer paramedics attend a heat-health workshop led by Dr. Jamuna Rani Appalasamy, Monash University. Photo credit: Monash University



Volunteer paramedics lead a first aid training with Zurich Malaysia volunteers and community members. Photo credit: EcoCupid

How you can take action

Partners looking to replicate this model can build on a curriculum tested in the field and an established train-the-trainer approach. This requires collaboration across several stakeholders:

- Emergency response networks can integrate a proven heat-health training model into their existing curricula.
- Research institutions can translate local health data into training materials and community-facing resources grounded in real risk.
- Local authorities can provide the institutional backing that keeps new training embedded in existing volunteer and responder systems.
- Technical and funding partners can support the expansion of heat-monitoring tools and extend similar training to other community responder groups, such as volunteer firefighters.

I am confident this collaboration will play a significant role in strengthening the preparedness of paramedics and community responders to recognize, prevent and manage heat-related illnesses, ultimately contributing towards safer, healthier and more resilient communities."

Saiful Nizam bin Sairi,
Head of Pre-Hospital and Ambulance Services Hotspot, St John Ambulance, Malaysia

The elderly, young children and infants are all at a greater risk when it comes to how heat impacts our health. By training residents to recognize heat risks and warning signs, we can keep communities safe and healthy."

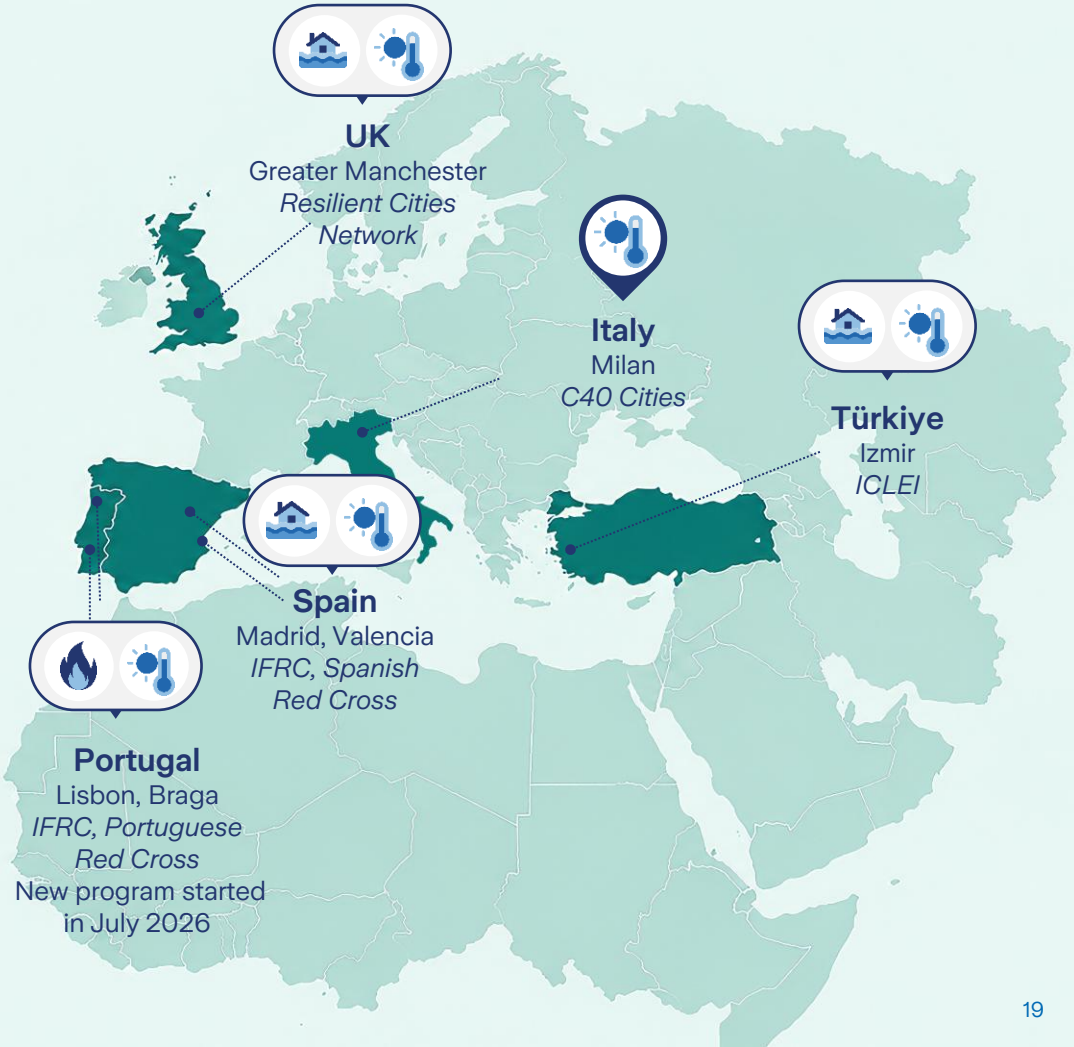
Dr. Jamuna Rani Appalasamy,
Lecturer, School of Pharmacy,
Monash University Malaysia



