

SHELTER PROJECTS

8th edition

CASE STUDIES OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT RESPONSES 2019-2020



Global Shelter Cluster
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

SHELTER PROJECTS

8th edition

CASE STUDIES OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT RESPONSES 2019-2020

Shelter Projects Working Group partners and supporting agencies for this edition



Shelter Projects 8th edition

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© Andrea Ruffini / IOM Chad. Chad 2020, Women working on shelter construction by providing straw.

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For more information on the Shelter Projects Photo Competition, see www.shelterprojects.org

FOREWORD



a Context is everything



b Shelter and settlements assistance is part of a process. It has long-term impacts



c People are active participants in their own response and recovery



d Shelter and settlements assistance must be inclusive



e There is a balance between scale, coverage, quality and impact



f Security of tenure underpins all shelter response



g Shelter and settlements go hand in hand



h Shelter and settlements assistance must link to other sectors and priorities



i Local environmental damage is long-lasting



j Locally appropriate technical solutions work best



k Good projects reduce the impacts of future shocks



l Effective projects are coordinated and planned

Messages distilled from previous editions of *Shelter Projects* and shared in the publication: *Shelter Projects Essentials* (2021).

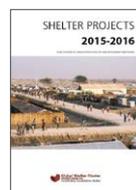
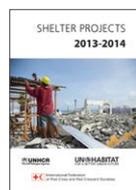
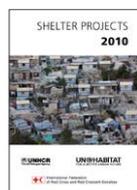
This is the eighth edition in the series of publications that started 13 years ago, contributing to a total repository of nearly 300 project case studies and response overviews, from programs implemented by over 60 organizations in over 70 countries overall. The case studies vary greatly in scale, cost, duration, response phase and project design. Although they are not statistically representative of all shelter responses, this growing body of knowledge represents a source of learning and reflects the highly contextual nature of individual shelter and settlements responses. Overall, it reflects many years of experience of about 500 field practitioners who have contributed across the editions.

This eighth edition contains 22 new case studies and five overviews of responses. It also contains five opinion pieces, which explore specific pertinent thematic areas in more detail.

So what are the themes that we can draw from all of these case studies? During the development of this edition of *Shelter Projects*, all previous editions and case studies were reviewed, and the recurring points of learning and good practice were distilled into a series of essential messages. These are summarized in the illustration above, and are explored in more detail in the first edition of *Shelter Projects Essentials* that was published in 2021.

In reading this book, or browsing different case studies, we hope that readers will be able to draw their own lessons and identify useful response options and approaches. We encourage readers to share this publication widely, and contribute their own project case studies for future editions. In this way, the humanitarian community can continue learning, avoid doing harm, and help improve the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people.

The Global Shelter Cluster Shelter Projects Working Group, August 2021.



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Photo credits appear over each figure or in the captions. All photos used on the covers and in the introduction section of this book were entries for the Shelter Projects Photo Competition 2021.

We would also like to thank those who contributed to previous editions of Shelter Projects; those who made suggestions for case studies that were not included in this edition and the many hundreds of people who have implemented the projects that are documented in this book, but who have not been individually credited.

We wish to dedicate this book to Petya Boevska, who contributed to two of the pieces within this book, and tragically passed away prior to its publication.

For comments, feedback or questions, please visit the website or contact shelterprojects@sheltercluster.org

ACRONYMS

3/4W	Who does What, Where (and When) Matrix	IDP	Internally Displaced Person
BBS	Build Back Safer	IEC	Information, Education, Communication
BoQ	Bill of Quantities	IM	Information Management
CBI	Cash-Based Interventions	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
CBO	Community-Based Organization	IP	Implementing Partner
CFW	Cash-for-Work	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CGI	Corrugated Galvanized Iron	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	NFI	Non-Food Item(s)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix	PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
HH	Household	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
HLP	Housing, Land and Property	TPM	Third Party Monitoring
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview	UN	United Nations
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

There has been much debate around terminology used in the shelter sector. The focus of these conversations has been held in the English language. As such the distinctions may not translate well into other languages.

There have been particular discussions in English language definitions used for different phases of assistance. For example, the terms “emergency shelter”, “transitional shelter”, “temporary shelter”, “semi-permanent shelter” and “incremental shelter” have all been used to define both the types of shelters and the processes used. Similarly terms have been used for Non food items (NFIs), Core relief items (CRIs), Household items. There are similar discussions related to the use of cash and vouchers in assistance.

Another example of terminology that has many variations is “camp planning”, “site planning” and “settlement planning”. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably, and sometimes they are used very specifically. This can be impacted for example by the political context (e.g. in contexts where “camps” are not allowed) or can be impacted by the degree of integration with existing settlements and wider urban and regional planning. In this book we use the terms used in-country and by the specific implementing organizations, which may vary.

The summary table within each case study includes sections showing the “Direct cost” and the “Project cost”. The direct cost refers to the value of assistance package directly received by households, this includes for example the costs of materials, of labor and/or the value of cash assistance provided. The term “Project cost” refers to the direct costs plus the indirect costs, for example taking account for staffing and overhead costs.



Lake Chad Province, Chad, 2020.

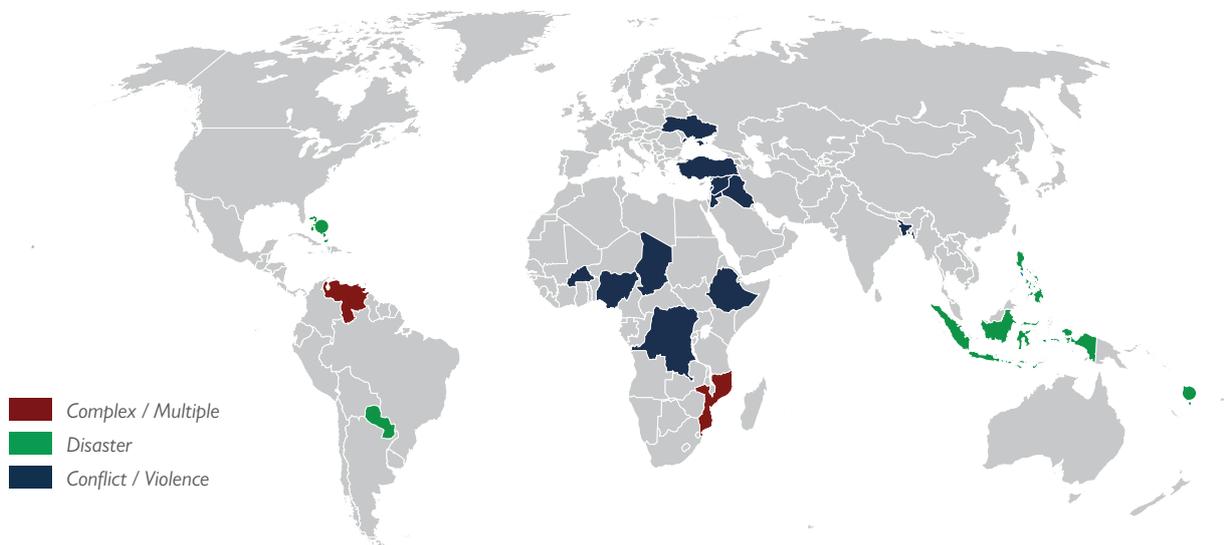


Bachoura area, Beirut, Lebanon, 2020.

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INDEX OF CASE STUDIES AND RESPONSE OVERVIEWS PUBLISHED IN SHELTER PROJECTS 8TH EDITION



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This edition of Shelter Projects contains 22 new case studies: 21 of these case studies focus on the implementation of shelter and settlements projects, and one case study focuses on the transition and handover of Shelter Cluster coordination. There are also five response overviews of large responses during 2019–2020. These case studies and overviews have all been written by practitioners who have been involved in each of these projects and responses. These pieces are all included in Section A.

In Section B of this edition, there are five Opinion Pieces. These explore a range of topics including the relationship between shelter and settlements assistance and physical and mental health (B.1); how shelter assistance can support community empowerment (B.2); measuring the impacts of shelter and settlement programming (B.3); reducing fire risk through better shelter and settlements programming (B.4); and an exploration of the links between shelter and settlements and concepts of “home” and of “community” (B.5).

The case studies in this book deal with projects implemented by many different organizations, a full list of which can be found in the acknowledgements section. In order to allow strengths and weaknesses of projects to be openly shared, the case studies are not directly attributed to individual organizations. Since projects are implemented in diverse and challenging conditions, case studies illustrate both good and bad practices. From each one, there are lessons that can be learned, and aspects that may be repeated or avoided. These are highlighted at the end of each case study. The objective of this publication has always been to encourage the learning process, advocate for following good practices and avoid “reinventing the wheel”.

If you wish to find out more about the specific projects, please contact shelterprojects@sheltercluster.org

WARNING

PROJECTS ARE CONTEXT DRIVEN

Any shelter project should take into consideration the local context and the needs, capacities and priorities of the affected population, which will differ in every case. Projects should not be directly replicated without proper consideration of the specific context, or there will inevitably be programmatic weaknesses and failures resulting in negative impacts and/or missed opportunities.

CASE STUDY SELECTION

The case studies were selected using the following criteria:

- The project was a) wholly completed or, if not, b) solid learning elements could be gained from the project implementation by late 2020.
- Given the scale of shelter needs every year, case studies must have had large-scale impacts. Discontinued trials, pilot projects or design concepts were not included.
- Most of the project must have been implemented within the first year following a disaster, or over longer time frames for recovery processes. For conflict, chronic emergencies and return processes, longer time scales were considered. In this edition, there are also three case studies on permanent new-build housing construction.
- Accurate project information was available from staff or individuals involved in the implementation. In most cases, content was provided directly by project field staff and program managers.
- The case studies illustrate a diversity of approaches to meet shelter and settlements needs, as providing shelter assistance is more than simply designing architecturally impressive structures or constructing individual houses.

After a pre-selection based on the above criteria, each case study was further peer-reviewed by members of the Shelter Projects Working Group. The review enabled an additional level of critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each project, and pointed out what lessons to highlight and what aspects to expand upon, ultimately increasing the overall quality of each case study.



Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2021.

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT AND RESPONSE

CONFLICT

During 2020, an estimated **11.2 million people** became newly displaced because of conflict or violence – a total that includes people displaced for the first time as well as people displaced repeatedly. This includes 1.4 million people who sought protection outside their country,¹ plus 9.8 million people newly displaced within countries.² An additional **30.7 million people** were newly internally displaced by disasters.

At the end of 2020, a total of **82.4 million people** were forcibly displaced worldwide, as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. As shown in Figure 1, this includes 26.4 million refugees, 48 million internally displaced people, 4.1 million asylum-seekers, and 3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad.³

While global data for returnees and non-displaced people (such as affected host communities) was not available, projects in this book also include assistance to these groups.

In 2020, 68 per cent of all refugees and other people displaced internationally came from just five countries: The Syrian Arab Republic (6.7 million), Venezuela (4 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million). The countries with the highest number of IDPs due to conflict and violence as of the end of 2020 were the Syrian Arab Republic (6.6 million), the Democratic Republic of Congo (5.3 million), Colombia (4.9 million), Yemen (3.6 million) and Afghanistan (3.5 million).

The countries with the highest number of people being newly displaced in 2020 were the Democratic Republic

of Congo (2.2 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (1.8 million), Ethiopia (1.7 million), Mozambique (592,000), and Burkina Faso (515,000).⁴ This edition has case studies and/or response overviews from all five of these countries (see A.4, A.22-26, A.5, A.6 and A.1 respectively). Figure 2 shows the countries where there were new internal displacements due to conflict and violence, and disasters.

4 IDMC (2021), Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021



Lebanon, 2016.



Lake Chad Province, Chad, 2020.

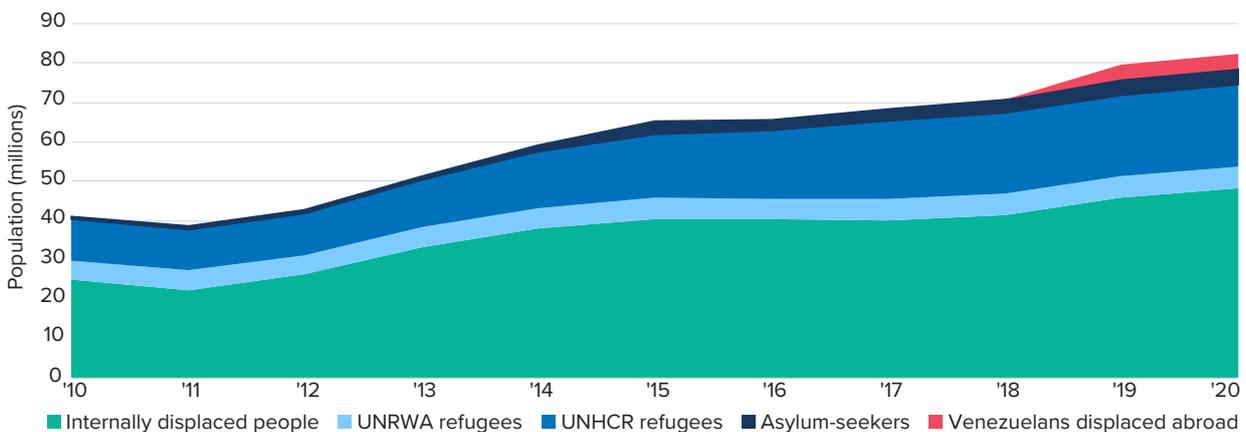


Figure 1: Number of people displaced at the end of each year, including people displaced due to conflict and violence, and Venezuelans displaced abroad (Source: UNHCR).

DISASTERS

In 2019 and 2020, disasters affected 94.9 million people⁵ and 98.4 million people⁶ respectively. However, the numbers of people affected do not necessarily mean that all had shelter needs. In both 2019 and 2020, the three types of disasters affecting the most people globally were storms, floods and droughts. 30.7 million people were newly internally displaced by disasters in 2020. China (5.1 million), the Philippines (4.4 million), Bangladesh (4.4 million) and India (3.9 million) accounted for the highest numbers of people internally displaced due to disasters during 2020, mainly due to floods and storms.⁷

In both 2019 and 2020, the three types of disasters affecting the most people globally were storms, floods and droughts.

5 UCLouvain, CRED, USAID (2020), *Natural Disasters: Now is the time to not give up*

6 UNDRR, UCLouvain, CRED, USAID (2021), *The Non-Covid year in disasters: Global trends and perspectives*

7 IDMC (2021), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021*

Multiple case studies in this edition show responses to storms. This includes a project responding to Hurricane Dorian which hit the Bahamas in 2019 (A.8), and recovery programming following on from the response to Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) (A.14) which hit the Philippines in 2013. Additionally, the Mozambique response overview (A.6) involves responses to multiple cyclones and tropical storms. The Paraguay case study (A.9) shows a response to large-scale flooding.

While geophysical disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic activity affected far fewer people globally than weather and climate-related disasters such as storms and floods, there were still numerous significant geophysical disasters in 2019 and 2020. The Indonesia case study (A.13) shows a project responding to the combined effects of an earthquake, tsunami, liquefaction and landslides, whereas the Vanuatu case study (A.15) outlines the response to Ambae volcano in 2018.

Number of internally displaced people per country due to:

- Conflict and violence**
9.8m total new displacements
- Disasters**
30.7m total new displacements

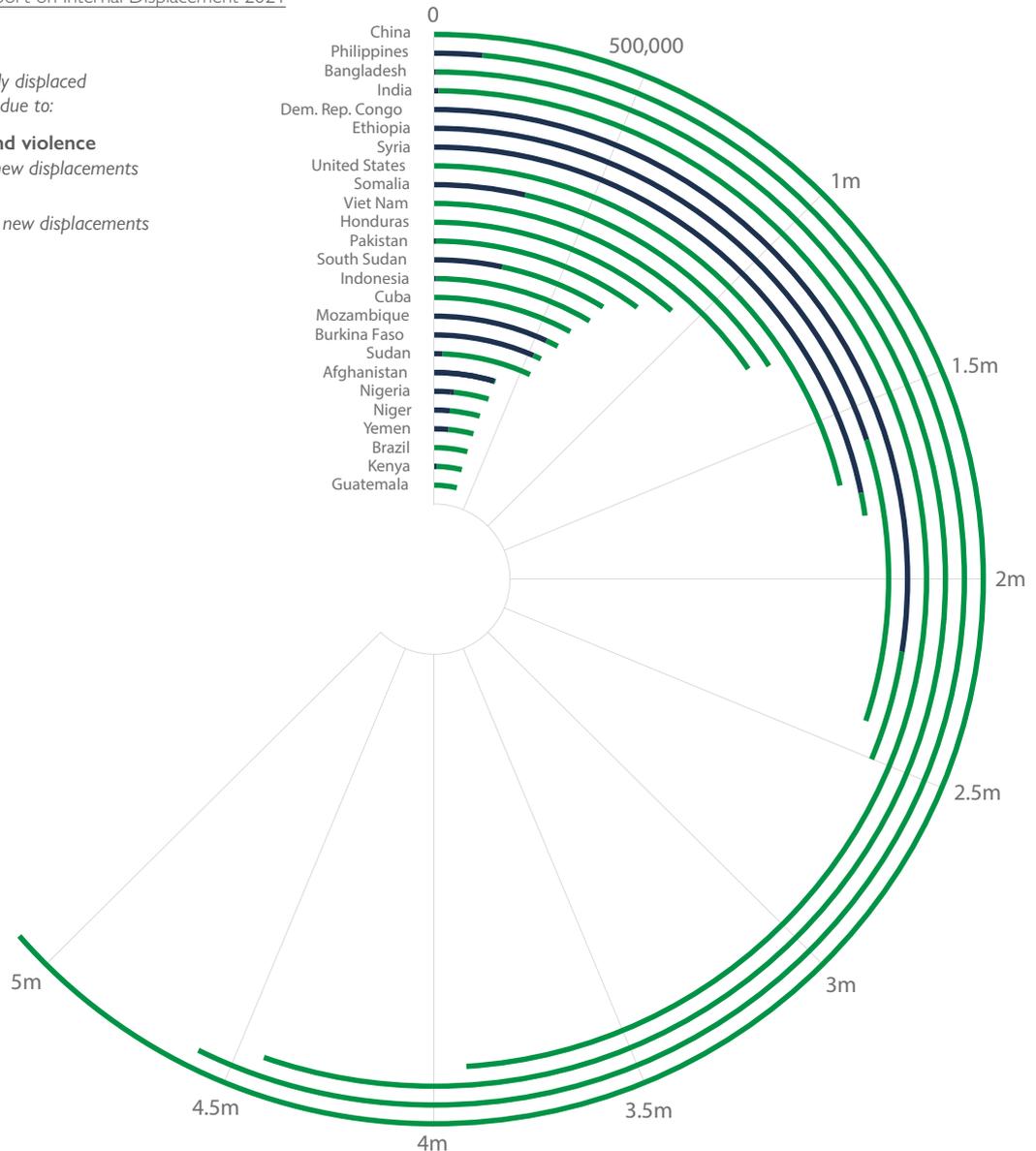


Figure 2: Twenty-five countries and territories with the most new internal displacements in 2020 (Source: IDMC).

SHELTER RESPONSES IN 2019 AND 2020

In 2019 and 2020, the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) reported that 14.2 and 14.7 million people respectively had been reached in countries where a cluster or cluster-like coordination mechanism was active.⁸ It is important to note that this excludes, among others, some refugee responses such as the Rohingya crisis response. These figures represent an increase in people reached when compared to the three preceding years, but they are not as high as the 18.1 million people reportedly reached with Shelter-NFI assistance in 2015 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 shows the total people targeted and reached with Shelter-NFI support since 2015. These figures should also be considered in relation to the overall number of people in need of Shelter-NFI assistance, which was 37.8 million people in 2019 and 58.5 million people in 2020. Overall Shelter Cluster responses met 25% of the total needs in 2020 and 38% of the needs in 2019. In both years responses assisted 57% of those people targeted. The large majority of this assistance was in NFI only. These figures do not include responses outside the Cluster system.

⁸ All data in this section is from the Global Shelter Cluster <https://www.sheltercluster.org/operations>

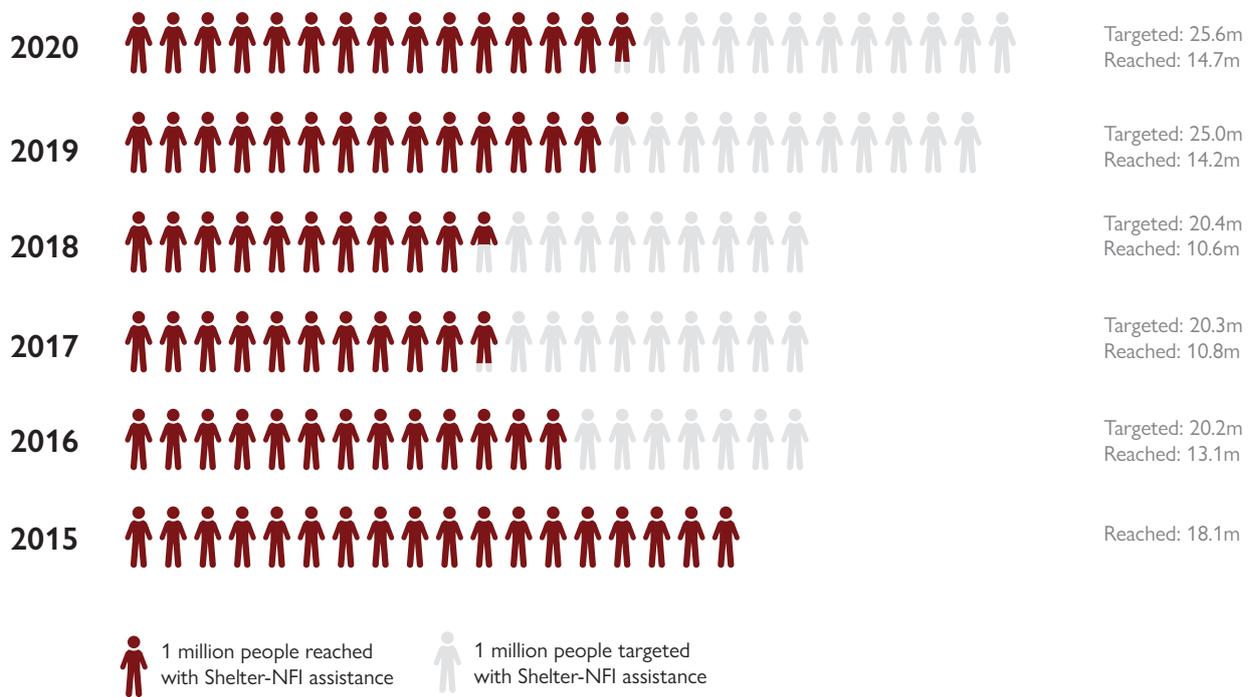


Figure 3: Total people targeted and reached with Shelter-NFI support from 2015 to 2020, in responses where a cluster or cluster-like mechanism was active.



Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2019.



Shyala, Gorkha District, Nepal, 2020.

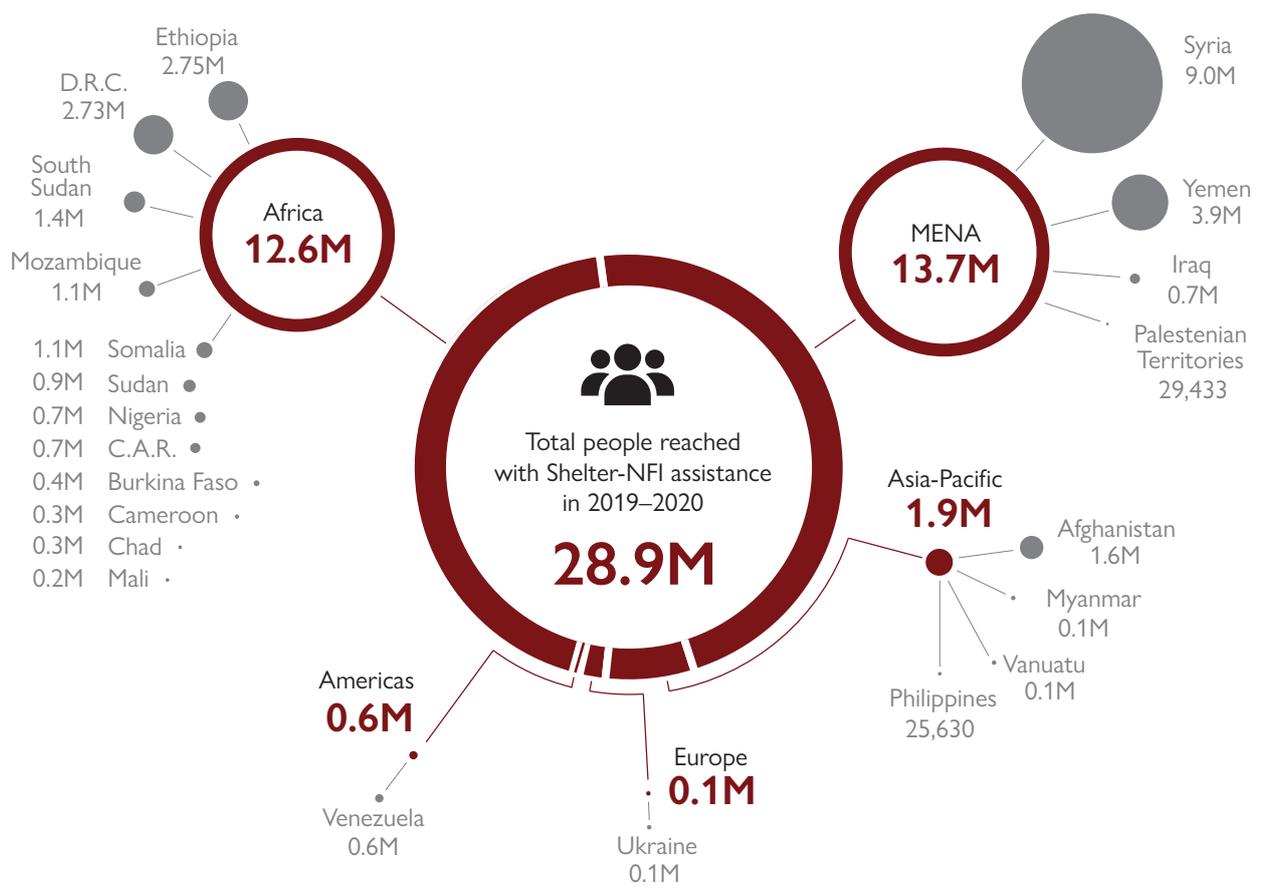


Figure 4: Total people reached with Shelter-NFI support by region and country in 2019-2020, in responses with a cluster or cluster-like mechanism active.

Figure 4 shows the combined total of people reached in 2019 and 2020 split by region. It shows that the majority of people supported with Shelter-NFI assistance were in either in MENA (13.7 million people reached) or in Africa (12.6 million people reached).

The major humanitarian Shelter-NFI responses in 2019-2020 were in the Syrian Arab Republic (see A.22-A.26), Yemen, DRC (see A.4), Ethiopia (see A.5), South Sudan, Mozambique (see A.6), Somalia, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria (see A.7). The Shelter-NFI response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh was also one of the largest in those years. The majority of Shelter-NFI assistance in 2019-2020 was related to conflict and violence, in some cases combined by the additional damage and displacement caused by exposure to natural hazards.

Figure 5 also shows the split between NFI assistance and Shelter assistance across these responses.⁹ It is possible to note for example that some responses, such as the response in Ethiopia, have reached a relatively large

9 Note that the overall number of people reached noted in Figure 5 is in most cases not equal to the sum of the breakdown of people reached with NFI assistance and people reached with Shelter assistance. This is because some people will have been reached with both NFI and Shelter assistance.

number of people with NFI assistance but have reached a much smaller amount of people with more substantial Shelter assistance.

In 2019-2020, as per Global Shelter Cluster figures, the sector received just 34 per cent of the funding required across all countries. Figure 6 shows the regional breakdown of funding requested and funding received.



Tabaco, Albay, Philippines, 2021.

INTRODUCTION

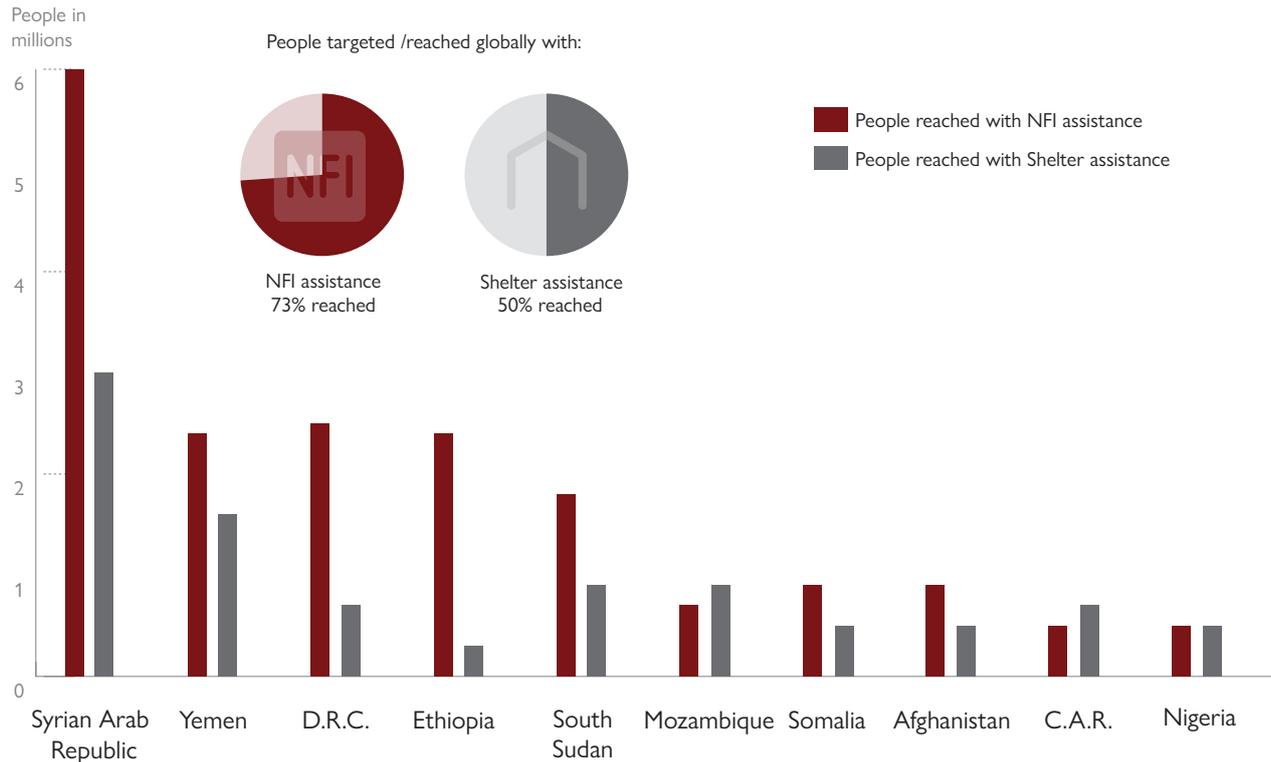


Figure 5: Top ten responses by people reached in 2019-2020 with Shelter and NFI assistance in countries where a cluster or cluster-like mechanism was active.

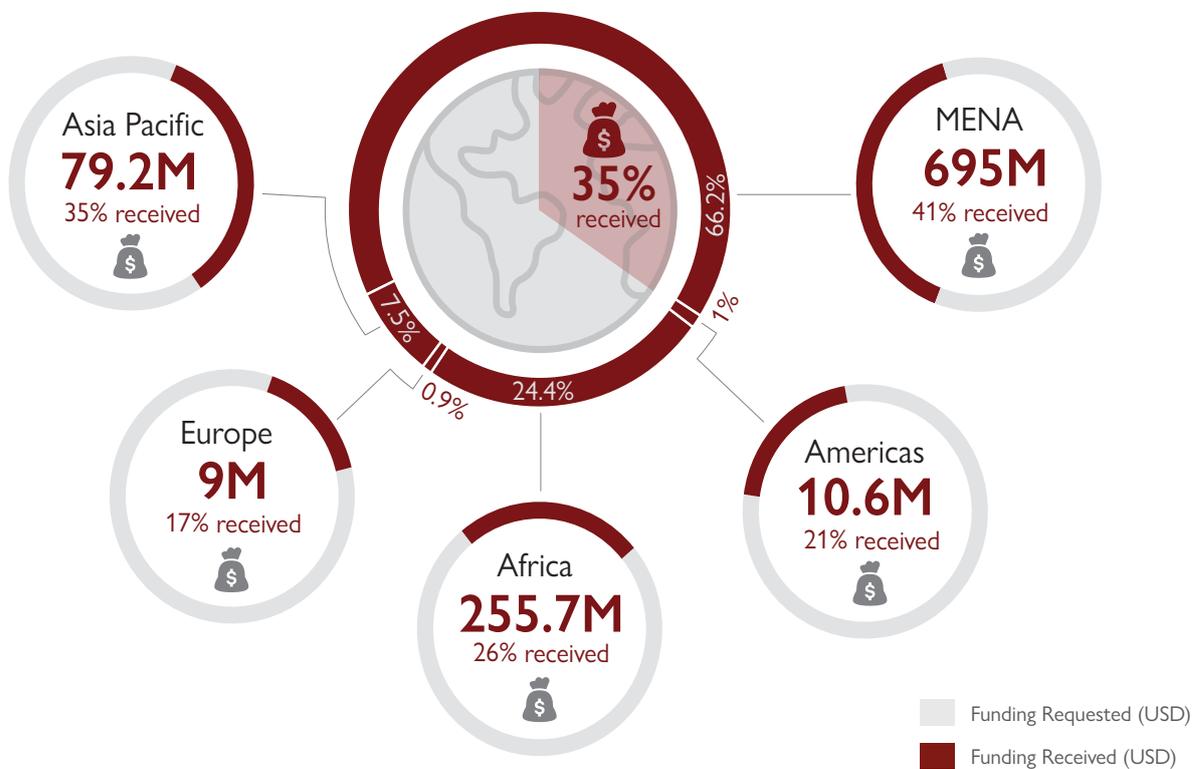


Figure 6: Regions by funding received for Shelter-NFI in 2019-2020 in responses where a cluster or cluster-like mechanism was active.



Baidoa, Burheybe, Somalia, 2020.



Virac town, Catanduanes Island Province, Philippines, 2020.

OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

DIVERSITY IN RESPONSES

Shelter and settlements assistance is part of a process and crisis-affected people are active participants in that process. How and where assistance is provided in an emergency can have long-term impacts on people's ability to improve their situation and eventually recover.

The case studies in this book show a wide range of approaches to providing shelter and settlements assistance. The approaches taken vary significantly due to a wide range of contextual factors, including the resources, needs, capacities, vulnerabilities, intentions, priorities and barriers faced by crisis-affected people, and due to the phase of response, organizational mandates and funding availability.

See the table on pages xviii-xix for a full summary of the locations and settlement options, types of shelter assistance and support methods assistance methods and settlement typologies of the projects in this book.

TYPE OF CRISIS AND DISPLACEMENT

Seven of the case studies are of projects that supported refugee populations: two case studies in Chad supporting refugees from Sudan (A.2) and from the Central African Republic (A.3); two case studies of projects in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, supporting Rohingya refugees from Myanmar (A.11 and A.12); and three case studies of projects supporting Syrian refugees in Jordan (A.20), Lebanon (A.21), and Turkey (A.27).

Ten case studies are of projects that were implemented in support of people internally displaced due to conflict or violence. These include case studies from the Democratic Republic of Congo (A.4), Ethiopia (A.5), Nigeria (A.7), Ukraine (A.16), two case studies from Iraq (A.18 and A.19), and four case studies from Northwest Syria (A.23-A.26).

Five case studies are of projects that responded to disasters (flood, storm, earthquake, volcano) at different phases of the response. These include emergency responses in case studies from the Bahamas (A.8), Paraguay (A.9)

and from Vanuatu (A.15); transitional shelter support in Indonesia (A.13); and longer-term resettlement support in the Philippines (A.14).

Many of the projects in this edition that respond to a specific disaster take place in contexts that experience multiple different types of natural hazards, such as in Vanuatu (A.15). Additionally, many of the case studies of projects implemented in response to conflict and displacement, particularly those in contexts of protracted displacement in camps, involve significant focus on disaster risk reduction and the ongoing response to seasonal hazards such as storms and flooding (see for example A.12 in Bangladesh and A.23 in Syria).

CONTEXT AND SETTLEMENTS OPTIONS/SITUATIONS

People assisted by the projects in this edition found shelter and were reached with shelter support in different types of locations. This includes 9 projects that were implemented in urban areas, 10 projects in peri-urban areas, and 13 projects in rural areas (though the definition of what is "urban" varies from one country to another). From a shelter perspective, the location and typology of settlement where people are can be considered amongst the main determinants in selecting appropriate response options.

Over half of the projects in this book were implemented in communal displacement sites. These included collective facilities which are often in existing public buildings (A.25); planned sites and settlements for large populations fleeing conflict and disasters (A.2, A.4, A.7, A.9, A.11, A.12 and A.15); spontaneous camps where people self-settled (A.9, A.11, A.15, A.21, A.23 and A.25); and planned resettlement sites designed to provide longer-term shelter solutions for people who had been displaced (A.3, A.14 and A.26)

Many projects also supported populations in dispersed locations, including people in rental accommodation (A.8, A.19, A.20, A.21, A.25 and A.27), people staying with host families (A.4, A.19, A.24, A.25 and A.27), and people who self-settled in dispersed locations (A. 4 and A.25).

INTRODUCTION

Many projects also assisted people who were not displaced but whose homes had been damaged or destroyed (see A.13, A.18, A.19 and A.24), or helped households who had been displaced to be able to return to their homes and communities (A.5, A.18, A.19 and A.24). Some projects also assisted people who had not been directly affected by crisis but who were members of host communities with significant housing needs (A.20 and A.27).

SHELTER ASSISTANCE TYPES

The case studies in this edition show a range of different types of shelter assistance. Eight projects offered support in providing materials for or directly constructing emergency shelters (e.g. A.4, A.9 and A.25). Five projects supported the construction of transitional or semi-permanent shelters (A.3, A.5, A.12 and A.13). Two projects supported host families (A.15 and A.19).

Eight projects supported housing repair, retrofit and/or rehabilitation in support of a combination of displaced people who were renting accommodation (e.g. A.20, A.21), returnees and non-displaced local populations (e.g. A.5 and A.18), and vulnerable host community members (e.g. A.20).

Three projects provided direct rental assistance (A.8, A.20 and A.21). Many other projects supported renters through negotiating rent reductions or rent freezes either for a set period of one or two years, or in perpetuity (A.26).

Four projects supported the construction of permanent housing: two projects supported the permanent reconstruction of severely damaged or destroyed homes (A.18 and A.19), and two projects built permanent new-build housing as part of new housing developments (A.14 and A.26).

One project (A.11 in Bangladesh), was specifically focused on improving material supply chains namely through the setup of a bamboo treatment facility. One case study (A.16 in Ukraine) focusses on coordination and on the transition and handover of the Shelter Cluster in Ukraine.

SUPPORT METHODS

Projects adopted a variety of support methods to deliver shelter assistance. These include the distribution of household items or shelter materials, tools and kits (e.g. A.9, A.15), the use of cash-based interventions (CBI) for example through conditional cash transfers (e.g. A.5, A.18, A.27), and non-material form of assistance, such as capacity building (e.g. A.13, A.15), technical assistance (e.g. A.19, A.20) and advocacy and legal advice for example in relation to Housing Land and Property Rights (HLP) (e.g. A.5, A.20 and A.27).

Many projects also provided settlements-level support. Nine projects involved site or settlement planning, including planning for the development, growth and upgrading of new and existing displacement sites and settlements (e.g. A.3, A.4, A.7, A.12), and supporting planning in existing urban and peri-urban areas (e.g. A.19). Eleven projects supported infrastructure improvements, including improvements to roads, drainage, communal spaces, and access to local services and amenities. Site and settlement planning, and infrastructure support was often implemented with aims to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards, mitigate protection and health risks, and promote social cohesion.



© Vianney le Gaer

Lebanon, 2016.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AND RECURRING THEMES

Building on the analysis conducted in Shelter Projects Essentials publication, the 22 case studies that follow were analyzed by subject experts. For each case study, the strengths and weaknesses highlighted in the case study were taken as the unit of analysis. Each strength and weakness was assigned up to two themes at the intervention/output level and up to two themes at the outcome level.

For example: *engaging the community in the project* (intervention/output) led to *stronger social cohesion* (outcome).

The strengths and weaknesses of each project were assigned themes from a list determined by the Shelter Projects Working Group, based on those used in the previous edition of Shelter Projects. In the case study development and review phases, contributors were encouraged to discuss these themes in the data collection form, and the peer reviewers of the case studies provided commentary to make sure the strengths and weaknesses were justified in the project description. The results of the classification were validated and then analyzed to extract findings. These are presented below and in the table on pages xxvi-xxvii.

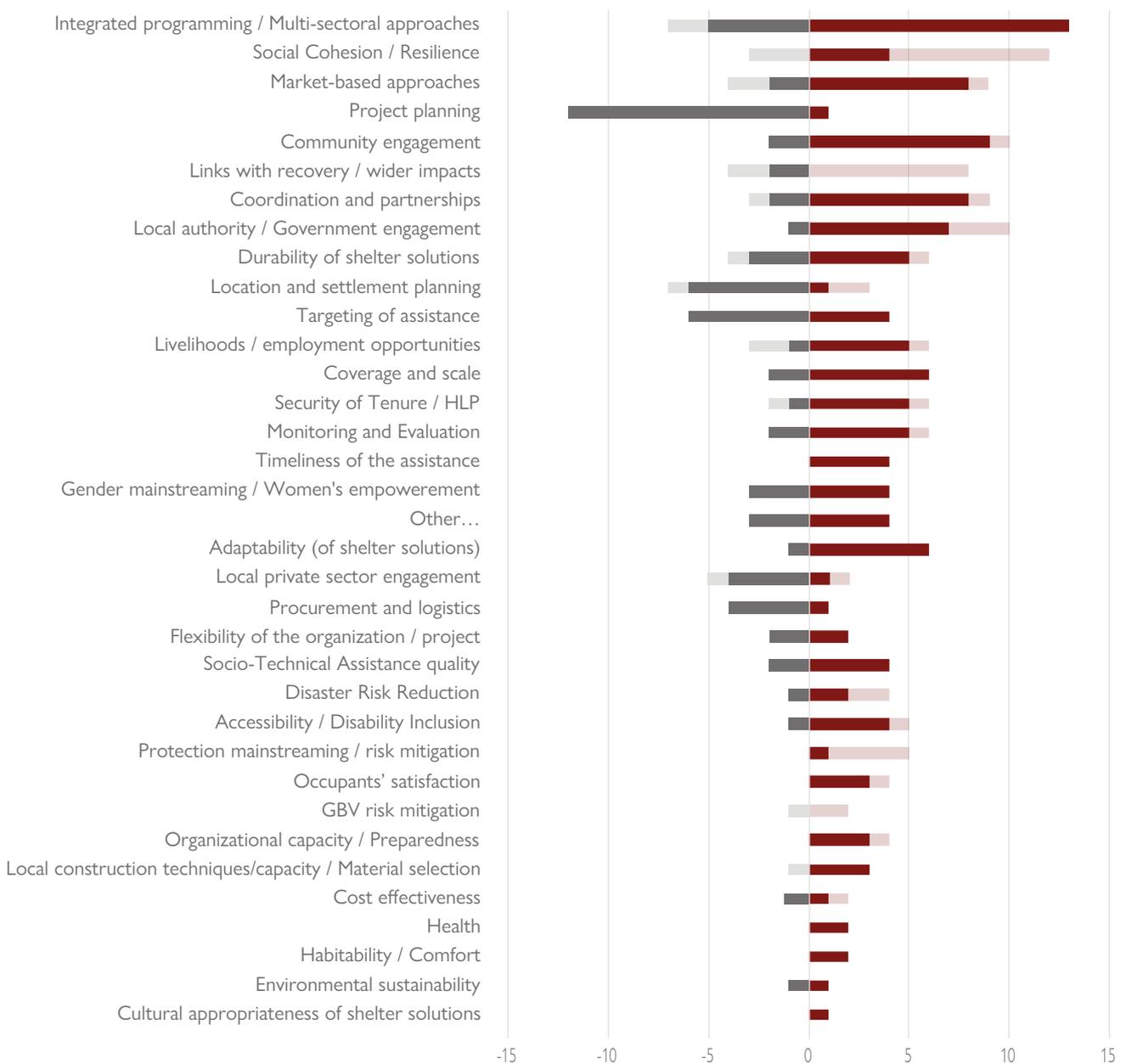


Figure 7: Strengths and weaknesses reported in the case studies, by theme.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE ANALYSIS

Top three strengths overall	Integrated programming / Multi-sectoral approaches, Social Cohesion / Resilience, Local authority / Government engagement
Top three weaknesses overall	Project planning, Location and settlement planning, Market-based approaches
Top four strengths in disaster responses	Community engagement, Coordination and partnerships, Local authority / Government engagement, Social Cohesion / Resilience
Top weakness in disaster responses	Project planning
Top two strengths in conflict responses	Integrated programming / Multi-sectoral approaches, Social Cohesion / Resilience
Top three weaknesses in conflict responses	Project planning, Location / settlement planning, Integrated programming / Multi-sectoral approaches

It is recognized that case studies have inherent biases due to each author’s perspective and the varying scope of different case studies. Strengths and weaknesses are mostly self-reported, and due to the limited length and specific scope of Shelter Projects case studies are not exhaustive, and the reality can be more nuanced. Case studies are also very diverse because of the varying nature of the context in which projects take place. However, by classifying the strengths and weaknesses of each project, some trends can be observed.