A volunteer paramedic with St. John's Ambulance shares flood awareness tips with community members. Photo credit: Eco Cupid

Europe and Middle East







Türkiye | Izmir

Extreme heat | Flooding

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

Location:	Pazaryeri and İmariye, Izmir, Türkiye
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat and flooding
Program duration:	2023-2026
Grant partner:	ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
Strategic partners:	Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Zurich Insurance Group Türkiye
Main focus:	Adaptation governance, climate risk education

Unifying public climate resilience training

Only **41%** of households in **Pazaryeri** knew how to evacuate safely in case of flooding. By the end of the program, this had increased to **90%.**

Only **66%** of households in **İmariye** knew how to protect themselves from extreme heat. By the end of the program, this had increased to **98%.**

Only **37%** of households in **Pazaryeri** were aware of the risks associated with unsafe water. By the end of the program, this had increased to **67%.**

The challenge:

Climate risks do not follow organizational charts

Floods and extreme heat affect densely built neighborhoods and everyday activities in multiple ways, creating health and safety risks that residents need practical knowledge to navigate.

Different departments tend to run their own public awareness and training initiatives. That means residents need to sit through multiple fragmented sessions, often with overlapping content that has little relevance to their daily lives.

This was the case in Izmir. Baseline research found residents in its Pazaryeri and İmariye districts were highly willing to act on climate issues. However, they lacked the practical knowledge to do so safely, particularly around everyday risks like unsafe water and heat exposure. The gap between willingness and understanding was sharpest for children, women and elderly residents, and for migrant communities facing language barriers to existing materials.

IZMIR, TÜRKIYE

The response:

Four departments, one curriculum

The Climate Resilience for Communities (CRC) project brought four of Izmir's municipal departments together for the first time: Agriculture Services, Health Services, Women and Family Services, and Climate Change and Zero Waste. Together, they co-developed a single Municipal Climate Resilience Curriculum, with separate trainer handbooks for adults and children.

The curriculum is designed to be inclusive. It teaches flood and extreme heat resilience rooted in residents' everyday realities. Targeted at children, youth, women and elderly residents, content covers topics like social vulnerabilities and the links between climate, health and agriculture, as well as everyday health and safety. It also uses interactive, age-appropriate formats and verbal alternatives to written activities so migrant children with limited Turkish literacy could fully take part.

The curriculum is now actively delivered across two community centers and four schools in Izmir.

The results:

After a successful pilot training in Pazaryeri and İmariye, the rollout is now continuing across the city.

- This initiative alone **impacted over 1,000 people across Izmir**, with rollout continuing across community centers and schools.
- Facilitated institutional collaboration, with four departments now sharing a common training tool and delivery model. It created new working relationships that outlasted the pilot.
- Community response exceeded expectations. At the end of the pilot sessions, roughly **100 participants volunteered** to form a community emergency team.

The curriculum's inclusive design enabled it to reach the residents facing the greatest barriers to information. It mobilized the whole community to actively participate in resilience-building.

The curriculum's inclusive design enabled it to reach the residents facing the greatest barriers to information. It mobilized the whole community to actively participate in resilience-building.



The project fostered collaboration across municipal departments to advance climate resilience. Photo credit: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

How you can take action

The curriculum, including its trainer handbooks and cross-departmental approach, is designed to be replicated elsewhere.

Through multi-stakeholder partnerships:

- Municipalities can bring departments together to co-develop a shared curriculum, rather than training communities in silos.
- City councils can adapt the model and its trainer handbooks to their own context.
- Technical partners can contribute expertise to strengthen or expand thematic modules, such as health, agriculture or water safety.

> *You cannot work in silos. You have to face life as life really is. Health professionals, for instance, already have close relationships with communities, which means we can bring climate risk into a truly holistic approach."*

Prof. Dr. Pınar Okyay,
Deputy Secretary General, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality

> *Climate resilience starts with people understanding the risks and having the knowledge and means to protect themselves. This initiative in Izmir demonstrates the tangible value of bringing together local government expertise, civil society experience and private sector support. For us, true success means embedding this collaboration in everyday life in local communities and creating a lasting model that can be replicated in other cities."*

Yılmaz Yıldız,
CEO, Zurich Insurance Group Türkiye & Member of the Board of Trustees, Z Zurich Foundation



Resilience in Action: Zurich volunteers on the ground, working hand in hand with communities.
Photo credit: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability



Extreme heat

C40 CITIES

Location:	Crescenzago, Milan, Italy
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat
Program duration :	Phase 1 2023-2026, Phase 2 2026-2029
Grant partner:	C40 Cities
Strategic partners:	City of Milan, Agency for Mobility, Environment and Territory (AMAT), Politecnico di Milano, Zurich Italy
Main focus:	Heat and health, nature-based solutions

Transforming an urban heat island into a cooling oasis

Land surface temperatures in Crescenzago frequently reach

48°C in summer

due to heat-trapping surfaces and a lack of natural cooling infrastructure.

The challenge:

A neighborhood where street temperatures soar

High-density urban areas are magnets for the summer sun. In Milan's Crescenzago neighborhood, asphalt and concrete surfaces absorb and radiate heat with very little natural infrastructure to offset it, making it one of the city's most severe urban heat islands.

The people living there are also disproportionately exposed. Crescenzago is home to a large foreign-born population, a high number of isolated seniors, and average incomes well below the city benchmark.

Residents were well aware of the rising temperatures and the lack of nearby cool shelters. Yet the community lacked the investment needed to build cooling, welcoming public space and had little trust in the local authority to protect them.

MILAN, ITALY

The response:

Turning temporary shade into permanent policy

The municipality focused on a combination of practical cooling measures and inclusive design. It consulted the local community through an outreach program in five languages, ensuring as many residents were involved in decision-making as possible. Taking into account their feedback, it installed shading structures and quality street furniture, pedestrianized school streets and opened up courtyards to create "community climate hubs".

Robust scientific monitoring by Politecnico di Milano revealed that shading structures can be a practical, effective and quick solution to reduce heat stress. The municipality decided to scale up the initiative in 2026, installing new shading systems while maintaining its commitment to long-term nature-based solutions.



The results:

What began in 2024 as a single pilot at Via Turroni evolved quickly into a cornerstone of Milan's urban strategy.

- The shading structures cut surface temperatures by up to 15°C and reduced perceived heat (UTCI) from "Very Strong" to "Moderate."
- More than 15,000 residents now have access to cooling public spaces within a 5-minute walk of their home, with over 11,000 now relying on the new cooling refuges.
- 85% of residents now plan to use these spaces during extreme heat.
- Shade from trees outperformed built structures for cooling effectiveness in resident surveys, triggering a shift toward more "living" infrastructure citywide.
- 89.5% of residents agree the School Oasis meets the neighborhood's diverse needs, and 80% say open schoolyards have strengthened social ties across ages and ethnic groups.
- The model was formally adopted into Milan's 2025 ‘Milano Attiva’ program, establishing the School Oasis model as a standardized, city-wide approach.

> **After unlocking new local and national funding, the project was able to reach far beyond its original budget. It has been adopted in permanent planning policy through Milan’s Air and Climate Plan.**

In 2026, the city installed 8 new shading structures in 7 different locations. GTNRC is supporting the city with the thermal comfort assessment to compare the effectiveness of these seasonal solutions with the permanent solution tested in 2025. Photo credit: C40 Cities

How you can take action

The Crescenzago model shows how well-planned, community-led cooling interventions can scale into permanent city policy. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships:

- Cities can pilot low-cost interventions in heat-vulnerable neighborhoods, and use scientific monitoring to build the case for permanent adoption.
- Research institutions can provide scientific monitoring to turn a local pilot into a credible, policy-ready model.
- Private sector and philanthropic partners can help move projects beyond public funding, providing the resources needed to scale proven interventions.
- Community organizations can lead multilingual outreach to ensure the most isolated residents shape and benefit from new public spaces.

> *This project allows for a better quality of life for those who cannot leave the city during the summer... it gives life and a voice to residents, demonstrating that in the outskirts, beauty and culture can thrive."*

Young Crescenzago resident

> *Having robust scientific evidence of our achievements is essential, as it allows us to inform the decision-making process and seek technical and political support for scaling up these adaptation measures to guide the city's resilient development."*

Ilaria Giuliani,
Chief Resilience Officer, Milan City Council



Mayor Sala, alongside Elena Grandi (Deputy Mayor of Green and Environment) and Bruno Scaroni (Country CEO Zurich Italy) celebrate the inauguration of the shade installation in Via Turroni alongside members of the Crescenzago community. Photo credit: The City of Milan



Extreme heat Flooding IFRC Cruz Roja Española

Location:	Madrid and Valencia
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration :	2023-2026
Grant partner:	Spanish Red Cross, IFRC
Strategic partners:	Valencia City Council, Fundación València Clima i Energia, Polytechnic University of Madrid, Zurich Spain
Main focus:	Resilience planning, heat and health

Making the invisible geography of heat visible

Spain recorded
Over 5,000
heat-attributable deaths in 2026.

6 participatory climate maps now cover neighborhoods home to approximately
171,000 people
across Valencia and Madrid.

The challenge:

Heat risk hides in plain sight

Extreme heat does not affect everyone equally. Its impact depends on housing conditions, green space, population demographics and access to services – factors that vary block by block. Yet, like most cities, Madrid and Valencia's climate and hazard datasets lacked the granular, neighborhood-level detail needed to identify where risk was concentrated.