From the analysis, the most reported theme was *Integrated programming / Multi-sectoral approaches* (reported in 16 out of the 22 case studies). The next most reported themes were *Social cohesion / Resilience* (12 case studies), *Project planning* (12 case studies), *Community engagement*, (11 case studies), *Links with recovery / Wider impacts* (11 case studies), *Coordination and partnerships* (10 case studies), *Market-based approaches* (10 case studies), and *Local authority / Government engagement*, (9 case studies). The most recurring themes found through the analysis described above, are briefly expanded below.



Petare, Venezuela, 2019.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING / MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACHES

Integrated programming was twice as likely to be reported as a strength than a weakness. Where it was reported as a weakness, the issue was usually that there was an absence of integrated programming. As a strength, collaboration with other sectors contributed to adequate standards in camps and settlement planning (A.2, A.4, A.7 A.12) through integrating site planning, site development, access, and WASH. Site-wide improvements in flood risk mitigation led to improved living conditions in A.23. Programs were described as more comprehensive in scope (A.19, A.24) by working with other sectors on WASH, infrastructure and food security. Integration with Protection was positive in A.15 and A.18. Outcomes were aided by multi-sectoral approaches, such as social cohesion (A.14) and self-sufficiency (A.3).

When reported as a weakness at output level it was mentioned when there was no WASH support (A.5), and in A.7 site preparation and development was initially stymied in part due to a lack of clarity over which sector was responsible. There were more comments on integrated programming as a weakness at output level. A.20 says that linkages with other sectors would have increased the positive impact of the intervention, A.26 reports that energy integration was not properly planned leaving households without energy access, A.21 highlights how the project built relationships with Protection actors, but mentions that further outreach and relationship building efforts were still needed. A.16 points to a lack of inter-sectoral coordination creating a missed opportunity in the transition from humanitarian to development actors.

In this analysis, a number of other themes which highlight specific areas of integrated/multi-sectoral approaches overlap with the broader theme. This is the case with the themes on accessibility/disability inclusion, GBV risk mitigation, gender mainstreaming, protection mainstreaming and security of tenure/HLP. A.21 and A.25 take the approach of linking shelter interventions with protection risks, which show specific outcomes in better inclusion and reduction of gender-based violence. Other inclusion strengths are in A.13 which demonstrates the importance of project flexibility and A.20 which shows the value of inclusion kits.

In A.3 the shelter approach prioritizing personal security contributed directly to a reduction in the risk of gender-based violence, however in the same project, the lack of community engagement in site planning and other aspects of the project were reported as a missed opportunity to strengthen support networks and further mitigate safety and security risks such as gender-based violence. Gender mainstreaming was a weakness in A.3 and A.13 where there was a missed opportunity to include women and girls in workshops and the construction process. In A.4 and A.25 the inclusiveness of the project approach was a positive for gender mainstreaming. A.15 showed the value of coordination with the Protection Cluster for gender outcomes. There were a number of approaches in the case studies that contributed to protection mainstreaming: A.2 links protection mainstreaming to engagement of host and displaced communities in the settlement planning process; A.24 and A.25 prioritize sensitive consultation; and multiple case studies such as A.5 and A.20 highlight the strengthening of tenure security.

SOCIAL COHESION / RESILIENCE

This theme was reported in 12 of the 22 case studies. In 9 of the 12 cases it was reported as an outcome strength or weakness, and in 2 of the case studies it was reported as both a strength and a weakness at outcome level, for different reasons. These case studies are a useful addition to the development of evidence to support the wider impacts of shelter programs.

Reported strengths: In case study A.3 the shelter component of the project provided an enabling environment for social cohesion, local integration and the peaceful co-existence of refugees and the host communities. A.4 describes how the inclusive implementation process involving both host and displaced communities led to collaboration and tolerance between the groups. Rehabilitation of unfinished houses belonging to host community members (A.19) were used for hosting IDPs and refugees, which helped in building peaceful coexistence among various groups. Case study A.24 reported that transparency of assistance for local, returnee and IDP groups enhanced trust between these communities and

with local councils. In A.26, it was recognized that while also supporting IDPs, the provision of permanent new infrastructure would be an asset for the local authority, as well as providing livelihood and skills opportunities for both host and displaced populations.

This linkage between host community support and social cohesion is perhaps one of the most important conclusions from this analysis. Support to host families and host communities including local authorities, for example through building community infrastructure or completing unfinished buildings was reported in multiple case studies to have an effect on social cohesion between displaced and host communities. Host community support is a clearly articulated theme which emerges from the data as significant and which does not have a specific category in the analysis framework. It is possible that this has been a long-standing characteristic of shelter programming, but one that has not previously emerged in analysis of Shelter Projects publications as it was not highlighted as a specific category for case study write-ups.

Specific to case studies in disaster contexts were strengths highlighting ongoing community identification of hazards and resilience strategies (A.13), as well as the sustainability of the community itself (A.14), and building common interests between host and displaced populations (A.15). Other strengths mentioned were that grouping households led to practical support for vulnerable groups (A.5) as well as collective strength in negotiations for resources; and the importance of understanding social networks and communities of origin when allocating shelters in relation to site/settlement planning (A.7).

For weaknesses, a lack of community engagement in some aspects of the project in A.3 was a missed opportunity to strengthen support networks, encourage ownership and buy-in, and mitigate additional safety and security risks. Shelter and settlements assistance has the ability to create division as well as the ability to foster social cohesion, especially if there are groups who are excluded from assistance. A.5 for example recorded a cash for shelter program in a volatile region which left out some of the bordering villages, which caused community tensions.



Borena, Ethiopia, 2020.



© Liatlle Putosa / IOM South Sudan

Naivasha IDP camp, Wau, South Sudan, 2021.

PROJECT PLANNING

The theme with most reported weaknesses is project planning, which includes a number of diverse issues dealing with program design. These include: no training on repair or maintenance (A.3); lack of awareness of wider needs and priorities, which impacted the shelter provision (A.5); weakness in verification procedures (A.8); lack of consideration of Cash-for-Work incentives (A.12); and implementing a large scale, multi sector housing project without a pilot (A.14). Timing was a weakness, with many projects reporting having not foreseen and planned for delays: in A.13 Project planning didn't consider harvest time; the "train the trainer" approach in A.9 had limited success due to time shortages for trainers; and A.16 underappreciated the pace of decision making and action by local authorities. Other weaknesses reported were: lack of understanding household's intent to return and the program's ability to determine their level of vulnerability in the location of displacement (A.18); and phasing of technical and vulnerability assessments (A.19). There was one sole positive comment on project planning: a realistic timeline in A.16.

Many of the case studies highlighted processes of remote management and remote monitoring, mainly in the context of cross border programming between Turkey and Northwest Syria (e.g. A.23, A.25), and also in relation to adapting to working in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (A.9). More broadly, although not mentioned significantly within the strengths and weaknesses sections, a recurring theme mentioned within the majority of case studies was the need to adapt project planning, implementation modalities and monitoring processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strengths reported related to community engagement included participation of both the displaced and the host communities in the settlement planning process (A.2) which had wider effects of promoting linking with social cohesion (as described on page xxii). A.14 demonstrated wider effects of community engagement where community participation in the design of the new community layout using social network analysis enabled the community to maintain the existing social fabric. A.19 reported close coordination with community leaders which helped in avoiding tension between host communities and the targeted IDPs and refugees.

Project A.4 engaged local communities as well as the IDPs in the shelter construction process, with particular efforts on including and empowering women. A.9 was particularly successful at incorporating many suggestions from communities into the project design and the distribution processes. Trust building made A.13 and A.24 successful by building good relations through intensive communication. In A.13 the organization worked in partnership with an existing community group to collectively implement the project and to support their capacity development. In A.18 the development of community representation structures, through Community Working Groups enhanced communication with communities significantly and facilitated community engagement and consultation, as communities were mobilized from the onset and throughout the project.

Weaknesses reported were that lack of community engagement in site planning, and layout resulted in a missed opportunity to strengthen support networks, encourage ownership and buy-in, and mitigate additional safety and security risks (A.3). A.7 reported the lack of time available to carry out community engagement in the early stages of the project.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY / WIDER IMPACTS

This theme, like social cohesion, is more often reported at outcome level (9 out of the 11 case studies, 8 as a strength and 1 as a weakness). As a strength, A.2 reported long-term planning for the settlement provided opportunities for economic development, in A.3 the durability of the shelters gave a sense of safety and security. A.8 reported ongoing links with local authorities. A.11 reports that the program has become a catalyst for research on the potential of treated bamboo. A.13 comments that households were enabled to adapt their shelter so that it could best fit in with their intentions for recovery. A.24 reports that markets were enabled to function sustainably. In A.21, positive psychological effects were reported due to the support provided.

As a weakness A.7 commented that more efforts could have been made to support returns and recovery and A.9 states that the project was not able to adequately address the longer-term needs of the affected population.

Many other themes overlap to a certain degree with this theme, as they highlight specific wider impacts of shelter and settlements programming. For example, there was one reported strength mentioned specifically about health outcomes in A.21. The project reported that the wider impacts of rehabilitation interventions were measured and positive psychological effects were reported by more than 50% of the respondents. Rehabilitations at a relatively modest cost had positive direct and indirect effects on reducing protection and health risks, reinforcing the economic environment in the area of intervention and contributed to the reduction of negative coping mechanisms.



Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2019.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the strengths and weaknesses highlighted under the theme of coordination and partnerships also support initiatives within the themes of local authority/government engagement (A.3, A.16) and community engagement (A.13). They form the basis for successful cross-sectoral collaboration with humanitarian and development actors (A.4, A.12, A.21) and among Shelter Cluster agencies (A.15), and they facilitate market-based approaches (A.11, A.25). Weaknesses in coordination and partnerships were highlighted in relation to Cluster transition to government (A.16), examples of where greater efforts were needed to improve coordination with other sectors (A.21) and challenges in implementing as per donor standards in certain contexts (A.25).



Ngurno camp, Monguno, Nigeria, 2020.



Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Quito, Ecuador, 2019.

MARKET-BASED APPROACHES

An equal number of strengths and weaknesses were mentioned in relation to market-based approaches. Strengths included cash as a modality (A.5) meaning that money was spent locally, supporting local markets, with pro-active efforts to put in place predictable prices in agreement with the local market vendors. Empowerment of crisis-affected households was reported by payments being made to the tenant (A.8) rather than the landlord in Cash-for-Rent programming. Cash assistance (A.18) enabled households to drive the reconstruction process, and choice created by cash-based modalities (A.20), enabled tenants and landlords more flexibility on the choice of material, quality and design.

Many weaknesses highlighted were in relation to Cash-for-Rent programming and a lack of exit strategy. Case study A.8 comments that while rental assistance can “buy time”, stronger linkages with other programs, supporting repairs or livelihoods were needed to help catalyze recovery. A.20 says Cash-for-Rent was only provided as a one-off assistance package and without linkages to other types of assistance to address the root causes of vulnerability. A.21 points out the risks to tenure security of rental programs in environments of crisis characterized by severe financial contraction and loss of purchasing power. This is an issue of known concern in shelter practice and recently guidelines have been released.¹

¹ See for example Shelter Cluster guidance on [Rental Market Interventions](#), and the [IFRC Step-by-step guidance for rental assistance](#).



Thevipuram, Mullaitivu District, Sri Lanka, 2019.

LOCAL AUTHORITY / GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

This theme was mostly reported as a strength. Aspects of this theme included addressing HLP concerns for allocation of land (A.2, A.24) and building the capacity of the local government on the protection of HLP rights (A.5). A.8 reported that an agreement with a government ministry in relation to referrals was useful to ensure that at the end of the project continued support could be provided to households with ongoing needs. A.14 reported capacity building of the local authority was important. A.15 noted strong collaboration and resource mobilization between local authorities and the Shelter Cluster coming from experience and capacities built from previous disaster responses in the region.

A.16 and A.19 noted that formal agreements were useful as a quality control measure to ensure that both parties agreed on their specific responsibilities and there was continuity in case of a change in leadership due to elections or change of personnel. A.27 noted that a positive result was achieved due to infrastructure projects being implemented collaboratively and co-funded by the town hall.

THEMES THAT WERE UNDER-REPORTED

It is interesting to reflect on themes which are considered important by the shelter community but are not reported often as strengths and weaknesses within the case studies. Cultural appropriateness is mentioned only once, environmental sustainability twice, cost effectiveness only three times, occupant satisfaction four times, and Disaster Risk Reduction and private sector engagement are mentioned only five times. As mentioned above, due to the limited length and specific scope of Shelter Projects case studies, the lists of reported strengths and weaknesses are not exhaustive, and the reality is more nuanced. More information is needed to understand the reasons why these themes are not widely reported.

SECTION A

CASE STUDIES & OVERVIEWS



OVERVIEW

BURKINA FASO 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

CRISIS START DATE	Earliest part of the conflict recorded in 2015 Clusters activated 5th December 2019
PEOPLE AFFECTED	2.9 million people*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	1,074,993 people as of Dec 2020**
HOMES DESTROYED	13,503 homes destroyed***
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	960,180 people****
PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN THE RESPONSE	28,560 HHs supported with NFIs 32,560 HHs supported with emergency shelter 556 HHs supported with semi-permanent shelter*****



SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

Since 2015, Burkina Faso has faced increasing insecurity from extremist international and national groups. From 2015-2018, violence was largely concentrated in Burkina Faso's Sahel region. Beginning in January 2019, the number of displaced persons accelerated dramatically from 87,000 at that time to over 1 million as of November 2020. The shelter response scaled up to support the Government of Burkina Faso meet the challenge of providing shelter to the thousands of people living within host communities with limited lands available.

* Source: Humanitarian Response Plan 2020

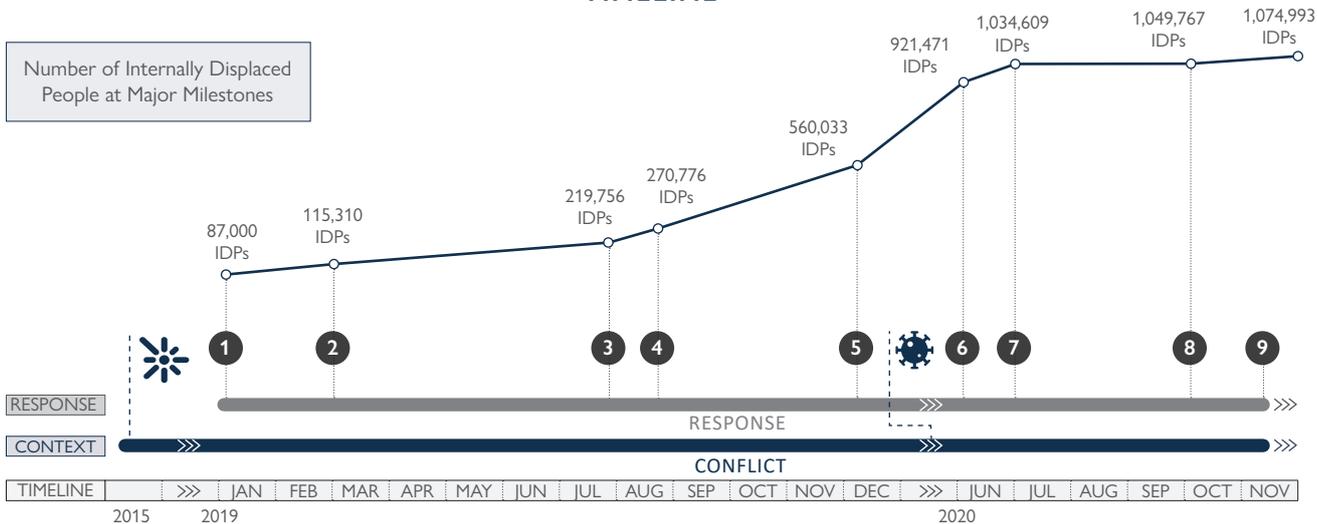
** Source: Situation Report, CONASUR (Dec 2020)

*** Source: CONASUR Quarterly Dashboard (Jan 2021)

**** Source: Shelter Cluster Dashboard (Dec 2020)

***** Source: Shelter Cluster Dashboard (Dec 2020). Figures are for Jan-Dec 2020.

TIMELINE



- 2015:** Earliest part of conflict recorded in 2015.
- 1** **Jan 2019:** Shelter/NFI Working Group (WG) launched.
- 2** **Mar 2019:** First NFI Standard Kit Established.
- 3** **30 Jul 2019:** First Sub-national Shelter WG in Kaya.
- 4** **19 Aug 2019:** Deployment of National Shelter Cluster Coordinator.
- 5** **11 Dec 2019:** Activation of Shelter Cluster.

- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 6** **Jun 2020:** Shelter Cluster Regional Focal Points for the main regions of displacement (Boucle de Mouhoun, Est, Nord, Centre-Nord, Sahel) put in place.
- 7** **Jul-Sep 2020:** Rainy season complicated shelter response and adaptations made.
- 8** **Oct 2020:** Sub-national Shelter Cluster Coordinator deployed.
- 9** **18 Nov 2020:** Strategy review workshop.

CONTEXT

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in Western Africa that shares a border with Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Burkina Faso has three climatic zones: a hot tropical savanna in the south, a hot tropical semi-arid climate reflective of the Sahel Desert in the north, and desert in the very north of the country. The majority of the population (80% of the working population) depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

The roots of the instability can be traced to the Soum region where a group called Ansarul Islam sought to create a new social order based on extremist versions of Islam, which appealed to the economic discontents of some local populations. Attacks became more widespread in 2018 through 2019 with insecurity stemming from within the country’s borders. This insecurity eroded trust between some of Burkina Faso’s dominant ethnic groups and challenged national authorities to reinforce security throughout the country.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

People lived in different types of houses across the region. In the Far North of Burkina Faso, people use traditional dome or cone like shelters which are designed to be quickly dismantled and reassembled according to the need

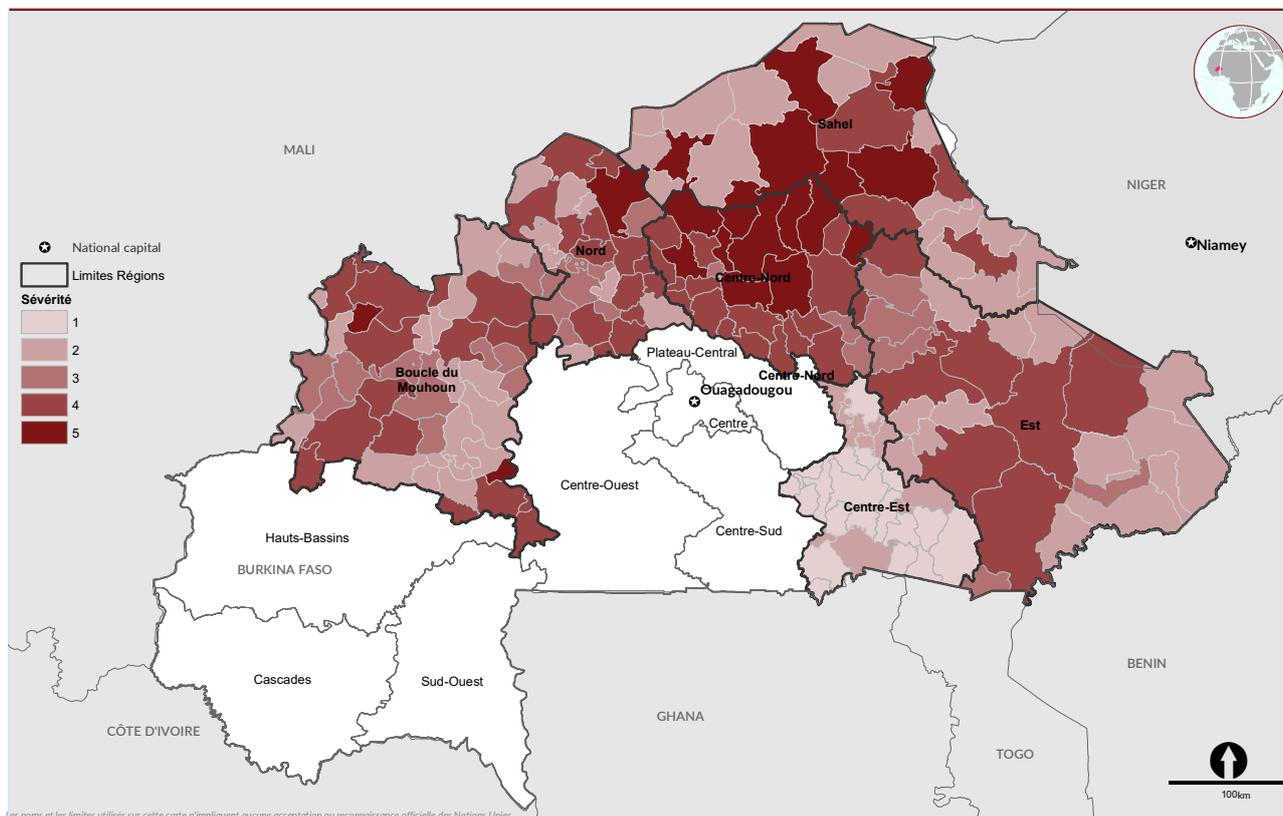
to move long-distances with their grazing livestock. At the beginning of the crisis, this type of construction was most familiar to humanitarian actors, because a similar emergency shelter had been used in the Malian Refugee Response (from 2012) in the Sahel region. Other traditional shelters of Burkina Faso include round huts that are put in a circular plot, where each of the huts is located to reflect the traditional and political roles of the family. Huts are also used for housing animals. Urban areas have homes made of mudbrick or concrete, with roofs of thatch or corrugated iron sheeting.

Due to rapid urbanization, Burkina Faso’s government was already grappling with challenges of land and housing within urban areas prior to the crisis. In the government’s land regulation, Burkina Faso has had to delineate between informal and formal land. Informal portions of settlements are referred to as ‘zones non-loties’. When looking at a map of any town in Burkina Faso, these zones are non-geometrical. Typically, these zones do not have established connections to water and electricity, and these must be acquired by the individual inhabitants. People are not easily able to formalize their ownership of the land. In planned settlements or zones loties, there is a clear planned geometric shape, and access to water and electricity and land ownership is easier to establish. Despite some governmental policies, land speculation is a direct consequence of this division between the two types of land.