At the same time, many residents had limited awareness of resources like risk maps and heat action plans, nor clear ways to shape the decisions that affect their safety. Without a way to connect lived experience with technical planning, resilience efforts risked missing the people and places that needed them most.

MADRID AND VALENCIA, SPAIN

The response:

Turning local knowledge into a map authorities can use

The Spanish Red Cross, IFRC and Zurich Spain started by asking the community. Through workshops and neighborhood walkthroughs, residents identified where extreme heat hit hardest and pointed out the existing shaded areas, drinking water points and cooling facilities. That knowledge was documented and turned into climate maps that provide an additional layer of local insight to existing technical data.

The process was built on partnerships between the Spanish Red Cross, researchers, local authorities and community representatives. In Madrid, the Polytechnic University of Madrid provided technical and methodological support. In Valencia, the Spanish Red Cross worked with the City Council and its Climate and Energy Foundation, a partnership that has since produced a joint funding proposal to expand the approach.



Reviewing the output of a local climate map, Valencia. Photo credit: Spanish Red Cross

The results:

Participatory climate mapping has changed how heat risk is understood and acted on in both cities.

The program:

- Produced 6 participatory climate maps covering neighborhoods of roughly 171,000 people in Valencia and Madrid.
- Strengthened community understanding of local climate risks, with residents gaining practical skills in risk mapping and prevention.
- Fed directly into city planning:
    - In Madrid, the maps helped operationalize the City Council's Action Plan for Episodes of Extraordinary High Temperatures (CALORMAD).
    - In Valencia, community climate assessments informed a joint project proposal between the Spanish Red Cross and local government.
- Built lasting capacity inside the Spanish Red Cross, turning a single pilot into a replicable methodology.

> By giving communities a structured way to contribute their local knowledge, the maps created a shared evidence base. It means residents, technical experts and city officials work from the same picture of heat risk, helping residents stay safe and planners make better-informed resilience measures. The data is already shaping where cities invest and giving communities a seat at that table.

How you can take action

Participatory climate mapping is most effective when different actors contribute their expertise and resources.

Through multi-stakeholder partnerships:

- **Cities** can use community-generated climate information to strengthen resilience planning and identify priority interventions.
- **Technical organizations and universities** can contribute data, analysis and research expertise to complement local knowledge.
- **Community organizations** can engage populations most affected by climate risks and ensure resilience actions reflect local priorities.
- **Private sector** partners can contribute through funding and support for locally led, participatory resilience initiatives.

We are currently conducting an urban microclimate mapping activity in the San Cristóbal neighborhood. This basically consists of identifying elements that can help the community adapt better to intense summers and heat waves, and that can strengthen community resilience in the face of climate-change-related heatwaves."

Daniel,
Spanish Red Cross volunteer



Localized and participatory climate mapping in the Vista Alegre neighborhood, Madrid. Photo credit: Spanish Red Cross



Participatory climate mapping was carried out to generate local knowledge on heat risks, climate resources, and safe spaces, supporting community preparedness and engagement with local authorities in Madrid. Photo credit: Spanish Red Cross



Extreme heat Flooding RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Location:	Edgeley, Stockport and Higher Folds, Wigan, Greater Manchester, UK
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration:	Phase 1 2023-2026, Phase 2 2026-2028
Grant partner:	Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities)
Strategic partners:	Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Stockport Council, Wigan Council, Groundwork, An Action Commons CIC, and HF Works CIC, Zurich UK
Main focus:	Adaptation governance, heat and health

One finding, two parallel levers of change

Trust in public services scored just **50%** in Edgeley and **38%** in Higher Folds.

Only 25% of Edgeley residents and **26%** in Higher Folds believed their community receives financial support comparable to neighboring areas.

The challenge:

A surprising finding in the data

Edgeley and Higher Folds are both among the most deprived neighborhoods in England, and both communities are facing serious climate hazards. Surface water flooding and extreme heat are regular threats, and Higher Folds sits on reclaimed coal mining land, adding the risk of subsidence. For Edgeley, biodiversity loss and poor air quality are compounded by the effects of dense urban heat islands.

Municipal authorities had worked on the assumption that low awareness is the main barrier to community resilience to these extremes in deprived neighborhoods. But the CRMC returned a counterintuitive finding.

In both neighborhoods, the weakest grades did not fall on hazard awareness or physical exposure but on governance and social norms. People knew about the risks of extreme heat but did not trust that institutions would offer support when dealing with its effects. In Edgeley, 91% knew how to protect themselves in a heatwave, yet only a quarter believed their community received support comparable to neighboring areas, and trust in public services graded D.

GREATER MANCHESTER, UK

The response:

Action on two levels

These findings were used to transform government response to community needs at two scales: city-wide policy and neighborhood support.

At city-region scale, the finding that trust and perceived equity were the weakest links reshaped the Greater Manchester Community Resilience Framework. Working from the CRMC's five-capital model, the Resilient Cities Network and Greater Manchester Combined Authority added two new foundations to the framework: culture, identity and belonging, and voice, influence and decision-making.

At neighborhood scale, residents needed something they could own. In Edgeley, R-Cities and local partners brought a disused council building, the former Park View School, back into use as the What If? Space. This is a legally independent, resident-owned institution, now running year-round programming on food security, heat and community life, including the Curious Garden and an edible park, and being resourced as a cooling and refuge point for summer 2026.

The results:

- The revised Greater Manchester Community Resilience Framework is being approved within the UK government's Stronger Local Resilience Forum Trailblazer program, with consultation to all ten Greater Manchester local authorities underway. Formal adoption is due in 2027.
- The What If? Space has been replicated in two further Stockport neighborhoods, with Stockport Council embedding the hub into its own long-term asset planning.

> Neither the policy changes nor the neighborhood response could have had successful real-world impacts without each other. The framework sets standards for an entire region, while the hub shows what meeting those standards actually looks like.



Community garden clean up, Edgeley, UK. Photo credit: SAZ Media

How you can take action

This model pairs policy with an in-community space, with both parts built to be replicated elsewhere.

- Cities and regional authorities can adapt the expanded resilience framework to their own governance structures, without needing to rebuild it from first principles.
- Regeneration partners and investors can back community-owned resilience assets once trust and local ownership are already established.
- Local boroughs can adapt the funding and governance model behind community resilience hubs to bring similar spaces to their own neighborhoods.
- Insurers and technical partners can support external review of resilience frameworks and strengthen the practical tools that sit alongside them.

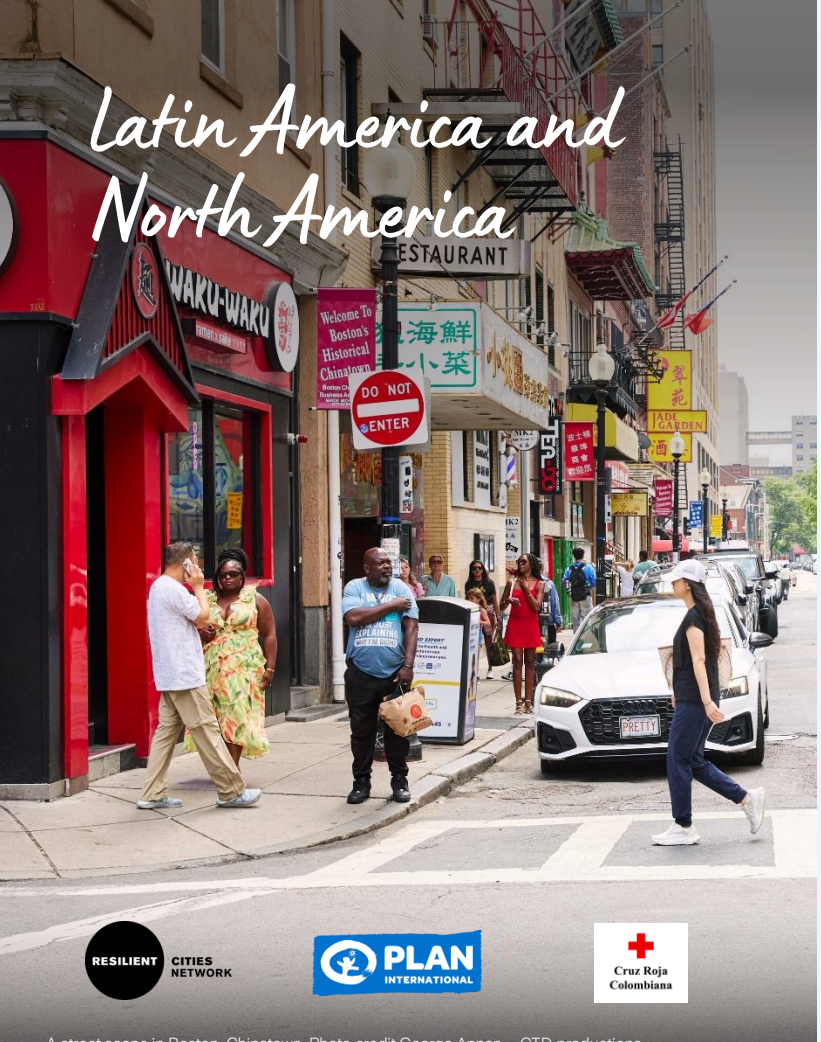
The support from Resilient Cities Network through the UCRP program has been really valuable in helping us develop the Greater Manchester Community Resilience Framework. It has allowed us to build on the practical work in Edgeley and Higher Folds, test our thinking with communities and partners, and bring in learning from other cities. That has helped us shape a framework that reflects how resilience is already being built in communities and can support a more joined-up approach across Greater Manchester."