BURKINA FASO

Carte de Sévérité des besoins (Abris)

A la date du 23 oct. 2020



Les noms et les limites utilisés sur cette carte n'impliquent aucune acceptation ou reconnaissance officielle des Nations Unies.
 Date de Production: 23 oct. 2020 Source(s): Cluster Abris, HNO-HRP2021 Auteur(s): kizima@unhcr.org Feedback: Cluster Abris - Burkina Faso Nom du Fichier: 20201021_Cluster_Abris_BFA_Carte de Severite Abris

Shelter Cluster map showing the severity of shelter needs (October 2020).

SITUATION DURING/AFTER THE CRISIS

Many of the displaced people turned to host communities that they knew through relatives, or relied on the hospitality of local people. In 2019, it was estimated that over 80% of IDPs were living with host communities in urban centers where more services were available and accessible. Due to the rapid increase of the number of displaced, host communities and hosts were quickly overwhelmed by the number of people. Resources for water and energy were in short supply and pressure was put on local markets.

Shelter actors sought to immediately decongest these host community accommodations by providing emergency shelters outside of these host shelters or in zones allocated by the government (typically zones non-loties). IDPs would also flee to schools to take shelter, as they were recognized to be public spaces always open to the community. As many of the initial violent attacks would happen at night-time, these were the most accessible. Shelter, WASH, and Education Clusters had to rush to find quick solutions to this situation in advance of the school year. In the summer of 2019, emergency shelter types were built outside of homes. Cash support also enabled IDPs to purchase and construct shelters in the zones non-loties. This put pressure on WASH Cluster partners to also ensure that these populations had access to potable water and latrines within the areas where these shelters were constructed. The Shelter Cluster strategy also immediately identified the need for stronger settlement planning in the response to facilitate both the work of Shelter and WASH Cluster partners. Due to lack of land and space, many emergency and transitional shelters are now constructed in the zones non-loties.

At the beginning of the response, the government permitted two formal camps to be established: Barsalagho which was found 5 km outside of the center of the town and Foubé. These camps were acknowledged largely as the population that was settled there (largely Peul people with no ties to the community) had reasonable fears to settle within the host (Maasi) communities due to their different ethnicity. Nevertheless, there was reluctance to set up additional camps for the displaced as they have fears of these camps becoming protracted without the capacity to provide longer-term solutions for the displaced population. The Shelter Cluster and a Site Management Working Group worked with the government in order to provide land to decongest the overcrowded situations. According to the Site Management Working Group as of December 2020, 94 temporary hosting sites of both spontaneous and formal nature have been identified and tracked.

In addition to accommodation with the host community, IDPs were provided with emergency shelter solutions including, Sahelian Tents (otherwise known as Tuareg Shelters), Refugee Housing Units, and wooden framed shelters covered in plastic sheeting. Some emergency shelters were heavily damaged by the floods and strong winds during the rainy season. The technical designs were reviewed by a Technical Working Group in order to reinforce the shelters but taking also into consideration the unpredictable duration of the crisis. The shelter response shifted from emergency towards a semi-durable response. The semi-durable response is based on the local traditional construction system with sun-dried clay bricks.



IDPs at the camp in Barsalagho in 2019 several months after their displacement.

© R. Wynveen

The Secretariat of the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (SP/CONASUR) has received support so that they can conduct regular IDP monitoring and registration of IDP numbers. This mechanism ensures that the government remains in the driving seat of the response, registering the specific issues of their citizens. The CONASUR regularly monitors the shelter types. As of November 2020, the CONASUR was able to register and assess the conditions of IDPs. According to their statistics, the shelter types of IDPs are the following (95,064 households recorded):

Types of shelters occupied by IDPs	
53%	Mud/brick houses
18%	Concrete housing
11%	Huts
7%	Hangars
7%	Tents
0.65%	Wood houses
0.64%	Schools
0.56%	Public buildings
0.09%	Religious buildings (Churches or Mosques)

NATIONAL SHELTER(-NFI) RESPONSE

GOVERNMENT ROLE

The main government body for the response in Burkina Faso is CONASUR. This government agency is considered the general body for response to emergencies. Whilst it does not have technical expertise in shelter and settlements, its key task is to liaise with the key government ministries of the response. At the time of setting up the Shelter Cluster, it was quickly identified that it would be

necessary to set up a liaison with Burkina Faso’s Ministry of Urbanism and Habitat in order to address some of the issues with lack of available land and housing stock for the displaced.

The liaison generated progress on this issue, as the Shelter Cluster has been able to secure land. The Shelter Cluster is now focusing on building the capacity of partners in the area of settlement planning, to accommodate IDPs as the host communities are overcrowded. Mayors struggle for funds, and are engaged in the local response as the displacement crisis has taken a toll on available resources for their residents and those displaced to their communities. For this reason, the support of international actors is critical to enable municipal authorities to engage in the response.

SHELTER TYPES

The Shelter Cluster’s Technical Working Group on shelter has been elaborating and reviewing the specific performance standards of the shelters employed. The climatic conditions of Burkina Faso: heat, wind, rain – put pressure on Shelter Cluster partners to look at how to adapt shelters for appropriate ventilation, durability, and protection from the elements.

In November 2019, a workshop was held on the origins of the Sahel tent and how the standard kit had adapted to the elements specific to where it was distributed in Burkina Faso. Partners conducted detailed reviews of the performance of the various emergency shelter options. The work of the Technical Working Group resulted in two detailed documents, one review of the interventions implemented to date in March 2020 and another document going into more details on shelter typologies and where each shelter type may be provided. This review of shelter typologies also created specific tables for the main regions of displacement on which solutions may be appropriate for each region.



IDPs accommodated in a site with emergency and durable shelters. The shelter response is shifting progressively from emergency to semi-durable solutions.

CASH AND SHELTER

Due to the lack of resources and the supply and logistical challenges of transporting materials throughout Burkina Faso, cash was an early feature of the response. IDPs used the cash to purchase NFIs in the markets and also to purchase land in the zones non-loties and to pay laborers for the work of completing their shelters. While an efficient way to provide assistance to the displaced, it was noted that technical assistance and monitoring were two important aspects of the program that needed to be strengthened in order to meet shelter objectives.

MAIN CHALLENGES

1. One of the critical challenges to the Shelter response is that there have been inadequate resources to mobilize enough partners particularly for the shelter portion of the response.
2. A second challenge has been the reluctance of governments to establish temporary settlements in order to accommodate the additional number of people displaced by the conflict recognizing that camps are a last resort.
3. Due to insecurity and the remote nature of the Sahel, it has been challenging to get timely and up to date information on the displacement and settlement patterns to inform real time response.



IDPs accommodated in Refugee Housing Units in order to decongest overcrowding in the town of Pissila.

WIDER IMPACTS

The insecurity in the Sahel was felt beyond Burkina Faso with a deterioration of the situation in Mali and Niger. Because of the climatic similarities between these countries, synergies and sharing between the shelter types and lessons learned were exchanged between the Shelter Clusters and the Shelter Working Group in these countries. This exchange of information contributed greatly to the efficiencies of coordination. Burkina Faso was the only country in the Sahel to be declared as an Interagency Standing Committee L3 Response, which in turn led to additional resources being invested in Mali and Niger to prevent a severe degradation in the displacement situation. The L3 designation enabled several resources to be allocated to respond to the shelter needs in the country and to set up a robust team to respond to the situation. This team in turn could share their tools with the other countries encountering similar challenges.



Sahelian tents set up by partners to accommodate IDPs living in collective centres and overcrowded shelters.



Semi-durable shelter made of mud brick. IDPs are supported with technical guidance and cash for these constructions.

LESSONS LEARNED

- In areas of land management and where IDPs are often found in urban and overcrowded host communities, settlement planning is a critical aspect of the Shelter Cluster strategy. Early geospatial analysis can facilitate decision-making about where to allocate emergency shelter and set up temporary settlements which can provide relief to host communities.
- Cluster Lead Agencies should initiate the Shelter Coordination early, in order to ensure that coordination staff are in place and that minimum shelter strategies are in place to start the response.
- The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) proved a key resource to kick-start shelter and settlement response programming.
- Early coordination and support to the government is critical.
- Collaboration with the WASH Cluster is critical both for stronger NFI programming and for Shelter programming to better implement the settlement planning aspects of the Shelter Cluster strategy.

CASE STUDY

CHAD 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

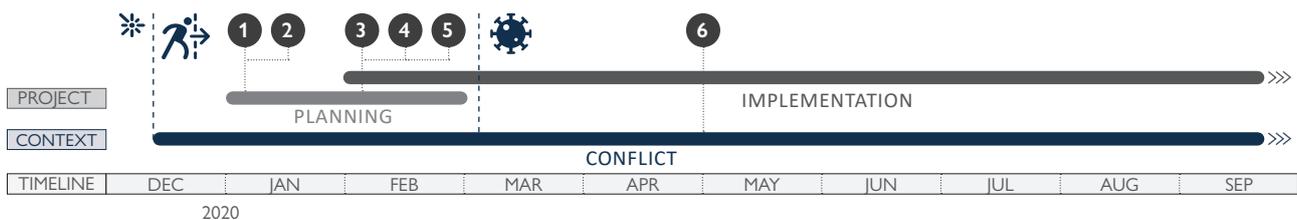
KEYWORDS: Coordination and partnerships, Host community integration, Settlement planning

CRISIS	Chad Emergency, 2020 (Ouaddai Province, Eastern Chad)
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Approx. 18,500 people*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEED	Approx. 7,988 people (total population in Kouchaguine-Moura Camp as of September 2020)*
PROJECT LOCATION	Kouchanguine Moura, Ouaddai Province, Eastern Chad
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	1,850 HHs (7,988 individuals) as of September 2020
PROJECT OUTPUTS	Multi-sectorial Integrated Settlement Planning and set-up with capacity for 27,000 people 1,850 temporary individual shelters constructed as of September 2020 6 communal transit shelters constructed Set up of communal facilities such as health centre, child friendly spaces, distribution spaces, school and other settlement infrastructure.
SITE AND SHELTER DENSITY	Site: 106m² per person Plot Size: 20m x 15m Shelter size: 17.5m² Shelter: 3.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 450 per shelter
* Source: UNHCR Chad Emergency Update - External 11 September 2020	



PROJECT SUMMARY

The project involved integrated settlement planning and the set-up of a new settlement in response to the Eastern Chad Emergency situation declared in January 2020 as a result of the influx of Sudanese Refugees. The decision was made to set up a new settlement; Kouchanguine-Moura located in Ouaddai Province. The settlement planning process used the Masterplan Approach – an integrated settlement planning tool – which took a participatory approach and focused on aligning the planning for the new settlement with the development plans for the host community area.



19 Dec 2019: Conflict as a result of an incident in Darfur led to the displacement of thousands of people both within Sudan and to the border areas in eastern Chad.

- 1 Jan 2020:** Site selection.
- 2 Jan 2020:** Site assessment.
- 3 Feb 2020:** Site preparation.
- 4 Feb 2020:** Relocation of the first refugees from the border to the new settlement.
- 5 Feb 2020:** Phased growth of the settlement.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 6 May 2020:** Further spikes in conflict occurred in May - July 2020.



The integrated settlement planning approach focused on links between the new settlement and host communities. Here a temporary market was set up by host community members in the new settlement.

CONTEXT

Eastern Chad continues to host refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan in established camps; Farchana, Hadjerhadid and Gaga, which are all reported to be at maximum capacity. Conflict as a result of an incident in Darfur on 19th December 2019 led to the further displacement of thousands of people both within Sudan and to the border areas in eastern Chad. Within a matter of weeks, thousands of refugees were temporarily living in small groups along the border near the town of Adre in makeshift shelters with no access to basic services.

DECISION TO SET UP A NEW SETTLEMENT

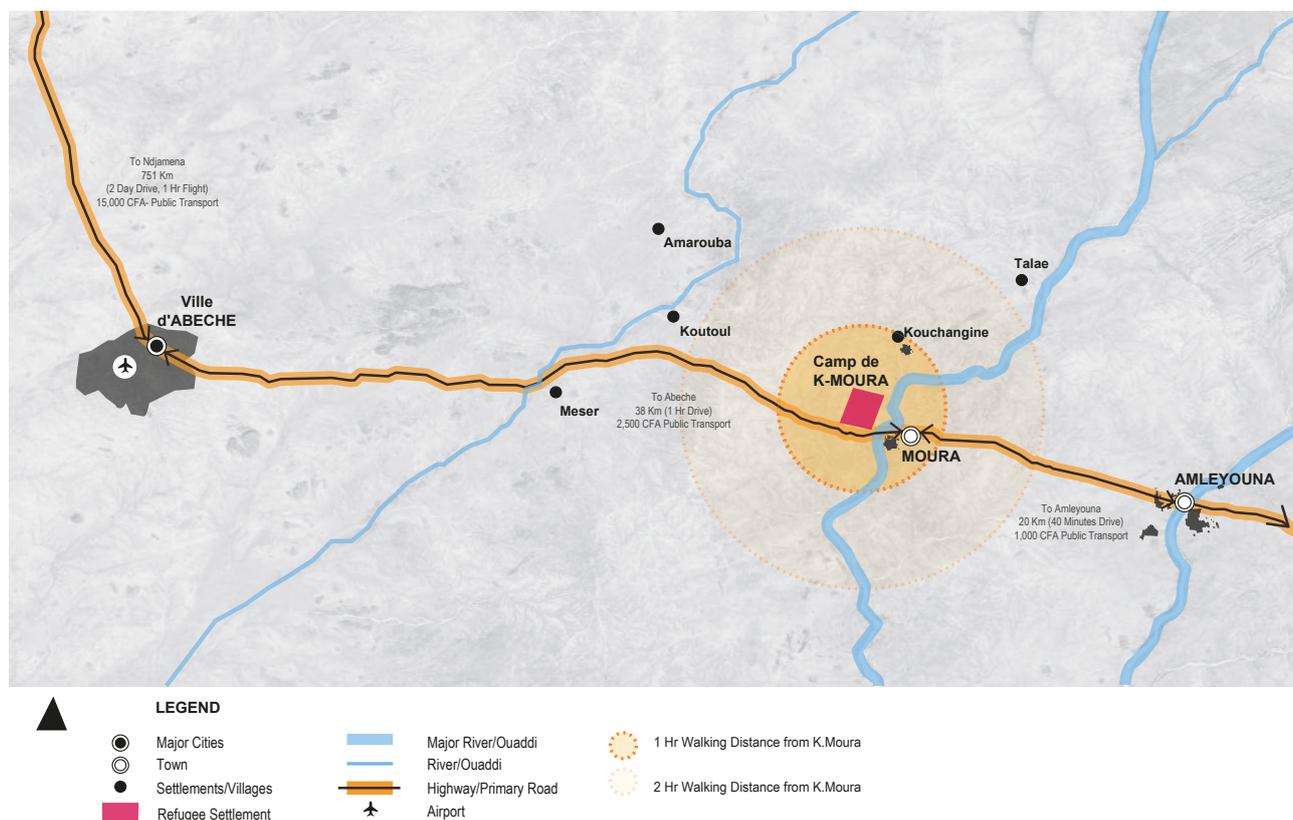
The organization recognizes that whenever possible, alternatives to camps, such as shelter options within existing communities, hosting arrangements, or consolidation or extension of existing settlements should be explored before considering the setup of new settlements. However, with an initial estimated influx of 30,000 Sudanese refugees needing support, in this case it was decided that the setup of a new settlement was necessary because existing refugee camps hosting earlier groups of refugees from Darfur had reached their maximum capacity with limited possibility of camp extension. A joint decision between the provincial and local government representatives, host communities and humanitarian agencies was made to establish a new settlement next to the village of Moura in Alemeyuna.

SITE SELECTION

The location for the new settlement was identified through a participatory process involving representation from different sectors of the government partner CNARR (Commission Nationale pour l'Accueil et la Réinsertion des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés), the organization, the hosting communities, government from Abeche and the sub-prefect of Amleyouna.



Refugees stayed in makeshift shelters on the Chad-Sudanese border while they waited to be relocated to the new settlement.



Map showing the surrounding context of the site for the new settlement.

The government and sector strategy for this response was based on the plan to set up a new integrated settlement next to the villages of Moura and Dabrane with the goal of providing refugees with opportunities for a holistic life with access to livelihoods, basic services, and long-term development opportunities for both the host and refugee communities. The site for the new settlement was strategically located along the Adre-Abeche Highway, 103km west of the border town of Adre and about 38km east of Abeche town. Its location next to the fertile seasonal river, Ouaddi Moura and along the highway created strong opportunities for economic growth and development as a centre of growth for the existing town of Moura and the settlement connecting Abeche and Amleyouna.

The new settlement of Kouchanguine Moura is in an area between the two small towns of Moura located at a distance of 1.5km and Dabrane located at a distance of 5.5km. The total population of the area before the new settlement was established was estimated to be 7,738. This mainly comprised of pastoralists and agriculturalists and semi-nomadic groups.

In this part of Chad most of the rural land is owned by communities. In responding to refugee influxes, when land for settlements is needed, the government is primarily responsible for providing the land. In this case the traditional leaders gave the land identified to the government for the purpose of setting up a new settlement. In essence the host community gave the land to the government who became the custodians for the land where the settlement is located.

The area is characterized by two seasons, a wet season between June and September, with average precipitation of maximum 180mm per month and the dry season from November to April where no rains are recorded. The environment of the area is fragile as it lies in a semi-arid region where most of the land is used for grazing animals with green agricultural belts along the seasonal Ouaddi Moura river.

MASTER PLANNING APPROACH

In establishing the new settlement, the organization used a Masterplan Approach. This is a framework that seeks to:

- Facilitate the achievement of long-term, area-based, development priorities through the development of humanitarian settlement plans which are in alignment with national development plans and policies;
- Provide an enabling environment for the sustainable integration of displaced populations within host communities through improved, equitable and safe access to basic services, including comprehensive health, education, and economic opportunities; and
- Mitigate risks to the protection of displaced people, peaceful coexistence of communities and sustainable local development.

The vision for the new settlement was that it would be fully integrated with the existing settlement, and its growth aligned to the national and local development plans of the Ouaddai region with the aim of facilitating linkages between humanitarian responses and long-term development efforts. The vision was

CRITICAL SITE PLANNING DRIVERS

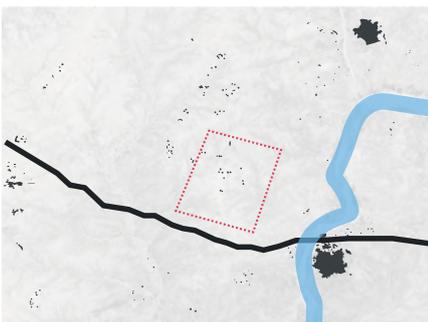
EXISTING ROADS



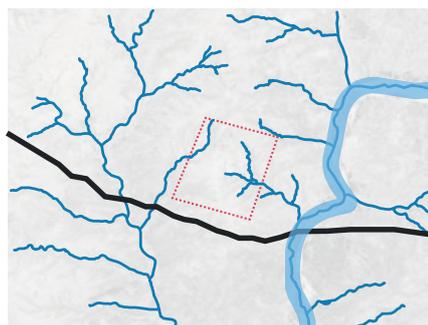
AGRICULTURAL AREAS



HOST COMMUNITY



SEASONAL STREAMS



ANIMAL CORRIDORS



that through having an integrated settlement promoting peaceful co-existence, refugees and the host communities would be provided with an enabling environment for sustainable development through improved and equitable access to basic services.

The settlement planning activities were primarily undertaken under three phases:

- i. **Assessment and Analysis Phase** with the engagement of various stakeholders such as government services, CNARR, other humanitarian organizations, donors, host communities and the displaced populations. In this phase, the multi-sectoral and multi-scalar site assessment and analysis was carried out to ensure that the basic and long-term needs of the target populations, both refugee and host communities could be sustainably met by the site. Also considered in this phase was the alignment to national and subnational development plans, HLP concerns, impacts on the environment and local economies, shelter typologies, population density and livelihoods.
- ii. **Conceptual design** was done in a participatory phase with back and forth discussions with the various stakeholders including the host communities and displaced households.
- iii. **Technical design** was carried out by different technical experts to produce technical drawings for construction of shelters and settlement infrastructure like roads, schools, communal facilities, health centers, sanitation facilities and water distribution systems.

Being a multi-sectoral process, the technical team involved in the settlement planning consisted of the WASH Officer, Shelter Officer and Settlement Planner in direct collaboration with the Abeche local government technical departments from the Environment, Water Engineering and the Urban Planning Unit. Other expertise that was directly involved in the process from other sectors included; Livelihoods Officers, Public Health Officers, Education Officers, Protection Officers, Program Management and Supply Officers under the coordination of the management team.

The Site Absorption Capacity – the maximum number of people the site and its services is able to sustainably accommodate – was determined with reference to multiple factors including: livelihoods, density, usable land, environmental factors, and capacity and accessibility of basic services (water, energy and social services). The usable land area (for construction) was determined by considering natural hazards, and many other contextual and cultural factors. This involved excluding the environmentally sensitive areas, rocky areas, seasonal streams, buffer zones and host community land located within the settlement area. A number of host community households from semi-nomadic groups had homesteads with traditionally constructed wood and thatch houses – also locally known as ferricks – within the settlement boundaries that had to be taken into consideration during the settlement

planning process to ensure their privacy as well as their access to services. From the analysis of the capacity, it was found that the allocated land could host 23,000 people.

Site analysis of capacity	
Site Absorption Capacity	23,000 people
Site Area	326 Ha
Density	9,430 persons per km ²
Area per person	106m ² per person
Plot Size	20m x 15m



Alongside the physical site assessments, remote hydrology, agricultural land, human settlement patterns and topography assessments of the site were also carried out using satellite imagery from UNOSat.

SETTLEMENT LAYOUT

The settlement layout was framed by the road network which was designed to follow the site contours with the two primary North-South and East-West roads being existing roads that cross at the central communal areas of the settlement. The decision on the scale and location of services (primary schools, secondary schools, health center, child friendly spaces, women center, youth center, distribution centers, markets, warehouse, registration center etc.) were decided upon by the different stakeholders including host and displaced communities taking into account existing services in Moura and the challenges to access during the rainy season caused by the seasonal Ouaddi Moura that created a barrier between the new settlement and the town.

A multi-sectoral environmental assessment was conducted using the Nexus Environment Assessment Tool (NEAT) which provided recommendations for the WASH, Shelter, Energy and Settlement Planning teams to mitigate the critical environmental issues highlighted. Environmental recommendations that were incorporated in the planning included tree planting locations, open spaces and defined buffer distance from the Ouaddis and small streams in the settlement.

In this context, where most of the host community are nomadic populations, the decision on appropriate density of the settlement was informed by studying the

average density of settlements in Chad, characteristics of the population, demography, way of life, livelihoods, and cultural background. This information came through the Protection team (registration & community based), observation and focused group discussions.