Sulafa Abushal,
Strategic Policy Lead (Whole of Society Resilience), Greater Manchester Combined Authority



Community Workshop, Edgeley, UK. Photo credit: SAZ Media

Latin America and North America



RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Cruz Roja Colombiana

A street scene in Boston, Chinatown. Photo credit George Annan – CTD productions



USA
Boston, Houston
Resilient Cities Network

Colombia
Soacha, Barranquilla
Colombian Red Cross

Ecuador
Guayaquil
Plan International



Colombia | Soacha, Barranquilla

Extreme heat | Flooding | Cruz Roja Colombiana

Location:	Soacha, Barranquilla, Colombia
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration:	Phase 1 2022-2025, Phase 2 2025-2027
Grant partner:	Colombian Red Cross
Strategic partners:	Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca, Santa Ana Water Utility, Municipality of Soacha, local Community Action Board, Zurich Colombia
Main focus:	Nature-based solutions, adaptation governance

From a community nursery to a restoration pathway

75-80%

of surveyed households reported that river and stream banks are unprotected and frequently affected by disturbance, erosion and degradation.

81%

reported having no emergency savings.

Over 50%

reported a monthly income at or below one minimum wage.

The challenge:

Climate risk brought on by environmental degradation

In Colombia, wetlands face severe degradation at the hands of aggressive agriculture, infrastructure projects and invasive wildlife. Economically vulnerable communities live beside these degraded wetlands and water-buffer areas. Ten of these flood-prone communities – five of them in Soacha – suffer from inadequate drainage, thin vegetation and improper waste disposal.

CRMC and Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (EVCA) by IFRC informed by 1,110 participants identified specific gaps in tree cover, natural-resource management, warning systems, and household income continuity. The evidence pointed at the ecosystem itself: restoring the wetland was flood protection.

SOACHA, COLOMBIA

The response:

Building an asset the community can own

The UCRP translated these findings into community development plans and a nature-based pilot that paired a community nursery with reforestation of the Santa Ana and Neuta wetlands. The nursery was established to supply native plant material for restoration activities across Soacha, giving it a permanent local source rather than a delivery schedule.

Around it, the program provided technical roundtables, community capacity building, partner convening, and evidence that a locally managed nature-based solution could close the resilience gaps the data had identified. It was this evidence that facilitated several institutional agreements, including a Memorandum of Understanding between the Colombian Red Cross and the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca.

This was key in establishing cooperation between the two organizations on ecosystem conservation, restoration, and climate resilience, while the Santa Ana Water Utility provided the nursery site and continued supporting its operation. The project also linked the neighboring Quintas de Santa Ana community to restoration activities, while the environmental authority expanded the pathway through additional initiatives for wetland protection.

The results:

- CRMC results recorded a **20% improvement in participants' knowledge** and capacities related to risk reduction and recovery.
- **400 additional trees were planted** by community members independently replicating the project's reforestation techniques.
- In 2026, the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca mobilized an additional USD **600,000** through its agreement with the local Community Action Board. More than **52,000 lives have been positively impacted** indirectly beyond the target communities.



Interactive 360° view of the Santa Ana Wetland. Green points provide information about the restoration process, while blue points connect users to additional views of the wetland. Photo credit: Colombian Red Cross



Planting activity at the Santa Ana Wetland in Soacha, supporting community-led ecosystem restoration and the recovery of an area that contributes to local flood resilience. Photo credit: Colombian Red Cross

How you can take action

The UCRP is now preparing the ecological restoration of roughly half a hectare of the Tibanica Wetland, which extends across Soacha and Bogotá.

- Private sector partners, utilities and universities can provide technical expertise, technology and independent impact evaluation.
- Communities and local environmental groups can contribute native plant materials, ecological monitoring technologies and specialized restoration support.
- Funders and cities can help support these initiatives to replicate and scale this model to other flood-affected communities in Colombia and beyond.

At the Santa Ana Wetland, we planted 180 native trees and established a community nursery that continues to supply plant material for ongoing reforestation efforts, with support from the Z Zurich Foundation. By working hand in hand with communities and local institutions, we are helping restore this important ecosystem and strengthen its long-term protection".

Fanny Santamaría,
Soacha community leader



Graduation activity for the community environmental and climate change committees trained by the environmental authority at the Tibanica Wetland. Participants contributed to a collective artwork celebrating the wetland's biodiversity and reinforcing community ownership of its long-term conservation and restoration. Photo credit: Colombian Red Cross



Ecuador | Guayaquil

Flooding

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Location:	Guayaquil, Ecuador
Climate hazard:	Flooding
Program duration :	Phase 1 2022-2024, Phase 2 2025-2027
Grant partner:	Plan International
Strategic partners:	Municipality of Guayaquil, SEGURA EP (Municipal Public Company for Risk Management and Security Control), Community Risk Management Committees, Zurich Ecuador
Main focus:	Adaptation governance

A new model for flood preparedness

3 educational institutions improved their water storage systems, benefiting **3,300+** students and teachers.

750 **families** benefited from safe water and sanitation initiatives in 2026.

The challenge:

When a coordination gap hinders locally held evidence

Because of their close proximity to one of Ecuador's largest rivers and their exposure to heavy seasonal rainfall, communities across Guayaquil are highly exposed to flooding. But the CRMC assessment found that organizational challenges were just as important as geography and climate conditions. **All six communities involved in the program identified governance and emergency preparedness as their greatest challenges** and reported very little coordination between the community and local government (CRMC analysis, 2024).

Across six communities, Community Risk Management Committees existed as a reflection of the local knowledge of climate hazards but had limited capacity to lead preparedness and response when climate-related events hit. Their roles and powers were not clearly defined, their coordination with municipal authorities was limited, and their financial investments did not reach them where they were needed. The program would have to prioritize the members of those committees, including women and youth leaders, as those most exposed to flood risks should be the first to have their capacities strengthened.

The response:

Strengthening what is already in place

Rather than create something new, UCRP set out to turn the Community Risk Management Committees into permanent community structures for flood preparedness, coordination, and response. The plan was designed to address two fronts: on the one hand, equip community leaders with technical support to improve community organization and emergency preparedness processes; on the other, open reliable channels to the Guayaquil Autonomous Decentralized Government and the national institutions responsible for risk management.

UCRP provided evidence and convened all the relevant parties to conduct the CRMC assessment, guide decision-making and build community capacity in risk management and leadership. This involved roundtable discussions between communities and public institutions, an analysis and capacity-building workshop with local government officials, and regular monthly coordination meetings.

The results:

- UCRP informed the Guayaquil Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Plan 2027–2034 as a tool to strengthen risk planning and management in the canton.
- SEGURA EP began distributing equipment directly to the Community Risk Management Committees in the project's locations. The local government assigns staff to capacity building activities.
- Committees now operate with clearer roles and strengthened capacities for flood preparedness within the target communities. Coordination with the municipality has become routine, and local events are monitored more closely than ever before.

> **The result is a community governance model that both improves preparedness and makes municipal investment land where it is needed the most.**

In addition to these:

- **100% of targeted community spaces strengthened**, with a potential reach of 15,000 people.
- **750 families** benefited from safe water and sanitation initiatives in 2026.
- **3 educational institutions** improved their water storage systems, benefiting 3,351 students and teachers.
- More than **4,500 people** have accessed and completed virtual courses on Disaster Risk Management.
- **116 workshops** and exchanges with local governments (GADs) focused on risk management and El Niño preparedness.



Follow up meeting with the local government. Photo credit: Plan International

How you can take action

- Other municipalities vulnerable to flooding can replicate and help scale this model by integrating this community governance approach into local disaster risk management policy.
- Local governments, private sector partners, academia, and community organizations can contribute their expertise, resources, and convening power.
- All communities and individuals are welcome to join the online game-based training.

The work carried out by the project ["Building Resilient Cities in Ecuador"] with the Community Risk Management Committees has empowered the families in my community. It has enabled us to advocate for our needs and demand a response from both local and national government authorities."

Rosa Torres,
Community leader and member of the Community Risk Management Committee of Valle del Cerro Azul

Our partnership with the "Building Resilient Cities in Ecuador" project has enabled us to pilot innovative interventions alongside communities, generate evidence of their effectiveness, and develop validated models that the local government can replicate and scale to benefit more people living in vulnerable conditions."

Patricia Ver,
Head of Risk Management, Guayaquil



Simulation exercise, Los Juanes, Guayaquil. Photo credit: Plan International



Rosa Torres,, community leader. Photo credit: Plan International



US | Boston, Houston

Extreme heat | Flooding | RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Location:	Boston, Houston
Climate hazard:	Extreme heat, flooding
Program duration:	Phase 1 2022-2025, Phase 2 2026-2027
Grant partner:	Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities)
Strategic partners:	Chinatown Main Street, City of Boston Office of Climate Resilience, Boston Mayor's Office, Zurich US
Main focus:	Heat and health, nature-based solutions

Cooling Boston's hottest neighborhood, one storefront at a time

Only 3%
of Chinatown's major streets have trees.

Chinatown is up to **10°F hotter** than other Boston neighborhoods.
(Heat Resilience Solutions for Boston)

Over 20%
of CRMC respondents in Chinatown said they would have to prioritize their income over their safety in dangerous heat.
(CRMC household survey, 2023)

The challenge:

When a hot day means choosing between income and health

Heat is already the leading weather-related cause of death in the United States, and the country is expected to continue to warm faster than other parts of the world. This problem is especially flagrant in Chinatown, Boston's hottest neighborhood. A densely built environment and almost no shade on streets means it reaches higher temperatures than anywhere else in the city and cools off more slowly.