Using a participatory process involving different sectors, a settlement layout was developed basing on the assessment and analysis carried out during the conceptual design phase. For instance as a result of the focus group discussions held with women in the community, the family plot layout design was changed to respond to their feedback that shelters located near roads be oriented with the doors facing in the other direction to avoid children playing on the road. This was a participatory planning process with continuous engagement with the different stakeholders (government, host communities, NGOs and displaced communities) through:

- Focus group discussions;
- On-site coordination meetings; and
- Joint site visits for site selection and location of community interest areas.

To address GBV risks, focus groups were conducted and the feedback from the groups was addressed for example in consideration of the location of communal facilities, design of shelters to include lockable doors, family plot layout and plans for communal street lighting. The result

of the continuous stakeholder engagement ensured that the cultural and religious needs of both the host and displaced communities were met with more confidence, and fostered a sense of ownership. This engagement also improved the relations between the host communities and the displaced communities.

The development of the settlement was phased so as to enable it to function well at a smaller size while the settlement population was still growing, but to also have a clear plan of how the settlement would expand if/when the continuing influx of refugees reaches the maximum settlement capacity. On phasing of the settlement, the site was planned to settle the first phase of refugees in the southern part of the settlement which is closer to the main road (Abeche to Adre), Moura Town, and existing and planned markets. This was also the area most strategic for the WASH team to set up the water distribution network with the least complications for the emergency phase. As such, all sectors initially focused on the provision of services and construction of shelters and infrastructure in the southern part of the settlement. The second phase of growth was planned to be in the northern part of the settlement. Key infrastructure and services such as the health center, the school and Food Distribution Point were located in the central part of the settlement to ensure the most feasible equitable access if/when the settlement reaches its full capacity.



Temporary family shelters were constructed for each refugee household arriving at the new settlement. The intention was that the shelter walls could later be upgraded by households by using more resilient locally available materials such as wattle and daub.

SHELTER ASSISTANCE

As an initial shelter response, shelter partners set up six communal transit shelters each with the capacity for 100 families and a total capacity of 600 families. These were temporary facilities with timber structures, CGI roofing and plastic tarpaulin walls. To ensure mitigation of GBV risks and privacy for individual families, the communal shelters were provided with internal partitioning and lighting. Upon arrival in the new location, refugees were accommodated in these communal transit shelters for a maximum of 3 days while their family shelters and latrines were constructed.

By September 2020, a total of 1,850 temporary family shelters had been constructed by the shelter implementing partner. The standard shelter design had a floor area of 17.5m² (3.5m x 5m) and had a lockable window. The design of the temporary shelter was done with plans to be upgraded to semi-permanent shelters by the occupants improving the walls using more resistant and locally available materials like wattle and daub, while maintaining the timber structure and the CGI roofing.

The allocation of family plots was done by CNARR in consultation with Protection colleagues and refugee community representatives to ensure that households with persons with specific needs were located closer to services like water points and existing community linkages were appropriately taken into account where possible.

MAIN CHALLENGES

COVID-19 pandemic. The onset of the COVID-19 crisis directly impacted on the project delivery as materials for construction and construction teams had to be re-planned and this slowed down the construction of shelters, latrines, and urgently needed infrastructure. This also affected programming and involved changes in implementation with recommendations such as social distancing and crowd control. The communal transit shelters were also functioning under half capacity to enforce social distancing measures meaning increased pressure for the delivery of individual shelters.

HLP concerns were raised as some members of families who had previously used the land were not involved in the initial land discussions between the host community and government. This meant that initial construction of shelters and infrastructure was often interrupted at the onset with claims of trespassing into private land. This challenge was addressed through the government organizing more consultation meetings on site that resulted in the technical land planning unit from Abeche installing mark-stones along the site boundaries with the participation of representatives from the local government, different neighboring landlords, host community leaders, refugee leaders, and NGO partners. This resulted in streamlined land documentation and cadastral drawings that were recognized by all stakeholders involved.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The new settlement is linked into the longer-term development plans for the area. This was supported through the active engagement of government colleagues in the settlement planning process, with decision making on issues such as site area, livelihood activities, environment, energy and planning regulations taking into account advice from technical government colleagues who were collaborating with the humanitarian partners delivering the response in the settlement. This ensures the settlement optimizes the available resources to ensure environmental protection, integration, access to basic services and sustainable long-term development for refugees and the host community.

Fostering ownership and supporting social cohesion. This was supported through the participatory approach to settlement planning and increased community engagement of both the refugee communities and host communities.

Transferable learning. The approach to integrated settlement planning that aligns to existing national and sub-national development plans is being further developed and utilized in settlement extensions and planning in other contexts.



Some families already commenced with the construction of other shelters within their plot for kitchens or to use as an extra room using locally available materials of stones, mud, wattle and thatch.



Onsite meetings were held with host community members and other stakeholders to clarify land boundaries.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Multi-sectoral collaboration** in the assessment, planning and implementation processes supported an integrated approach to settlement planning.
- √ **Participation of both the displaced and the host communities in the settlement process** from the assessment, planning and implementation process. This ensured that GBV and protection risks were addressed in the process.
- √ **Active engagement of the local government and their technical teams in all phases of the settlement planning process.** This was most significant in their role in addressing HLP concerns when called upon during the allocation of the land and in the process of developing land documentation.
- √ **Long-term planning for the settlement in alignment with the development plans of the local government and existing sub-national legislation.** The strategic location of the settlement along the highway and next to the existing town of Moura provides opportunities for the economic development as a major town which is characteristic of the linear urban growth patterns in the region along main infrastructure corridors.

WEAKNESSES

- × **The limited access to agricultural land in the areas is a challenge for refugee livelihood opportunities.** This was partially addressed during the emergency phase through advocating for fertile land within the buffer area of the site layout next to the seasonal river Ouaddi Moura. Other alternatives to farming were being explored for animal husbandry with the livelihood teams from the government, local NGOs and host communities.
- × **Settlement location impacting service provision.** The seasonal Ouaddi Moura cuts off access between the settlement and the town of Moura for 3 months in the year. This resulted in the need to advocate for the rehabilitation of the existing services in particular the health post and the primary school in Moura town to ensure equitable access to services.
- × **Host community involvement in the construction processes.** Participation of local host communities in the construction works was limited as the initial primary contractors were not from within the community given the limited availability of skilled labour. This was eventually addressed through capacity building of the local communities and progressively more members from the host communities were employed as part of the construction teams.
- × **Initial HLP concerns.** Initial confusion regarding the claims of different stakeholders over the land allocated for the settlement led to claims of trespassing and implementation delays. This was resolved in collaboration with the government, host community and other stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Contingency planning in site selection.** Operations should already have potential sites selected as part of contingency planning to ensure that in the case of displacement, the process of site selection is less constrained by the limitations of time which is often the case in emergency situations. Site selection is a critical step that needs to be done during contingency planning with the participation of different stakeholders under the technical guidance of settlement planners to ensure the most appropriate areas with highest potential for integration with host communities are selected.
- **Settlement planning expertise from early stages.** It is important to deploy a settlement planner as one of the early preparedness actions in planning for an emergency, and where possible seek the technical guidance of one during the contingency planning process before the emergency. In this case the settlement planner was deployed at the onset of the emergency, however the ideal situation should have been earlier to ensure inputs in the planning process. Settlement planners and technical teams need to be involved in the discussions with the government and other stakeholders in the decision-making process on whether to set up new settlements and in exploring other alternatives to camps like consolidation and expansion of existing settlements.
- **Engagement of a range of stakeholders in settlement planning.** Integrated settlement planning is a multiscale, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder process that requires active engagement of all contributors beyond that of the more technical roles.
- **Housing Land and Property rights issues should be addressed as early as possible** in the process with agreements set in place to ensure agreements are clear to all stakeholders.

CASE STUDY

CHAD 2018–2020 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, Integrated programming, Transitional shelter

CRISIS	Refugee influx from the Central African Republic into southern Chad
PEOPLE AFFECTED	Approx. 22,000 people from the CAR displaced to Chad (March 2018)*
PROJECT LOCATION	Goré and Moissala districts in southern Chad
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	2,290 HHs (13,790 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	2,290 transitional shelters
SHELTER SIZE	14m²
SHELTER DENSITY	2.8m² per person on average (varies due to family sizes – large families could still only occupy one shelter, while other shelters had a single occupant)
DIRECT COST	USD 267 per HH
PROJECT COST	USD 900 per HH (this figure covers all aspects of the integrated program)
* Source: UNHCR Briefing Note (March 2018)	



PROJECT SUMMARY

This project provided transitional shelter for refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR), meeting an urgent and fundamental need, and enabling refugees space and time to start addressing their other requirements, such as establishing livelihoods, focusing on education and training, and meeting food needs. Supporting community dialogue, conflict resolution through committees, and complaints mechanisms, ended up playing an important role in fostering social cohesion. In this regard, shelter support formed part of a project that addressed the so-called ‘triple nexus’ of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding, with the linking of project activities both meeting immediate needs and addressing underlying root causes.



* **Dec 2013:** Pronounced increase in refugee influx from CAR following an increase in violence.

1 Aug 2018: Proposal submitted.

2 Aug 2019: Rains started.

3 Oct 2019: Delays caused by flooding.



The shelter component of this project was designed as part of an integrated approach that aimed to address the three aspects of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus at a very local level. This image shows some households using the space around their shelters as kitchen gardens (Silambi refugee site, Moissala).

CONTEXT

Surrounded by countries experiencing internal strife, Chad's border communities have, over the last decades, hosted hundreds of thousands of people fleeing deprivation, persecution and conflict. Since 2014 there has been a pronounced increase of refugees in the Lake Chad Basin area and in the south of the country. By the end of 2019, it was estimated that there were over 451,000 refugees living in Chad, almost 72% of whom had come from Sudan. The next largest group originates from the Central African Republic (CAR); around 22% (99,000 refugees) and a further 4% from Nigeria and 2% from other countries. In addition, some 117,000 Chadian nationals and 'third-country nationals' whose families originated in Chad but migrated to neighboring countries, often generations ago, have had to flee violence and return to Chad. Many do not have citizenship in the country to which their parents migrated, nor do they have documents that prove their Chadian nationality by birth, so they remain in the limbo of statelessness. Chad's population also faces its own challenges, including a deep socio-economic crisis, insecurity, and inter-communal conflicts.

LIVING SITUATION

Refugees from CAR had arrived in an area with which they had historic trade links, where there are linguistic and cultural similarities with local host populations, and similar patterns of rural settlement in grouped village communities. Most refugees were first displaced to self-settled sites within host communities, and then relocated to planned camps neighboring existing host communities, where they were provided first with emergency shelter and then transitional shelter. Lands and natural resources are therefore shared by the refugee and host populations.

Refugees had initially been housed in basic, emergency tarpaulin shelters, in which they lived for 18 months or more, even though the emergency shelters might only have been expected to last for about six months. This increased their sense of vulnerability, fear and trauma over time, with thefts and GBV associated with the easy-to-cut shelters and exposure to the elements, as well as other risks occurring (rain, flooding, rats, snakes) as the tarpaulin sheet material and lightweight structure deteriorated.

PROJECT APPROACH

This project formed part of a multi-sectoral humanitarian program for newly arrived CAR refugees in the sites of Began 2 (Goré) and Dilingala (Moissala) and their surrounding host communities in southern Chad. The project aimed to support safe and secure living environments.

The project design identified the risk of food insecurity and negative coping strategies due to a lack of income and livelihoods for the refugees, as well as an increased risk of GBV as a result of competition for and conflict over scarce resources. The deteriorating quality of the emergency tarpaulin shelters was also highlighted as a priority given their negative impact on health, safety and security. As a result, the project proposed an approach where:

- Shelter would contribute to safety and security and meet a basic humanitarian need;
- Agricultural inputs, training, Income-Generating Assistance (IGAs) and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) would strengthen livelihoods and food security and improve resilience; and
- A range of community-led conflict resolution mechanisms, including GBV reduction, would be established or supported to encourage social cohesion and a peaceful environment.



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An emergency tarpaulin shelter of the type used before the construction of the semi-durable shelters (Dilingala refugee site, Moissala).

The project therefore aimed to address the three aspects of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus at a very local level. It considered conflict mitigation and mediation between communities to be part of the peacebuilding process so that many of the project activities performed multiple roles in both meeting immediate needs and addressing underlying root causes.

COORDINATION

There was limited involvement of the Shelter Cluster with the response in southern Chad as its priority was focused in the Lake Chad Basin area, north and east of the country where ongoing active humanitarian emergencies were unfolding. The shelter design, project and site planning and implementation of this project was coordinated with and through the site planning agency and the National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees (CNARR) as part of a standardized response.

SITE PLANNING

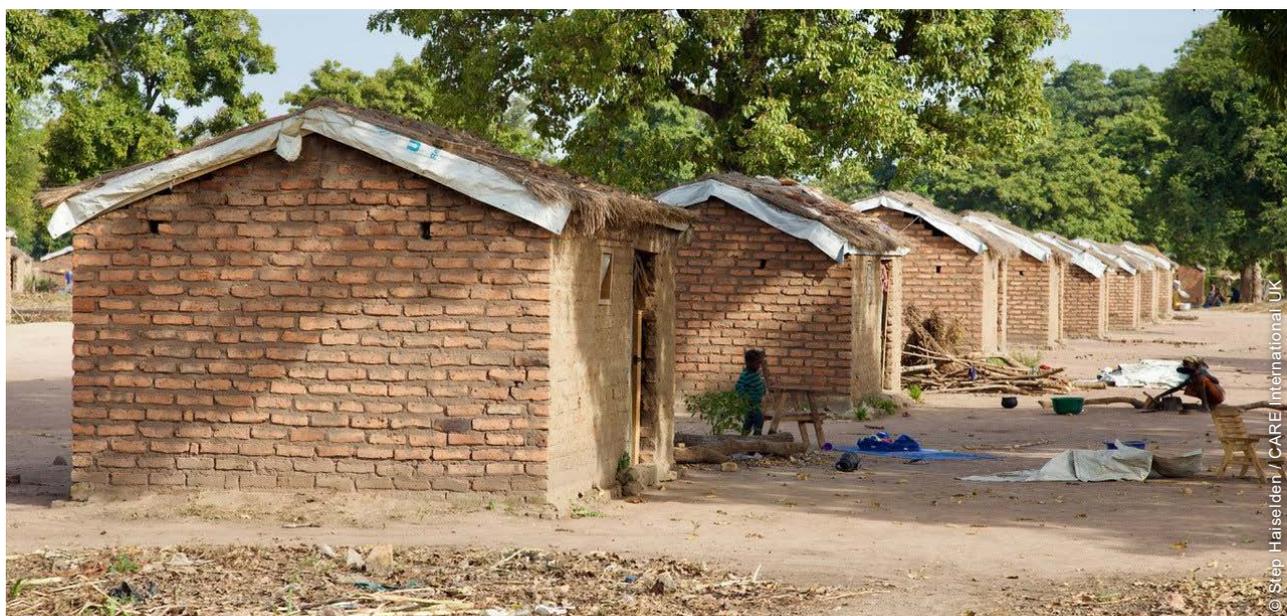
Government land was allocated for each of the refugee sites although there were sometimes conflicts over land use with historic or customary use of land by the host community for rites and rituals, agriculture and grazing. The refugee sites bordered existing host communities. A plot of land around 300m² was allocated to each household. Refugee households signed the documents allocating plots of land for their shelter and space for other household functions (such as an outdoor cooking area and kitchen garden) but did not receive a copy to keep. At each of the project sites the shelters were arranged in an orthogonal layout provided by the agency responsible for site planning. While this arrangement met planning standards, it did not engage the affected population in a participatory manner so missed the opportunity for building a sense of project

ownership, as well as mitigating protection risks (such as GBV) and strengthening social support networks within the refugee community. The layout and orientation of shelters also did not respond to localized site variations and constraints such as the prevailing wind direction, topography, vegetation and trees.

SHELTER DESIGN

The shelter size and design - consisting of a 4m x 3.5m (14m²) single space with a double pitched roof, with one window and one door - corresponded to the model agreed with CNARR, the site planning agency, and shelter partners working in southern Chad. The shelter design was similar to that of the homes that the refugees lived in CAR and similar to those of the host communities in southern Chad, with load bearing fired brick walls, timber framed roofs, and a compacted earth floor often rendered with cement. The refugee shelters were roofed with tarpaulin, while homes in local villages often used corrugated galvanized iron sheets or thatch.

A pilot study was implemented before the start of this project, which showed the shelter design to be capable of withstanding seasonal rains, despite the limited lifespan of the tarpaulin roofs, as well as being more durable and cost effective when compared to the emergency tarpaulin shelters. Through a strong process of monitoring, evaluation and reflecting upon lessons learned, the details of the shelters evolved over time in response to user feedback and observation. For example, the floors of early shelters were flush or very slightly raised above ground level; in the shelters constructed later in the project, the shelter floor was raised several brick courses above ground level to prevent water ingress. NFIs did not form part of the project despite being expected by the households, so complaints about the lack of mattresses and blankets were common.



Shelters have been arranged in rigid, orthogonal grids to donor requirements rather than in consultation with the community (Silambi refugee site, Moissala).

MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

Fired bricks were obtained from the local area. Tarpaulins were received from a pipeline stock managed by another agency. The durability of the tarpaulin roofs would have been strengthened with the inclusion of locally available grass thatch covering the external parts of the roof. Masons and carpenters were identified and hired from both the refugee and host communities around the refugee sites. On many occasions, the artisans undertook both masonry and carpentry work, with general laborers assisting with manual work such as carrying bricks and excavation. Training to masonry/carpentry artisans and laborers was provided in some sites and not in others. Where training was included, the quality of the shelters was higher.

COMMUNITY-LED MEDIATION

Implementation of the shelter component was strengthened by community engagement approaches employed as part of the wider project, such as the conflict resolution committee, GBV committee and complaints mechanism. When issues arose, they were quickly reported by individuals or the community to these community-led structures which then followed collectively agreed protocols to encourage dialogue, mitigate tensions and resolve conflict. Committees were elected by community members and were representative of the different interests and groups – for example, in terms of refugee and host population members, farmers and herders, women and men. Committees were provided with regular training on principles, dialogue and conflict resolution, and provided with the tools and materials to assist their mediation activities (such as cameras, stationery, visibility and furniture). Thus, tensions and conflict that arose over the use of host community land for refugee settlements, and the subsequent harvesting of natural resources by both refugee and host populations, were addressed through these established mechanisms, reducing the risk of inter-communal violence, fostering shared understanding, and strengthening local integration processes.



A family group outside their semi-durable shelter. All families received the same size of shelter, irrespective of their family size (Silambi refugee site, Moissala).

MAIN CHALLENGES

Lack of flexibility in shelter provision. While meeting the Sphere minimum standard for covered living space for a 'typical' family of four, the fixed size of the one-room shelters was not able to be adapted to suit larger household sizes, nor was more than one shelter able to be allocated to very large households. This was because the project design had been agreed in coordination with other organizations and could not be amended, meaning that one shelter would be expected to house anywhere between a single person and a family of twelve.

Shelter allocation. Families were moved into completed shelters in a haphazard way due to the onset of heavy rains towards the end of the construction period. As a result, there was little or no consideration of pre-existing community connections or support networks between households or how these connections might have improved the overall outcome of the project.

Lack of contingency funds. This meant that there was limited flexibility to address issues arising during implementation. In one of the project sites, the rigid budget meant that there were insufficient funds to cover all of the households within the planned geographical area of the project and that a few households had to be excluded.

Flooding causing delays. Shelter construction was delayed by unexpected flooding during October 2019.

WIDER IMPACTS

Shelter construction provided **safety and security**, particularly for women and girls and those at risk of gender-based violence, as well as **contributing to dignity and psychological well-being**. The project removed a major source of anxiety and risk for vulnerable refugee households, allowing them the opportunity to focus on other longer-term needs such as education and vocational training, health and livelihoods.

The project **fostered interactions, understanding and shared interests between host and refugee communities**. The similarity of the shelters to construction norms within the host community meant that potential conflict over unequal provision of assistance was avoided.

Typically, appointed committees were able to **mediate conflict** between agriculturalists and pastoralists or between community members in cases of GBV. The election, establishment, training and work of these representative, community-led committees was central to strengthening a peaceful and cohesive society, for which building a shared understanding of the needs, interests and concerns of other groups in the wider, shared settlement area was crucial. Feedback on the project highlighted that the different groups involved emphasized this sensitization as a key tool for developing mutual understanding and fostering a cohesive society.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Durability of shelter.** The semi-durable shelters were a vast improvement on the temporary emergency shelters. They are expected to have a far greater lifespan and brought a welcome sense of safety and security.
- √ **Personal security.** The shelters provided personal security for the inhabitants and their assets and this is reported to have contributed to improved health, comfort and dignity. The 'safe shelters' contribute directly to a reduction in the risk of gender-based violence, as described in detailed community feedback and formal evaluation and learning processes.
- √ **Locally appropriate shelter design.** The design and construction of the shelters were appropriate for the locality and relatively easy to be maintained with local materials, knowledge and skills.
- √ **Integrated approach.** The inclusion of a humanitarian shelter component within a multi-sectoral relief and resilience approach had a significant impact in supporting other activities in the program such as generating income, farming, seeking education and training. In short, the program helped to kickstart the process of self-sufficiency within the communities.
- √ **Social cohesion.** The shelter component of the project and the accompanying access to land and natural resources provided an enabling environment for social cohesion, local integration and the peaceful coexistence of returnees and the host communities.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Inflexibility of shelter design.** No allowance for large families, who would ideally have received an expanded or double shelter. The specific needs of vulnerable individuals and groups were also not directly addressed.
- × **Leaking roofs were a common complaint in the project.** Tarpaulins supplied to the project as an in-kind contribution from another agency proved to be of poor quality as they had probably been stored in sub-standard conditions for too long. The project lacked a quality control procedure to verify their condition.
- × **No training on repair or maintenance.** The project did not train households to repair or maintain their shelters or provide any tools to the community to support this.
- × **Women and adolescent girls and boys were not involved in the process of shelter construction,** which was a missed opportunity for training and skills-building, especially as these groups expressed a lot of interest to learn construction, as an income-generating opportunity as well as for practical maintenance reasons.
- × **Lack of construction training.** Not every site where shelters were constructed trained the masons and carpenters in detail, missing an opportunity to build skills and knowledge in good building practices.
- × **Basic NFIs not provided as part of the shelter assistance package.** Very few families had the resources to purchase these items.
- × **Lack of community engagement in site planning, layout, shelter orientation and shelter allocations,** resulting in some issues relating to wind and flooding as well as a missed opportunity to strengthen support networks, encourage ownership and buy-in, and mitigate additional safety and security risks (such as GBV risks).

LESSONS LEARNED

- Active conflict-reduction mechanisms, such as the committees that were established as part of the project, complement other measures taken to reduce the opportunities for conflict and tension to arise or be exacerbated.
- Community engagement in site planning and shelter design processes is important to include from the outset of projects to ensure that the inputs of affected communities are taken into account.
- It is important to include assistance for households to purchase basic non-food items when moving into new shelters, particularly through the use of cash or vouchers where markets are favourable, in order to strengthen comfort and dignity.
- On-the-job training during shelter construction as well as training in maintenance and repair techniques would build skills, improve the sense of ownership of the project, and increase the quality of completed shelters. Community toolkits would need to be made available to support maintenance activities.

CASE STUDY

DEM. REP. OF THE CONGO 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

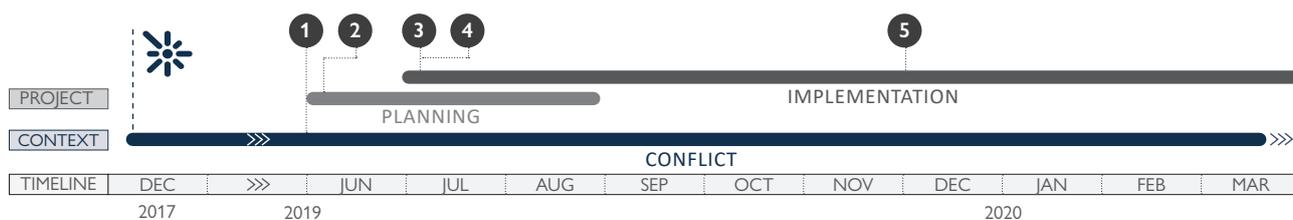
KEYWORDS: Emergency shelter, Environmental sustainability, Site planning

CRISIS	Ituri crises, late 2017 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Over 360,000 people displaced since June 2019*
PROJECT LOCATION	Ituri Province, Northeastern Congo
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	8,621 HHs provided with emergency shelters
PROJECT OUTPUTS	7,673 family emergency shelters 79 collective emergency shelters 8,621 IDP HHs received NFIs Cash-for-Work for host community and displaced populations Site coordination and management Community based protection activities
SHELTER SIZE	10.5m²
SHELTER DENSITY	2.1 – 3.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 125 per shelter
PROJECT COST	USD 140 per shelter
* Source: UNHCR DRC country operation	



PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was developed to respond to the internal displacement crisis during the upsurge in violence in Ituri province. The organization scaled up its response, constructing collective and family emergency shelters for the most vulnerable IDPs across 20 IDP sites in 12 villages and towns. The organization undertook site planning and shelters were built in extensions to existing self-settled IDP sites, in a newly planned IDP site, and on the land of host families. The construction teams were formed of members of host communities and IDPs and were engaged through the Cash-for-Work modality. The project triggered in-depth research into the appropriateness of different variations of shelter designs.



- Dec 2017:** Inter-ethnic attacks between communities had already led to widespread displacement in late 2017 and early 2018.
- 1 Jun 2019:** Escalation of inter-ethnic attacks in Ituri region.
- 2 Jun - Jul 2019:** Assessment of needs.
- 3 Jul - Aug 2019:** Project design and land negotiations.
- 4 Jul 2019:** Start of consultations with the host communities and IDPs.
- 5 Dec 2019 - Mar 2020:** Further research carried out into alternative shelter typologies using locally available materials.



The project aimed to improve living conditions for IDPs and decongest extremely overcrowded IDP sites.

CONTEXT

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is rich in natural resources, the rate of people living below the poverty line is one of the highest in the world and the country is ranked among the most vulnerable in terms of humanitarian crises. The political situation results in ongoing escalations, electoral and economic tensions, resurgences of militias and latent ethnic and community conflicts. These factors generate massive displacements, cause resurgences of endemic diseases and worsen malnutrition and food insecurity. In addition to hosting refugees from neighboring countries, by the end of 2019, DRC was also home to more than five million IDPs.

ESCALATION OF ATTACKS AND DISPLACEMENT

Since December 2017, violence in Ituri Province, in the northeast of DRC has left thousands of people dead and nearly half a million displaced. The political climate improved following elections in 2018, with a peaceful transition of power. However, while the scale of violence decreased in some regions, there was a sharp increase in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. Since June 2019, large-scale displacement has been reported once again in three of Ituri's five administrative territories.

The majority of displaced people sought shelter within host communities, with host families in some cases hosting up to four IDP households. Tens of thousands of others arrived in existing displacement sites where conditions were already dire, with many needs including shelter and health. Many IDPs were sleeping out in the open or in public buildings such as schools and churches. A minority of IDPs managed to set up makeshift shelters – often with materials they had kept since previous episodes of displacement, including tarpaulins. For many, this was their second or even third time being displaced.



79 collective shelters were built in host communities to support IDPs sleeping in the open air or in public buildings. Collective shelters were partitioned with separate units for eight households.

PROJECT APPROACH

The organization's three strategic shelter focuses in relation to IDPs in DRC are: to provide emergency response, to support returns or local integration in displacement areas, and to reinforce local capacities. The shelter response in Ituri province aimed to provide the most vulnerable IDP households with emergency shelter. The response aimed to support the most vulnerable IDPs: those sleeping in the open air, in public buildings, or staying with host families. IDPs sleeping in the open air or in public buildings within host communities were first to receive shelter support, through the construction of collective shelters.

Efforts were also made to decongest existing self-settled IDP sites by negotiating additional land and providing shelters for families who were resettled. Shelters were built in the contexts of extensions to spontaneous IDP sites, in newly planned settlements, and on the land of hosting families.

The emergency shelters were implemented through an integrated program where the organization provided the shelters while other partners were engaged with the provision of latrines, showers, and in improving water sources. The organization's response also included the distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs) such as blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, laundry soap and jerry cans. Women and girls also received dignity kits (including sanitary pads) to support their menstrual hygiene. IDPs and the host communities were involved in the construction of the shelters through a Cash-for-Work modality.



Many IDPs built improvised shelters in self-settled sites which presented very overcrowded and severely inadequate living conditions.

ACCESS TO LAND & SITE PLANNING

EXTENSION OF SELF-SETTLED SITES

The vast majority of IDP sites started as self-settled sites on church land, where IDPs had negotiated with local authorities, landowners and host communities the right to occupy the land. To decongest overcrowded sites and to improve living conditions, the organization negotiated access to additional land adjacent to or in the vicinity of the existing sites, to which some families could be relocated. Access to land was negotiated for an initial period of five years, with possibility of extension.

Even with site extensions the sites remained incredibly dense and overcrowded. The site planning of the site extensions followed basic humanitarian planning principles and standards in relation to the spacing of new shelters. However, communal areas (schools, cooking areas, market areas) and infrastructure works (drainage, access roads, WASH infrastructure), which are usually an integral part of well-planned sites, were oftentimes not implemented. Latrines were built by partners but the lack of overall site planning and issues with phasing of implementation meant the locations of latrines within sites were often not optimal.

KIGONZE IDP SITE, BUNIA

In the Ituri response, only one IDP site was established as a planned site; Kigonze IDP site, built on the outskirts of Bunia city and through a phased approach, hosted 10,000 IDPs (2,000 shelters) once completed. Unlike the extensions to self-settled sites, Kigonze was thoroughly planned following humanitarian site planning standards.

Kigonze was developed by considering different elements that form human settlements and was not limited only to the implementation of the shelter units. The toilets, showers and water sources were arranged to allow access for the most vulnerable. The limited space did not allow to allocate individual kitchen areas, therefore covered communal kitchen areas were implemented evenly throughout the settlement. Moreover, contrary to other sites, the local authorities agreed to build a new school

which was planned to serve IDPs and the host community (IDPs who settled in other sites had to integrate their children into local schools, which proved challenging in the majority of cases, as the local schools were already overcrowded, and in general the IDPs were unable to pay the extra school fees). Kigonze site was planned taking advantage of the slight terrain slope to facilitate site drainage and was equipped with access roads and drainage channels.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With the goal of promoting coexistence, social cohesion, empowerment and endorsement of the new sites and shelters, local communities and IDPs were involved in shelter construction, site preparation works and camp management activities. The shelter response component was accompanied by site coordination and management activities focusing on the organization of the IDP communities in the new sites, for example taking social networks and the needs of Persons with Disabilities into account in shelter allocations. The planning and implementation engaged several Cluster partners, the local government, the local church and host communities as well as the IDPs.

SHELTER DESIGN

The shelters built through the project were simple, one room timber structures covered with plastic sheeting and were implemented to provide critical lifesaving emergency assistance. The shelter size did not comply with Sphere space standards, however, it was designed to reflect the local standards and avoid conflict with host communities and self-settled IDP communities who had constructed shelters on their own, and were residing in shelters that in general offered a living space far below 3.5m² per person. The reduced size of shelters was also deemed necessary due to the number of IDPs in need of shelter while land availability was limited. Large families received two shelters. While these types of emergency responses provided critical lifesaving assistance, they also presented limitations in terms of durability and sustainability.



This image shows improvised shelters built by IDPs in a self-settled site and latrines built by a partner organization on the edge of the site. Although the organization provided shelter support (not shown in this image), wider site planning improvements in the existing IDP sites and their extensions were limited.

RESEARCH INTO ALTERNATIVE SHELTER DESIGN OPTIONS

In Eastern Congo the vernacular homes are usually single story, one room (of rectangular or circular floor plan) structures clustered in groups. The predominant construction technique is mud on framed bamboo wall (wattle and daub). Fired brick is used less commonly by low-income households. Thatched roof is common in rural areas whereas in urban areas corrugated iron sheets prevail. In cities, reinforced concrete, cement block or burned brick constructions are more and more common.

The shelter design that was used in this project consisted of a timber frame with plastic tarpaulin walls and roof. Following challenges in implementation including in relation to material supply chain delays (outlined in the 'Main Challenges' section), the organization decided to carry out research to identify the most optimal alternative design typologies using locally available materials. The intention was that the research would inform future responses, and the designs and BoQs of the variations were also shared with partners so that they could be used as options for shelter upgrading.

After a careful analysis of suitable construction materials three options were chosen for the final comparison. These options were:

- Variation A: Timber frame with plastic tarpaulin walls and roof;
- Variation B: Timber frame with wattle and daub walls and compacted earth roof; and
- Variation C: Brick walls with compacted earth roof.

Each option was assessed according to multiple criteria including the initial investment costs, shelter life span, covered living area of the shelter and the environmental impact and life cycle of the materials. This was used to ultimately identify possible strategies to increase the sustainability of shelters, reduce local environmental degradation, reduce the carbon footprint of the shelters and promote more environmentally friendly humanitarian responses.

The program was designed to respond to an emergency context and provide a dignified living space for IDPs. However, the challenges that were faced during implementation, for example a short-term shelter solution being implemented in places of protracted displacement, delays in the procurement supply chain for obtaining globally procured materials (tarpaulins), and unfamiliar building techniques/materials leading to issues with shelter maintenance, triggered interest to explore in more detail the cost/benefit aspects of alternative shelter designs and their long term sustainability and adequacy in order to demonstrate that there are suitable and valid alternatives to the usually preferred tarpaulin covered emergency option.

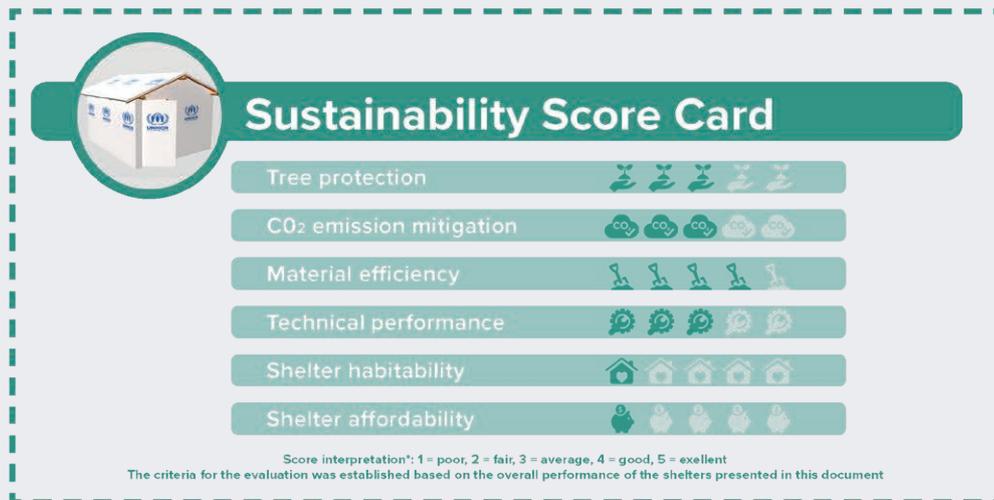
While the upfront cost for Variations B and C are higher than Variation A, once the shelter lifespan is added into the equation, Variations B and C prove to be better value for money. This is in addition to Variations B and C also scoring higher than Variation A in most other criteria, including on environmental impact. Additionally, while not included as a criteria in the analysis, learning from this response showed that using more locally available materials would also have the added benefit of having positive impacts on local markets.



The country's construction cultures reflect the diversity of territories, climates and resources.

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Variation A: 11.9 USD/m²/year (scorecard)



Variation B: 6.1 USD/m²/year (scorecard)



Variation C: 2.3 USD/m²/year (scorecard)



Scorecards summarize some of the analysis of the design variations.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Shelter response durability. Cycles of displacement in the Eastern DRC are recurrent and protracted, with IDPs often remaining displaced for many years. While the use of plastic sheeting in shelter designs can have advantages in emergency contexts, its lifespan and durability are limited.

Supporting hosting of IDPs. The majority of newly displaced IDPs were staying with host families – often dispersed in very remote areas – in some cases with up to four IDP families with one host family. The shelter response initially aimed to support IDPs staying with host families in situ, so that they would not need to move to IDP sites. However, in most cases this proved unfeasible due to issues of overcrowding, lack of land for additional shelters and access issues and security concerns at the host family locations. This meant that the focus of the project shifted, with very few IDPs receiving shelter assistance at the host family locations, and instead moving to IDP site extensions.

Site planning. Due to a lack of technical capacity, coordination and long-term vision, the site planning efforts in the self-settled sites and extensions were limited to shelter implementation and the later addition of latrines on the periphery of the sites, bypassing safety norms and special consideration of vulnerable groups. The lack of site planning sometimes resulted in site overcrowding and flooding and fire risks not being addressed. Access to services and infrastructure was not equitable and it was often implemented without taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable. The protection risks linked to limited access for the most vulnerable were highlighted after the implementation; however, it was practically impossible to apply rigorous site planning principles after the shelters and WASH facilities were already implemented. It is specifically for this reason why investment in appropriate resources and a skilled technical team during the planning phase is imperative.

Women's involvement in construction activities. Following outreach to engage host community members and IDPs to be involved in the shelter construction through

undertaking Cash-for-Work, no women came forward. To address this, the organization gathered the leaders of women's groups to explain more about the project, find out why no women had initially opted to join the Cash-for-Work activities, explain that these activities were open to women and encourage women to join. The women's groups then organized a small campaign to inform and sensitize about work opportunities in shelter construction for women. Some women were then integrated into the construction teams, though they remained a minority.

Material supply chain. The territory of Ituri province is very remote and geographically difficult to reach. The access to the sites presented serious challenges for the project implementation, not only due to very precarious or non-existent road infrastructure and flooding of existing routes, but also because of constant threats from different armed groups along the way. Supply chain challenges led to delays in delivery of materials to the affected areas. The challenges of the project were mainly related to the global procurement of the tarpaulins, which due to the above reasons delayed the construction of the shelters.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The shelter response in Ituri triggered a broader analysis that aimed to challenge the usual approach to humanitarian shelter responses and to assist humanitarian practitioners in assessing the technical performance, environmental impact, habitability and affordability of shelter options. Analysis showed that with some adjustments it is possible to amplify the positive and mitigate the negative effects of shelter activities on the environment and to improve their sustainability. Analysis also showed that smaller initial investment costs do not necessarily result in the best value for money.

This exercise triggered a broader study researching different shelter typologies that were recently implemented across the organization's field locations, with the overall aim of simplifying the comparison of different shelter design options.



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The only officially planned IDP site was Kigonze IDP site on the outskirts of Bunia town.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Scale and timeliness of response.** The response was implemented at scale to support mass displacement of IDPs in a very challenging context with limited support options.
- √ **Inclusive implementation process.** The project engaged local communities as well as the IDPs in the shelter construction process, with particular efforts on including and empowering women. Through the engagement of the host community and the displaced population, the project also forged collaboration and tolerance, supporting social cohesion.
- √ **Coordination and partnership.** In the Kigonze IDP site, collaboration with other actors meant that the site was equipped not only with shelters, but also with sanitation facilities, improved water sources, access roads and other services. Coordination and partnership in other camps also enabled WASH support to accompany shelter provision, though this was less well coordinated.
- √ **The shelter response was accompanied by site coordination and management activities,** focusing on the organization of the IDP communities in the new sites, ensuring that existing social ties were supported and promoting harmonious cohabitation.



Special effort was made to involve women in the construction teams.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Lack of site planning.** Ad hoc planning of sites and lack of site planning standards and properly skilled technical teams on the ground resulted in multiple issues in many of the sites, including non equitable access to WASH facilities, a lack of proper road access or fire breaks, issues with water drainage, and a lack of properly designed kitchen areas.
- × **Host family support.** The initial approach of supporting IDPs in situ in cases where they were staying with host families proved unsuccessful. Further analysis of different shelter support options earlier on in the project may have led to an alternative approach to support in these cases to avoid IDPs needing to move to IDP sites.
- × **The shelter design represents a challenge in terms of sustainability.** Given the protracted nature of displacement, alternative shelter design options using more locally available materials may have proved to be a more effective form of response.
- × **Issues with international and regional procurement of materials delayed shelter activities.** The state of the road infrastructure is very precarious and all transport especially in rainy periods are challenging. These factors need to be fully taken into consideration in project planning, especially when estimating the timeliness of internationally procured materials in comparison to using local production and procurement of construction materials.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Investment in technical teams with site planning capacity** that can execute a thorough analysis of the territory and planning of the site in the initial phases of the project is vital to ensure the implementation of adequate, sustainable and safe settlements with equitable access to infrastructure and services.
- **Supporting host communities.** More in-depth analysis is needed on how to better support host communities through shelter programming, for example in relation to the economic and market benefits that different approaches to IDP shelter support would bring.
- **Shelter response sustainability.** The shelter response in Eastern DRC gives the opportunity to challenge the usual humanitarian shelter response and focus on how to respond in the future by redrawing the 'business as usual' shelter response and planning for longer term and more sustainable shelter solutions.

CASE STUDY

ETHIOPIA 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Conditional Cash Transfer, Local construction techniques, HLP, Returns

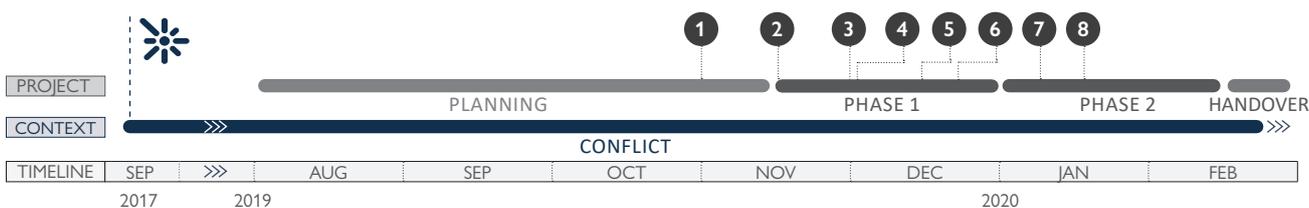
CRISIS	Inter-Communal Conflict between Somali and Oromo communities, September 2017 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	43,918 HHs (209,165 individuals) displaced within East Hararghe Zone of Oromia Region*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	75% approx. 32,939 houses fully destroyed 25% approx. 10,979 houses partially damaged
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	43,918 HHs in 2017 (209,165 individuals)
PROJECT LOCATION	Chinaksen and Babile Woredas, East Hararghe Zone, Oromia Region
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	1,250 HHs (9,339 individuals, including 296 female headed households)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	1,250 shelters repaired or reconstructed, 127 carpenters trained, 1,250 HHs received HLP support
SHELTER SIZE	21-25m² on average
SHELTER DENSITY	3.6m² per person on average
DIRECT COST	USD 240 per HH (including cash instalments and materials provided)
PROJECT COST	USD 345 per HH



PROJECT SUMMARY

Using a conditional Cash-for-Shelter approach with strong community engagement, the project supported 1,250 conflict affected IDP households to return to their places of origin and repair or reconstruct their homes which had been damaged or destroyed during the 2017 conflict. Local carpenters were trained on carpentry techniques, market vendors in the local towns were engaged to prepare for the increased demand for shelter materials, and where needed the organization's Housing Land and Property (HLP) team were engaged to secure land tenure approval documentation.

* Source: DTM Report, November-December 2017



Sep 2017: Inter-communal conflict erupted between Somali and Oromo communities.

- 1 **1–15 Nov 2019:** Household verification.
- 2 **16–30 Nov 2019:** Door-to-door HLP assistance.
- 3 **1-4 Dec 2019:** Carpenter training in target villages.
- 4 **4-10 Dec 2019:** Households formed groups of approximately 12 households.
- 5 **15-19 Dec 2019:** First cash distribution - households received cash equivalent to 100 USD + tarpaulin + rope.
- 6 **20 Dec 2019 -14 Jan 2020:** Verification of phase 1 construction.
- 7 **15-19 Jan 2020:** Second cash distribution - households received cash equivalent to USD 90.
- 8 **20 Jan - 14 Feb 2020:** Verification of construction completion.



The main shelter typology in East Hararghe is typically a wooden structure that consists of wooden poles harvested locally, wooden infill from wild bushes, and mud plastered walls.

CONTEXT

In 2019, Ethiopia hosted approximately 3.2 million IDPs; the third largest number of IDPs in the world. The majority of IDPs were displaced due to inter-communal conflict which surged in late 2017. Many of these IDPs are hosted in areas reeling from past droughts and continue to be challenged by acute malnutrition, disease outbreaks, protection risks and other hazards, including floods.

RETURNS AND SECONDARY DISPLACEMENT

In April 2019, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) developed a strategy to address internal displacement in the country under the pillars of peace and security, rule of law, short-term relief assistance and longer-term recovery and rehabilitation of IDPs. Subsequent to this, the government reported that 1.3 million IDPs had been returned to their areas of origin, thus, the IDP camps were decommissioned. However, according to the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ethiopia, as a result of insufficient support provided, returnees in some areas were facing dire living conditions, were still not fully back in their homes, had not resumed their livelihoods and had no adequate access to basic services.