The people most exposed are those who cannot step away from the heat: line cooks, kitchen managers and other staff in the restaurants and small businesses that line the commercial district. For more than a fifth of residents surveyed, a dangerous heat day is a choice between earnings and safety. Language access and engagement barriers compound the risk, limiting who can reach heat preparedness information and emergency support when it matters.

The response:

An idea cooked up in the kitchens

The program started by listening rather than acting. On site visits and corridor walks with Chinatown leadership and city staff, the UCRP team spoke directly to line cooks and kitchen managers. It was those businesses that proposed air purifiers as the intervention they actually needed.

Working through Chinatown Main Street, UCRP adapted an existing storefront improvement grant so it could fund equipment and modifications that improve indoor air quality and provide cooling relief. Grants were targeted to immigrant-run and immigrant-staffed businesses and to community members facing language barriers. Alongside the micro-grants, UCRP supported the Chinatown Heat Action Plan, built around language access, resourcing and community engagement. The plan calls for localized implementation, culturally relevant engagement and practical interventions that reflect Chinatown's density and diversity — and community partners are now putting those principles into practice.

The results:

- **25 local organizations** joined the Heat Action Plan working group.
- Around **11,000 neighborhood residents** benefit indirectly from strengthened city and community response processes and infrastructure.
- Chinatown Main Street received a **$159,230 Community Clean Air Grant from the Boston Mayor's Office** to expand the micro-grant program for restaurants and small businesses, with additional funds set aside for a youth-led air quality education campaign.
- Chinatown Main Street purchased and operated misting tents at Chin Park, so residents and visitors had somewhere to stop and cool off.



With few parks and green spaces, public spaces like Chin Park are widely used as places to cool down by Chinatown residents and visitors alike.
Photo credit: George Annan - CTD Productions.

The pilot has now moved into R-Cities' Community Resilience Lab, a 14-month program that turns proven local solutions into policy tools other cities can adopt. Chinatown Main Street joined a cohort with Boston, Houston, Chicago and New Orleans, each city receiving seed funding and technical mentoring to scale what worked.

How you can take action

This model is a tested micro-grant structure already backed by city funding, and is already being scaled by a four-city cohort.

There are several key ways to push progress further forward:

- Cities can fund micro-grants for heat and air quality upgrades in small businesses.
- Cities can embed worker protections and micro-business support into heat planning.
- Businesses and place-based networks can contribute technical expertise and translation capacity, so resources reach language-isolated communities.
- Cities can open national networks to carry their work to new cities.

Chinatown is unique because we are dealing with both residents and visitors. Misting tents at Chin Park were useful because visitors and pedestrians could stop for several minutes, cool down and continue walking."

Debbie Ho,
Chinatown Main Street



A restaurant worker in Chinatown takes a break for water. Photo credit: George Annan - CTD Productions



Restaurant workers in Chinatown are exposed to high temperatures and poor indoor air quality. Photo credit: George Annan - CTD Productions

Conclusion

Looking ahead, the UCRP's priority is no longer proving that local action works. It is pace and scale. Global adaptation finance still falls far too short of what is needed, and the hardest costs to raise are the ones that make adoption possible: convening, facilitation, measurement, and the patient years between a pilot's success and an institution's commitment.

Resilience can mean different things to the communities around the world absorbing climate shocks. This report highlighted cases where interventions informed by community knowledge began as pilots and were taken up by the institutions that will outlast the grant. Kuala Lumpur City Hall now maintains the cooling infrastructure in PPR Beringin and is folding the lessons from the program into the city's Heat Action Plan. Milan has written tactical urbanism into its Air and Climate Plan and made the School Oasis part of the Milano Attiva program. In Greater Manchester, a community resilience framework has government approval and a rollout to ten local authorities, while a disused school building is now owned and governed by the residents who use it. In Boston, a nine-business pilot became a city grant program.

Building resilience saves lives, reduces economic losses, and creates cooler, greener, healthier places where communities can thrive. It also reinforces equity, because the households with the least capacity to absorb a shock are the ones asked to absorb it most often. Every adoption began with the evidence held by the people who live with the risk. It is these communities who own the change, while the institutions they partnered with provide the levers required to make it happen at scale. Adaptation done this way strengthens not only systems, but fairness.

This report is both a record of progress and a call to build on what works and take it further

Cities and local governments can treat community evidence as planning evidence and give resilience an institutional home. National governments can create the pathways that let local proof travel. Philanthropic donors can provide catalytic funding to bridge the gap between successful pilots and sustained adoption. And the private sector can bring insurance and risk expertise, data, employee networks, and local partnerships to the places where their own workforce, customers and operations already sit.

The foundations are in place. The evidence is growing. The opportunity now is to connect resources, expertise and influence to take what works and scale it further. What we need now is collaboration, and the commitment to hold it.

Bring resources, expertise and influence to the same table, and communities can do more than withstand the next climate shock. They can keep growing through it.



ZURICH Foundation

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