Many “returned” IDPs remained secondarily displaced. These IDPs were now living close to their areas of origin, sheltered in public infrastructures (such as administrative offices, coffee harvesting structures and schools) or simply in open spaces. Assessments showed these living situations posed severe protection and security concerns, including risks of gender-based violence (GBV), psychosocial distress, and negative household coping mechanisms that could result in family separation, child labor, or child marriage. IDPs living in the open air without any protection were susceptible to heavy rains and associated negative health

consequences. Though closer to their areas of origin, IDPs were unable to return to their homes that had been mostly damaged or destroyed, and security concerns meant that a critical mass of returnees was needed for many households to feel safe.

Following assessments, the Shelter/NFI Cluster proposed that shelter repair support for returnees be prioritized in five zones prioritized by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and UNOCHA. Implementation of shelter repair projects was carried out by organizations with operational presence and shelter expertise in the prioritized locations.

PROJECT STRATEGY

The goal of the project was to provide critical shelter assistance for the most vulnerable households in East Hararghe, and to support recovery and a transition to durable solutions.

The Shelter/NFI Cluster & partners conducted a contextual, market and HLP analysis in prioritized locations. The findings highlighted:

- That existing markets had the capacity to respond to sudden and large increases in demand for shelter materials;
- An absence of security of tenure among displaced households; and
- That shelter needs varied from fully destroyed to partially damaged homes.

As a result of the analysis, it was decided to use a Cash-Based Intervention modality to support repairs and reconstruction, and HLP support was integrated as a key component within the project.



Carpenter training was undertaken in the villages with a focus on practical demonstrations of techniques to improve durability of structures.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project implementation consisted of four components:

COMMUNITY, LOCAL AUTHORITY AND MARKET ENGAGEMENT

Cash as a support modality was unfamiliar to local authorities and communities in this part of Ethiopia.

- Sensitization sessions were held with households and community leaders to discuss the key elements of the project such as selection criteria, type of assistance, feedback mechanism, conditions and timeline.
- Through the local authorities, an understanding was reached and agreed with market vendors in the local towns that they would not unduly raise the price of shelter material following the cash distribution, and vendors were also engaged to prepare for the increased demand for shelter materials.
- Households were asked to form groups of approximately 12 households and nominate a representative of each group. The representative acted as a focal point for communication. Thereafter the groups were treated as one entity and progressed through the stages of the project based on completing conditions as a group and not as individual households. Later a discussion was held with the group representative for feedback and any questions or concerns were addressed. Each household was provided with a unique numbered token to identify them to the organization for subsequent stages of the project.

HLP VERIFICATION SUPPORT

Prior to the project the organization trained enumerators for individual door-to-door HLP assessments. The organization recorded the details of households' lease or land tenure agreement. If a household could not present a lease or land tenure agreement, then either three neighbors or the local authority could verify that the household owned the land. Following this verification, the organization engaged with the local authority to ensure a lease or land tenure agreement was created for the household.

CARPENTER TRAINING IN COMMUNITIES

Carpenters were trained in the villages so that once the cash was distributed households could choose to hire the carpenters to carry out the shelter repair. For every 12 households, an average of one carpenter was trained. The training concentrated on practical demonstrations of building back safer. The trained carpenters were not to be employed by the organization, but rather the households had the option to engage the carpenters for some or all of their shelter repair depending on their situation and need. The fair price that the carpenters could charge per day was fixed with the carpenters and local authorities prior to their training.

INSTALLMENTS OF CASH AND MATERIALS

First installment: on the condition that all the members of the group (12 households per group) had attended the sensitization meeting and all were in attendance for the distribution, the households each received cash equivalent to USD 100, a 6x4m tarpaulin and 10 meters of nylon rope. The USD 100 was calculated to be sufficient to purchase, transport and build the structure of a 20m² shelter (tukul type). The tarpaulin was provided to act as temporary roof and wall covering until the final cash installment.

Second installment: USD 90 was provided to each household on the condition that all the members of the group had completed the primary structure and that this was verified by the organization. This USD 90 was calculated to be sufficient to purchase and install CGI sheets to cover the roof of a 20m² shelter based on local market prices.



Plastic sheeting distributed in the first installment was used as a temporary roofing material prior to households receiving the second installment.



The project supported both households who could repair their partially damaged homes, and households whose homes were beyond repair and needed to be rebuilt.

TARGETING

The Woredas to be targeted were selected in coordination with the Shelter/NFI Cluster prioritization. Thereafter the Kebeles (the more localized administrative units) to be targeted were prioritized by the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO), the government entity at Woreda level with a mandate for coordinating humanitarian response. The initial list of target households was provided by the DRMO. The organization then carried out final household selection, following door-to-door verification, collecting data based on vulnerability criterion and household size.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As Standard Operating Procedure, households were consulted on the distribution process, location, timing and entitlements prior to distributions. This included consultations with men, women, boys, girls and Persons with Disabilities, and involved considerations of timing of distributions and distribution locations to ensure the safety and security of households.

In previous pilot cash projects, in many cases projects were delayed due to different households completing their work at different stages. Grouping the households into groups of 12 fostered a community dynamic that supported the implementation. In many cases groups combined their cash and negotiated prices for material, transport and labor. This solidarity among villagers especially aided the most vulnerable households whereby tasks such as transporting material from the market back to villages was done collectively rather than individually. As a result, all households and groups qualified through the stages to receive the full assistance. Households reported that they welcomed the formal accountability of group members within the group system as it reduced the risk of a household provided with cash deciding not to spend it on shelter material as intended. Rather than receiving the cash installments in their villages, household members preferred to travel to the town market to receive the cash so that they could immediately purchase the materials.



Each group of 12 households were responsible for progressing all the group's shelters in order for the group to collectively qualify for the next stage of assistance. The image above shows a group of women carrying out mud plastering.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Second cash installment not always used to complete shelters. The provision of tarpaulin with the first cash installment was intended as a temporary roof and wall covering until the second cash installment. However, in many cases it dissuaded households to invest the final cash installment into durable materials to complete the roof and walls. As a result, the final cash installment of USD 90, which was intended to enable the households to purchase and install durable materials such as CGI sheeting was in some cases spent on other priority needs. The

organization's field staff went to great efforts to sensitize households and village leaders to explain that this was an opportunity to construct a shelter that would endure for many years and not simply to last them for the short term. Many of the households responded to this; however, some did not. It was felt by the project team that in order to ensure that the second installment of cash is spent on shelter needs, using a commodity voucher for the final cash installment or retaining 10-15% for a third cash installment as an incentive may have been more effective. This was trialled by the same implementing team in a later project in 2020 and proved to be largely successful.

Lack of water for mud plastering. The main shelter typology in East Hararghe is typically a wooden structure that consists of wooden poles harvested locally, wooden infill from wild bushes, and mud plastered walls. Due to a lack of abundant water in some locations, the mud plastering of the walls could not occur until three months after the end of the project, once the wet season had started.

Tensions created by targeting. Following consultation with the Zonal authority, it was recommended that cash assistance would not be suitable for many of the border villages between the Somali and Oromia Regions which are traditionally volatile and insecure. As such, these villages were not targeted through this project. Later, during the cash distributions, this created tension between the village leaders of locations that were not selected. During the project implementation, meetings were held between the village leaders, Zonal authorities and the organization to explain that the border villages would be prioritized for subsequent in-kind emergency assistance distributions. This resolved the tensions.

WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

The project strengthened households' security of tenure by supporting the provision of basic tenure documentation through building the capacity of the local government on the protection of HLP rights. This approach aimed to support prevention of further displacements and forced eviction by assuring the right to a safe home, and to support prevention of discriminatory tenure systems or customary practices that could compromise the ability of women and other vulnerable groups to exercise their HLP rights.

Through using a cash modality, the project strengthened local markets, ensuring that money was spent locally. **The project trained and engaged local carpenters,** creating livelihood opportunities.

The project was conducted at a large scale, supporting 1,250 households in eight villages and was designed to be scalable for future large or small responses. **The lessons learned from this project have since informed various cash projects in Ethiopia** such as multi-purpose cash transfer for households who have had their crops destroyed by desert locusts. It has also informed a pilot Cash-for-Shelter & Latrine project which was later carried out in East Hararghe.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Strong community engagement.** The grouping of households fostered a community dynamic and the collective approach taken by groups for activities such as transportation supported vulnerable households. Grouping households also enabled groups to collectively negotiate prices of materials, transportation and labor.
- √ **Enabling choice through use of cash.** The conditional cash modality enabled households to have choice over what materials they needed to purchase and what aspects of construction they undertook themselves. They were also able to design and construct their shelter as per their household need and in line with local building techniques and capacities.
- √ **Timeliness of the assistance and cost-effectiveness.** The project was implemented within a tight timeframe. Using a cash modality supported both the timeliness and the cost-effectiveness of the project. The cost of transport and storage would have been greater if the project had used a direct in-kind modality, and due to the dispersed location of the households, the speed and reach of the assistance would not have been as fast through in-kind support.
- √ **Market engagement.** The use of cash as a modality meant that money was spent locally, supporting local markets. Additionally, the project also succeeded due to the agreement of the local market vendors, local carpenters and local authorities to ensure that prices would not be unduly raised for material or labor once the cash was distributed.
- √ **HLP verification support.** Ensuring that HLP support was integrated into the project increased the tenure security of households and built the capacity of the local government on the protection of HLP rights.

WEAKNESSES

- × **WASH component not integrated.** Although hygiene promotion was mainstreamed during the community sensitization there was no budget to directly integrate support for latrine provision as part of the project. The result was that 1,250 households returned to their place of origin with shelter assistance but not WASH assistance for latrine or water supply. As a result, it was necessary for the households to rely on the existing infrastructure and coping mechanisms.
- × **Inflexibility of modality impacted targeting and created tensions.** The Cash-for-Shelter modality was not suitable for many of the border villages between the Somali and Oromia Regions which are traditionally volatile and insecure. As the Cash-for-Shelter modality had been decided upon, these border villages were not included in the project despite having shelter needs, which created tensions.
- × **Households not using second cash installment for completion of shelters was unforeseen.** Not all households utilized the final installment of USD 90 as had been intended (for the completion of shelters) because they understandably prioritized other critical needs that could not be addressed by the project such as food, clothing and medicine. This outcome had not been foreseen by the project team during project design. Project design did not include measures to better ensure that the final installment would be used for shelter, for example through ensuring shelter assistance was part of more holistic support (so that other needs were also addressed), and/or through adding restrictions or further conditionalities to the final installment process.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **WASH should always be integrated into shelter programming.**
- **Flexibility of modalities is needed to support different communities in different ways.** Selecting a single modality or approach - in this case cash assistance - can lead to communities for whom this modality is not appropriate being excluded from receiving shelter assistance and can also create tensions between communities. Assistance needs to be flexible enough to offer support to different communities in different ways. This could be either through a single project or through multiple complementary projects.
- **The grouping of households** had multiple positive impacts including fostering a community dynamic, cost savings due to collective negotiation on prices, and vulnerable members of the group being supported by groups addressing certain tasks collectively.
- **If cash assistance is unconditional/unrestricted and households have multiple critical needs, then cash inevitably won't always be used for shelter.** Projects need to take this into account during project design. Unrestricted and unconditional cash has the advantage of households having the choice of what to use it for according to their own priorities. If cash assistance is intended only to be used for shelter support however, then a combination of restrictions and/or conditionalities can be introduced to support this.

CONTEXT

Mozambique is a 2,300km long country with a coast on the Indian Ocean. It is highly exposed to natural hazards, with the south suffering from drought and regularly being hit by cyclones, floods and tropical storms.

In 2019, two major cyclones, Idai and Kenneth, hit the center and north of the country, affecting 2 million people. By March 2020, 99,000 people continued to receive assistance in 73 resettlement sites.

CONFLICT

Since 2017, attacks from Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) in the Northern Region have resulted in a progressive increase in the number of internally displaced people, with many people often displaced multiple times. During 2020, the conflict expanded with NSAG gaining control over Mocimboa da Praia, Muidumbe, Quissanga and Macomia districts. In March 2020, 110,000 people were displaced, and by the end of the year more than half a million more people were displaced. Results from the DTM Baseline Assessment (Round 12) show the top districts of origin of IDPs are Quissanga, Palma, Macomia, and Mocimboa da Praia – the same districts where humanitarian access remains limited due to the volatile security situation in the areas. In general, there is a continued trend of displacement to district capitals and southwards, where IDPs find safety.

Drivers of the conflict remain unaddressed and humanitarian access has been severely hampered due to administrative barriers, insecurity and COVID-19. Despite being rich in natural resources, Cabo Delgado remains economically disadvantaged with little investment in education, health services, water and sanitation systems, public transport and telecommunication infrastructure. Subsequently, it ranks at the bottom in human development indicators amongst other provinces.

Conflict-induced displacement combined with previous disasters, and preexisting socio-economic vulnerabilities have outstretched the capacities of local authorities to respond and have aggravated community grievances on access to basic services.

In November 2020, nearly 80% of displaced people were living in host communities, whose living conditions were also very precarious. There were also residual shelter needs from Cyclone Kenneth (which struck the Northern Region in April 2019). The remaining 20% of people were mainly in temporary sites (schools) and on informally occupied surrounding lands. Lack of access to safe shelter for displaced people caused overcrowding in both host communities and temporary sites, contributing to health and protection risks, especially for women and children.

On March 27th 2021, Palma town was attacked, and people fled to Nangade, Mueda, Montepuez, Ibo Islands and Pemba. During the last week of July 2021, 8,086 newly displaced people were recorded, bringing the total number of people who have been displaced from Palma to approximately 80,000 people, on top of the hundred of thousands who have been displaced over the last few years. Most of the displaced families across the Northern provinces remain in need of urgent access to basic items and services, including those within Palma.

TROPICAL STORM CHALANE AND CYCLONE ELOISE

On top of the conflict, on the 30th December 2020, Tropical Storm Chalane struck in the Central Region of Mozambique. It hit locations where approximately 90,000 displaced people from Cyclone Idai were living in resettlement sites. Overall the storm affected 86,412 families (441,686 people). The most vulnerable people, who were unable to prepare/upgrade their shelter ahead the storm, were the most affected. Tropical Cyclone Eloise then struck on 23rd January 2021. It affected an area to the south of the conflict, making landfall near where the 2019 Cyclone Idai had struck. It landed as a Category 2 Tropical Cyclone.



Four major cyclones and tropical storms have struck Mozambique since 2019. This photo shows people displaced following Cyclone Eloise in 2021 which made landfall close to where Cyclone Idai had struck in 2019.



© Eva Samalea

During 2020, the conflict in the north of the country expanded and displacement increased rapidly. Many displaced people moved to temporary sites, such as this one in Cabo Delgado.

CONFLICT EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Resources were extremely limited for all responses in Mozambique, and immediate assistance was required. Different “tailored shelter packages” were provided depending on the context (rural or urban), the availability of construction materials that could be collected by the displaced population, and the capacity of partners.

In rural contexts where displaced people could access local construction materials, a simple kit consisting of Emergency Shelter (1 tarpaulin) / Non Food Items (basic household items) and tools was provided to support self-recovery. Once people relocated to plots in relocation sites (15x20m), they could set up a basic “tent type” emergency shelter where they could live while they built transitional or semi-permanent shelters.

In urban or peri-urban contexts, where access to local construction materials is more challenging, as far as possible (based on resources available and/or capacity from partners) displaced people received an emergency shelter kit with construction materials. This was to enable them to set up a basic emergency shelter and upgrade it once more materials were available (received or procured).

In all contexts, Shelter Cluster partners, aimed to identify the most vulnerable households who required technical and/or labor assistance, although resources to provide this assistance were very limited.

TARGETING

The Shelter Cluster developed assessment tools at household level with a Score Card system, and trained the enumerators of Cluster partners. It also used Displacement Tracking Matrix teams. The assessments were conducted to ensure that the right information was collected and processed, so that the most vulnerable people could be identified, and their needs properly understood. The tool required household level assessments, to avoid blanket distributions as much as possible. Despite these efforts, verification of distribution lists proved very challenging, and humanitarian actors are struggling to target the most vulnerable people.

In practice, partners had very limited freedom to identify and target the most vulnerable households based on the selection criteria defined by the Shelter Cluster. However, during early 2021, partners’ communication with local authorities improved, and advocacy efforts from the Shelter Cluster and other members of the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) were strengthened. As a result it was anticipated that it would be possible to better tailor the response based on different needs of each household being relocated.

“SURVIVAL KITS”

From October to December 2020, the 12 active Shelter Cluster partners (at that time) managed to assist 7,292 households affected by the insecurity crisis. Although significant, this only accounted for 7% of the people targeted. Given the need to respond quickly, a Survival Kits methodology was also introduced to the Cluster partners and the ICCG. In December, the Shelter Cluster started piloting the modality of Survival Kits for hard-to-reach areas. Before the attacks in Palma and subsequent evacuation, the first 146 households were assisted with these kits.

Later in January 2021, the Shelter Cluster started the development of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Survival Kits, engaging with other sectors and standardizing the composition. The Shelter Cluster partners' contribution to these kits is 1 bag, 1 tarpaulin, 1 adapted (light) kitchen set, 1 solar lamp and 1 mosquito net (to be adapted based on the context). The kits are coordinated with WASH, Health and Food Security and Livelihoods Clusters. Collectively the kits are pre-packed together with key items from the different sectors.

RELOCATION SITES

In Mozambique, relocation sites – resettlement sites for IDPs affected by the insecurity crisis – are often promoted by local authorities for some of the displaced people. At these sites, semi-permanent and permanent shelter solutions are allowed. Each family receives a plot of 15x20m where they can settle immediately, and based on the support received or resources available, build and upgrade their shelter.

Between November and December 2020, relocations started from the most congested areas in Pemba to some relocation sites in Ancuabe and Metuge, but partners were unable to target the most vulnerable families based on

selection criteria. Relocation sites rapidly become small villages, and they are intended to become permanent settlements.

SELF HELP

Given the scale of needs and the limited resources, affected people found their own shelter solutions. A lot of this depends upon finding land that they can build on. Where people did have access to land, they usually have been able to start to recover and build shelters and houses. For these households who started building their own shelters, Shelter Cluster partners who had available resources were able to support with retrofit and/or roofing kits and technical assistance. This was to increase resilience and reduce exposure to natural hazards.

For people living in sites, depending on the context, some people received some ES/NFI assistance to start building and upgrading their shelters, but sometimes, if the relocation process was delayed, people often had to wait for more than five months to start improving their shelters. As soon as households could access more resources, they extended their emergency shelter. Some households could not upgrade the type of shelter, but instead focused on increasing the covered space. Wherever people were able to find resources, with some technical support, shelter upgrades happened.

Beyond the basic ES/NFI kits and construction tools that were provided, supporting organizations also provided trainings. Awareness on proper use of natural resources and technical guidance for building more resilient shelters was aimed at increasing effectiveness of the response, and mitigating the environmental impacts related to emergency shelters interventions (such as deforestation and soil degradation).



Support was provided to households building their own shelters using locally available materials. This included trainings and awareness raising on more resilient construction techniques, and on mitigation of the potential negative environmental impacts of shelter construction.



Emergency Shelter and Semi-Permanent Shelter (self-built) as part of the upgrade strategy within the same household, Ntokota Relocation Site, Metuge, Cabo Delgado.

TROPICAL STORM CHALANE AND CYCLONE ELOISE RESPONSE

The initial response utilized 2020 prepositioned family tents. “Accommodation centers” were established by the government as transit/temporary sites to accommodate people displaced by the storms. In some cases these were collective centers in public buildings such as schools, whereas in other cases they were temporary tented sites.

The first priority for shelter partners as advised by the government was to deactivate the accommodation centers. There was also a need to decongest the shared family tents, and support the resettlement of newly displaced families. People were moved from accommodation centers and overcrowded resettlement sites to individual plots in safe locations. Planning was difficult for agencies due to limited notice of accommodation centers being deactivated. Assistance provided included the provision of basic emergency shelter kits (2 tarpaulins and tools) and essential NFIs.

Five new resettlement sites were created and eight existing resettlement sites were extended. This created plots for 6,736 newly displaced families (an increase of 35% from the number of plots available in resettlement sites following Cyclone Idai). Resettlement sites were promoted by the government, especially for the resettlement of people who had been living in hazard-prone areas prior to the cyclones.

The 11 Shelter Cluster partners active in response to Cyclone Chalane and Eloise reached 13,000+ families with emergency shelter and NFIs, both within and outside of resettlement sites. However, there were large gaps in coverage in the provision of assistance, both to people in existing resettlement sites (8,755 households were affected) and those outside of resettlement sites (50,000 households were affected).

The Central Region Shelter Cluster was also concerned by the lack of prepositioned stock available for the 2022 rainy season and the high numbers of families continuing to live in emergency shelter since Cyclone Idai in 2019, increasing year on year, and the lack of support to move towards transitional and permanent housing solutions.



Shelter extension in Ntokota Relocation Site, Metuge, Cabo Delgado.

FLOODING IN CABO DELGADO

Meanwhile there were floods in Cabo Delgado, where the insecurity crisis continued to escalate. More than 200 households were affected by floods (and an outbreak of cholera in one area), but the lack of resources from partners and lack of land available for relocation compromised the assistance.

OVERSTRETCHED RESOURCES

In April 2021, due to the attacks in Palma, the number of displaced people reached 732,230. New arrivals were reported every-day in the relocation and temporary sites, but replenishment of stocks was very challenging due to procurement delays and lack of resources. Frustration within the sector increased. Partners were already overstretched to provide assistance to previously displaced people, and lacked the capacity to assist more.

As of June 2021, 30% of the targeted people who were displaced due to the insecurity crisis had been reached, by 15 partners, with very basic assistance. There were concerns that the situation would not stabilize and that there would be insufficient funding to upgrade or maintain shelters. There was insufficient stock in preparedness for the coming rain and cyclone season.

WHAT ABOUT HLP?

In Mozambique, the Government owns the land. People can own the houses, but not the land. People and organizations can have access to the land via use right, which can be formalized with a “Right of Use and Enjoyment of the Land” or “DUAT” in the Portuguese acronym. In order to help partners to address this situation, the Shelter Cluster has organized HLP trainings (that will continue) for Shelter and CCCM partners.

One key aspect of HLP in Mozambique is that community land rights through occupancy are often not formally registered and are thus “invisible” in formal records and official maps. Parallel informal property systems exist in peri-urban and rural settlements. In this context, conducting “due diligence” processes to understand the tenure of land for humanitarian interventions (such as shelter and the construction of infrastructure) is very important. The Cluster actively trained partners on approaches to addressing and conducting due diligence on land ownership.



Shelter phased approach development by one household in Meculane Relocation Site, Chiure, Cabo Delgado.

MAIN CHALLENGES

The lack of resources (materials and human resources) due to procurement delays and financial shortages compromised both responses (insecurity and cyclone). Considering the huge needs, Shelter Cluster partners have needed to optimize their resources by reducing shelter kits composition to the most basic package, in order to reach as many people as possible.

The application of household selection criteria is extremely challenging across all sectors, as lists of households are being prepared (and imposed) by local leaders, with very limited opportunities for partners to discuss the lists or make changes if required to ensure that the most vulnerable households are targeted. The Shelter Cluster defined assessment tools to support this and continues to advocate to local authorities and key sectors that can support, especially for the referral of the most vulnerable household to be prioritized, as partners were struggling with identification of vulnerable individuals.

Coordination. Most of the Shelter Cluster partners were not familiar with the Cluster system, nor with humanitarian interventions in insecurity crises, so they needed a lot of support and guidance. The humanitarian response increased and has continued the need to scale up.



Shelter Cluster partners discussing the shelter designs to be promoted during the phased approach, Pemba, Cabo Delgado.

Long lead times. Without prepositioned stock it is impossible to rapidly respond. Lead times for international procurement are many months, especially as budgets mean that airfreight is not generally possible. Considering all procurement and importation challenges faced in the country, centralizing this would benefit all Shelter/NFI partners and support both insecurity and disaster responses. With a proper pipeline system, access to items and construction materials will be more efficient.

WIDER IMPACTS

The impact of the Shelter Cluster strategy promoted from the end of 2020 is showing results, with a balance between immediateness and sustainability. Rapid Response and Early Recovery modalities were merged, taking advantage of the previous capacity built in the region by development partners. Even if most of the partners did not have the immediateness mind-set, most of the organizations deployed emergency experts to support the teams, and the Shelter Cluster proposed areas of intervention to partners based on their strengths.



Woman building her shelter, Meculane, Chiure, Cabo Delgado.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Strength of coping mechanisms.** The proactiveness and coping mechanisms of affected populations in Mozambique are key factors for the effectiveness of the response. The Shelter Cluster must continue supporting these mechanisms but also increase environmental impact awareness activities and other strategies to ensure that construction materials are collected properly and from controlled sources.
- **Need for prepositioning.** To ensure adequate immediate Emergency Shelter and NFI response, considering the procurement delays (customs blockages and low local production capacity), prepositioned stock including key shelter and NFIs is essential in this context, where the number of people in need of Emergency Shelter and NFI assistance is increasing everyday due to the insecurity crisis and the exposure to natural hazards.
- **Community mobilization.** During the promotion of a phased approach to shelter, partners need to strengthen the engagement of communities from the beginning of the project planning to ensure ownership of the projects and adequateness of the approach, and agree on the timelines. Community mobilization activities need to be reinforced, and shelter teams need to have dedicated staff for this.

CASE STUDY

NIGERIA 2017–2020 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Coordination, Land advocacy, Site management, Site planning

CRISIS	Armed conflict, Northeast Nigeria
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Over 2.15 million people as of December 2020*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	Over 986,000 as of September 2017**
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER/NFI NEEDS	2.5 million people*
PROJECT LOCATION	Bama town, Bama Local Government Area, Borno State.
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	7,717 HHs (estimated over 30,000 individuals) shelter support Over 18,000 individuals transit/reception assistance
PROJECT OUTPUTS	5,896 individual emergency shelters 31 communal shelters (560 HHs) 175 emergency shelter kits 66 buildings rehabilitated (1,086 HHs). Reinforcement of 2,531 shelters 450 shelters replaced
SHELTER SIZE	Emergency shelters: 16.2-19.8m² per HH Communal shelters: 9m² per HH Rehabilitated buildings: 15.4m² per HH on average Emergency Shelter (ES) Kits: 9m² per HH
SHELTER DENSITY	Emergency shelters: 3.8-4.7m² per person Communal shelters: 2.1m² per person Rehabilitated buildings: 3.7m² per person on average ES kits: 2.1m² per person
SITE DENSITY	Site area: 932,600m² Overall site density Dec 2017: 58m² per person Overall site density Dec 2020: 24m² per person
DIRECT COST	Emergency shelters: USD 254 Communal shelters: Type 1: USD 318 per HH, Type 2: USD 134 per HH Rehabilitated buildings: USD 318 per HH on average ES Kits: USD 100 Shelter reinforcement: USD 72 per HH
PROJECT COST	USD 420 per HH on average



PROJECT SUMMARY

The Government Senior Science Secondary School (GSSSS) camp in Bama was set up by the government and humanitarian partners to host over 5,000 households following a large-scale influx of IDPs into Bama town, with two shelter organizations taking the lead for provision of shelter assistance. Despite attempts to advocate for the expansion of the camp and the establishment of additional sites, the initial camp remained the only safe option to host the continuous flow of new arrivals. By the end of 2020 the camp hosted over 10,000 households. This case study focuses on the site planning and set-up and on subsequent shelter interventions, aiming to provide dignified shelter solutions for displaced populations within the limited land available.

* Source: [Nigeria HRP 2020](#) and [DTM Round 35 Report](#)

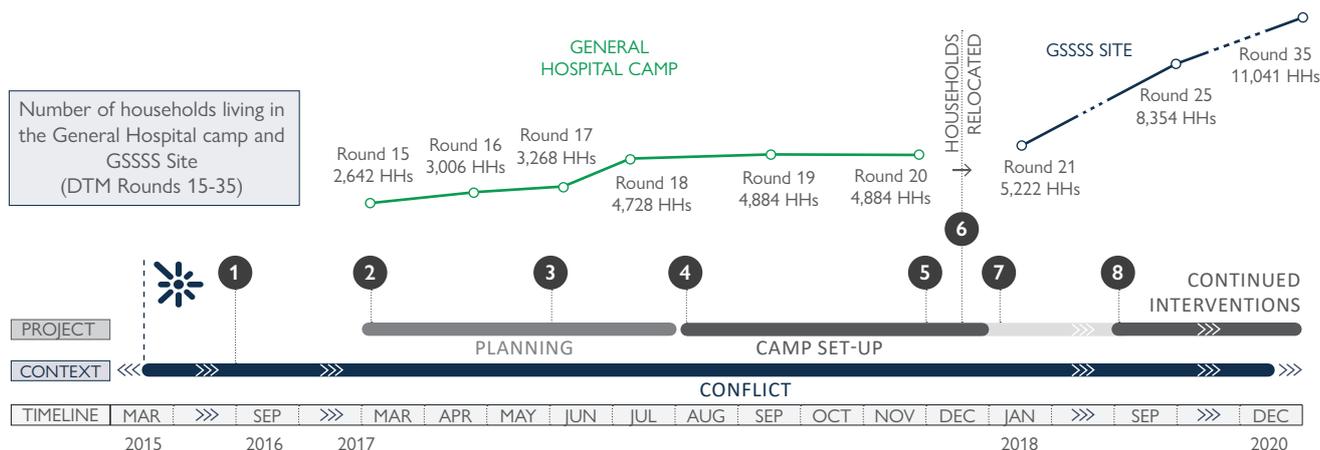
** Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/cost-terrorism-boko-haram-nigeria-648854>



An aerial view of the GSSSS camp during camp set-up. The camp, located on the edge of Bama town was set up to enable the relocation of IDPs from the overcrowded General Hospital camp.

© Jessica Mammo

TIMELINE



1 Mar 2015: Nigerian Armed Forces regain control of Bama from Non-State Armed Groups. Hundreds of IDPs are brought to General Hospital Camp.

2 Sep 2016: Borno State Government starts reconstruction of Bama town.

3 Mar-Apr 2017: Alternative site assessments and identification of GSSSS site.

4 Jun 2017: Uncoordinated shelter construction begins at the GSSSS site.

5 Aug-Sep 2017: Infrastructure mapping and site planning of GSSSS site.

6 Dec 2017: Completion of 5,000 emergency shelters at the GSSSS site.

7 Mid-Dec 2017: Relocation of all families from General Hospital to GSSSS camp.

8 Jan 2018: New GSSSS camp is fully operational, while construction of camp infrastructure and WASH facilities are partly still ongoing.

9 Sep 2018: Additional shelter interventions commenced: communal shelter construction, partitioning of rehabilitated buildings, new shelter construction and distribution of emergency shelter kits.

CONTEXT

For more information on the overall context, see [case study A.18 in Shelter Projects 2015-2016](#).

Bama Local Government Area (LGA) was one of the most severely affected by the conflict in Northeast Nigeria. Before the crisis, Bama town – the second largest in the State – had been home to 250,000 people. Prior to being retaken by the Nigerian Armed Forces in 2015, it had been repeatedly attacked and finally seized by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). A camp was soon established by the military to host internally displaced persons on the General Hospital grounds, with humanitarian partners providing support after access was possible in 2016. Like many other locations in Northeast Nigeria, Bama was surrounded by a security perimeter controlled by the Nigerian Armed Forces.

SITUATION IN BAMA IN 2017

By the end of 2016, the state government announced the plan for the reconstruction of Bama – which was largely deserted apart from the General Hospital camp – focusing on housing repair, key infrastructure and reopening the main road to Maiduguri, the state capital. This led to a significant increase in new arrivals into town and a push to reopen key facilities such as the hospital. In the second part of 2017, mass movements of populations back to Bama led to the over-congestion of General Hospital camp, which at its peak had only 10 square meters of space per person.



The General Hospital camp shown here was closed at the end of 2017, with camp residents relocated to the new GSSSS camp.

MULTISECTORAL RESPONSE PLAN

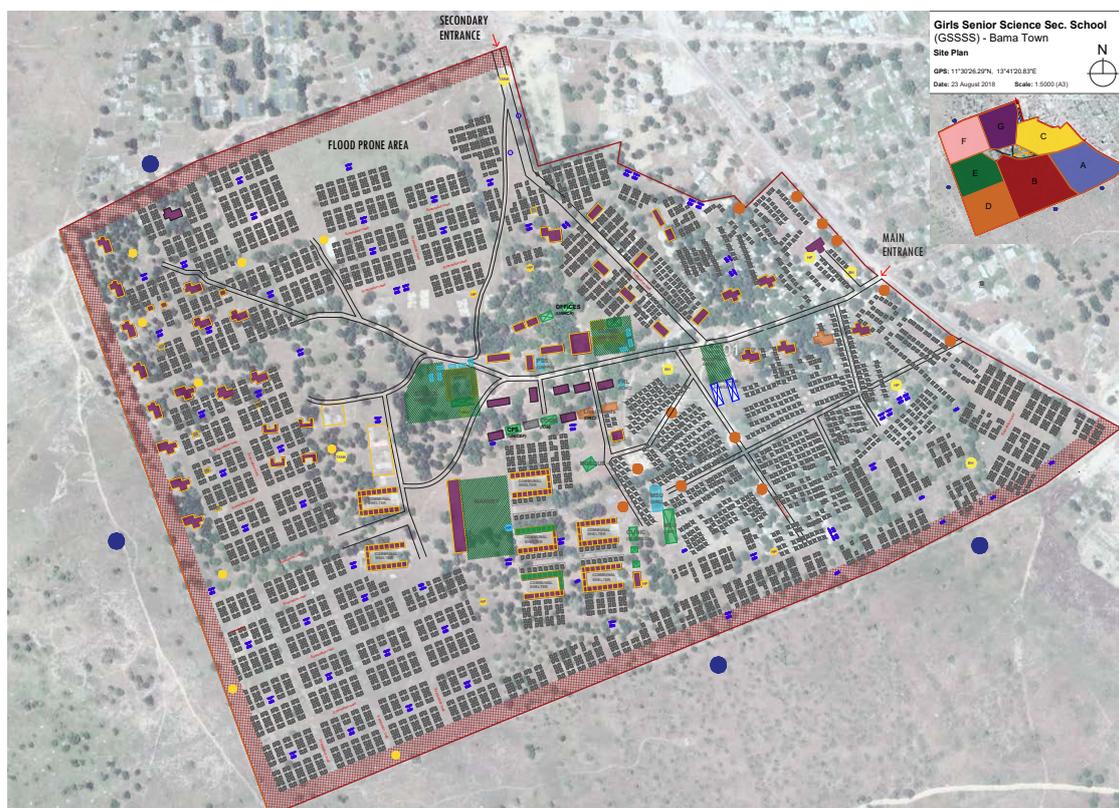
Since late 2016, the joint Shelter/CCCM Sector, led by the government with the support of two international organizations, was closely monitoring new arrivals, leading needs assessments, gaps analysis and response across the accessible areas of Northeast Nigeria. Plans to rehabilitate and re-open General Hospital meant that the camp needed to be relocated. Additionally, as the military did not have the capacity to protect two sites, it was decided to identify a single large site that could host the whole existing displaced population in Bama, plus the projected new arrivals. Land exploration and site assessments began in March 2017 and out of three options, only the Government Senior Science Secondary School (GSSSS) compound was considered viable. The school had been closed since 2014 and, unlike some of the other schools in Bama, there were no immediate plans for it to be rehabilitated and reopened. All except a few buildings on the site were damaged or destroyed. As the school had previously been used by the NSAGs during their occupation, the grounds had to be swept for possible unexploded ordnance.

SITE PLANNING AND NEW CAMP SET-UP

By mid-2017, although a joint response plan with partners' commitments had been developed, one organization started construction at the GSSSS site prior to the agreed implementation timeline, in an effort to decongest General Hospital Camp. This initially caused some challenges, such as the available space not being maximized and some shelters and latrines being built on flood-prone areas.

However, shelter partners then rapidly came together with other sectors under the Shelter/CCCM Sector and followed a multisectoral plan, agreed upon at the Humanitarian Country Team level, which included roles and responsibilities and a single site plan. The site plan comprised seven zones and was based on a mapping of existing infrastructure, mainly damaged school buildings, and the nearly 1,200 shelters that had previously been constructed in zones A, B and C. Priorities in site planning included making best use of space given the limited area, while considering GBV mitigation measures, flood risk, fire safety considerations, and planning around the many existing trees on the site.

By October 2017, setting out and shelter construction started with two main shelter partners implementing an additional 3,700 shelters in phases. One organization used multiple private contractors while the other implemented via a government agency. This was mainly due to the scale of the operation and the limited timeframe to complete construction. Works were always supervised by technical staff of the implementing organizations. Although some delays in materials supply were experienced, the initial capacity to accommodate the population in General Hospital was achieved in around two months. The implementation of water and sanitation facilities, as well as other services, had also been started by a range of humanitarian partners. Commitments and construction updates were being coordinated with dedicated meetings and captured with frequent updates of the site plan, led by one of the shelter partners.



With the input of partners a single site plan was developed, which aimed to make the best use of the limited available space.

RELOCATION PROCESS

The sector strategy initially envisioned to complete essential facilities (shelters, sanitation blocks and water points) and then start relocation in January 2018 following an agreed plan, but the constant influx of new arrivals and poor conditions of General Hospital camp led the government to bring forward the relocation to mid-December 2017. The relocation happened over two weeks and was mainly led by the military, which was also providing security between the old and new camp. Humanitarian partners assisted with transport and by facilitating the reception and shelter allocation processes. This meant that not all basic facilities were ready when people started moving into the new camp. In particular, zones E and F, further away from the entrance lacked sanitation facilities for nearly two months.

Prior to the relocation, camp management staff conducted consultations and community mapping in General Hospital camp to understand the IDPs' concerns regarding the relocation and particularly which groups wanted to be relocated together in the new camp. Since the government-led relocation had started earlier than planned, camp management staff arrived only after the first few days and in the beginning did not manage to follow the community mapping. However, the mapping was later implemented during shelter allocation as much as possible.

Two reception structures were constructed and paired with reception management services near the camp entrance. These were soon overwhelmed due to the constant influx of new arrivals and could not cater for people relocating to shelters in the zones further away. After the first wave of relocation from the old camp, the shelters in zones A, B and C were mainly occupied. To facilitate reception activities, a second location within the camp was designated for zones D, E and F. Shelters were allocated based on community of origin and household size and composition. In some cases, due to the limited availability of shelters,

two small female-headed households would be allocated to one shelter if they chose to. When new arrivals were registered, camp management would encourage them to do go-and-see visits around the camp to identify relatives or fellow community members, so that they could be allocated to the same or nearby shelters.

During the period of relocating the camp from General Hospital to GSSSS, a camp closure coordination meeting was held and the plan for decommissioning the General Hospital site was initiated, enabling the later rehabilitation of the hospital.

CONTINUOUS INFLUX AND NEW SHELTER INTERVENTIONS

In the second half of 2018, a significant influx of people into Bama required shelter partners to come together to increase the capacity of the camp. By September 2018, around 1,900 households were living without shelter. One organization constructed 250 additional shelters, while another partner constructed 175 shelters using shelter kits. Some challenges were faced in finding land for these interventions, as most of the remaining space available was being used by the camp residents for communal and recreational activities. However, following consultations with the community and in the absence of alternatives, it was agreed to proceed with the construction.

Since space for new construction was rapidly being exhausted while the capacity to host new arrivals was still insufficient, shelter partners decided to explore different shelter assistance options which had not yet been implemented in the context of Northeast Nigeria; the construction of partitioned communal shelters and the rehabilitation and partitioning of existing buildings. This required extensive consultations at the sector level, as well as an adaptation of programs following discussion with the donors.



Shelter and latrine construction commenced in October 2017 in preparation for the anticipated relocation date of January 2018 (which was later brought forward to mid-December 2017).



There were many existing trees on the site which were integrated into the site plan.

BUILDING REHABILITATION

There were many existing buildings within the GSSSS site; mostly classrooms and teachers' accommodation. Most did not have roofs, doors and windows due to fire or vandalisation. A few had been destroyed, while only two were in good conditions. One organization conducted a comprehensive inventory of all the buildings in the camp, including an estimate of all the rehabilitation works required, which focused mainly on the reconstruction of roofs, rehabilitation of some damaged walls, provision of doors and windows and partitioning using plastic sheeting. Due to funding constraints, only some of the buildings could be rehabilitated in 2018, while more were rehabilitated the following year.

Initially, contractors were engaged to provide all materials and conduct the rehabilitations. In 2019, one organization used a different approach based on the availability of an existing stock of emergency shelter kits. These were used to construct the roofs and to clad openings and partitions for an additional 39 buildings. Throughout, community carpenters were engaged through a Cash-for-Work modality. In this case, plastic sheeting was used for the roofs instead of corrugated iron sheets, thus reducing the lifespan of the intervention. However, the involvement and on-the-job training of carpenters from the camp provided new skills and income opportunities to the IDPs.

COMMUNAL SHELTERS

Due to the lack of space for individual shelter construction, one organization piloted the construction of 14 communal shelters of 20 rooms of 3x3m each in available pockets of space within the camp. This was implemented via contractors and was then adopted as a model for reception facilities across the state. Initially intended to be a temporary solution, the continuous influx of new arrivals and the inability to acquire additional land meant that these shelters continued to be used as accommodation. This shelter solution was initially criticized by some based on claims of limited privacy and cultural appropriateness. This led to the sector deciding to discontinue this type of intervention as a shelter solution, while it continued to be used for reception facilities. However, through later discussions with the Protection Sector, it was accepted that partitioned communal shelters were still a better solution than exposing IDPs to the weather.

In 2019, following large-scale influxes across locations and advocacy by one organization, the sector approved the introduction of a more affordable model of communal shelter – with 16 rooms and plastic sheet roofing – which was implemented via community carpenters. In the case of Bama GSSSS camp, a total of 10 structures were built on available space in 2019 and an additional five in 2020. Despite the initial criticism, findings from a survey in 2019 showed that only very few households complained about the lack of privacy, while over 95 per cent of respondents were satisfied with this shelter type and reported that it had significantly improved their living conditions.



Existing buildings on the site were rehabilitated and partitioned (right) to provide additional shelter in the camp. Partitioned communal shelters (left) were also constructed due to the lack of space for individual family shelters.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

A preliminary assessment of the local market prior to implementation revealed that there were no suppliers of construction materials in Bama. Due to the scale and limited timeframe to set up the camp, all materials were procured in the state capital Maiduguri, stored in the organization's warehouse and transported to Bama via military convoys. Over time, small suppliers started to appear; however, they were not always present in town and did not have sufficient stocks for the scale of construction activities conducted in the camp.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY

The GSSSS camp remained for a long time the only safe settlement option in Bama since the military was directing all new arrivals to the camp and could not protect other areas in the host community. Most efforts and resources from humanitarian partners were invested in the camp, while the government focused on the recovery of infrastructure and housing outside the camp. Since the GSSSS camp was first established, there was the intention to rehabilitate the existing buildings so that after camp closure, these can be handed over to the host community in good condition.

At the time the camp was set up, there was no host community as such as Bama was uninhabited, thus restricting the options of shelter partners to provide assistance in out-of-camps settings and, therefore, stimulating recovery. Looking forward, the organization planned to focus more efforts in support of returnees and host communities – while also continuing to support new arrivals and displaced populations living in the camp – as well as advocating for additional land for decongestion.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Unplanned movement. Although a plan had been developed, the government-led movement process from the old to the new camp was rushed, leading to an uncoordinated movement and allocation of shelters in the first few days, which was later put back on track with support of humanitarian partners. The sudden relocation also meant that entire zones in the camp were inhabited prior to basic services such as sanitation facilities being completed. For several weeks, IDPs in some parts of the camp had to walk long distances to access dignified latrines and showers, while many used damaged buildings or practiced open defecation.

Land scarcity and congestion. From 2018 onwards, extensive efforts were made to identify and advocate for additional land for the decongestion of GSSSS camp. Three plots of public land were assessed and approved by state and local authorities in 2018 but were never approved by the military, which did not have sufficient capacity to protect multiple sites. Further advocacy was then conducted in 2019–2020 to expand the existing perimeter of the site. Three options were identified; however, lack of approval by land owners and additional requirements for military installations meant that, at the time of writing, no solution had been found yet. Shelter partners had to continue to resort to the construction of additional shelters in the very limited available space remaining within the camp perimeter, often having to reduce the width of major roads and encroach on areas used for community activities.

Topography and drainage. The GSSSS site presented an undulated topography with small elevations and lower, flood-prone areas. A flood-risk assessment was conducted by the Shelter/CCCM sector which was taken into consideration when the site plan was prepared, avoiding lower lying areas which are known to flood. However once the shelters were constructed and the site occupied, the site's

natural water flow networks were disrupted and therefore other areas also experienced flooding. A comprehensive drainage assessment was later developed, however its overall cost was beyond the available resources of humanitarian partners and limited donor interest in funding drainage activities was identified. Because of this, only a few drainage interventions were actually implemented for the worst affected areas.

WIDER IMPACTS

In terms of shelter solutions, Bama represented a pilot location for implementing new types of activities that were later scaled up or more widely adopted. For example, the rehabilitation and partitioning of existing buildings was later repeated in other LGAs by the same organizations and by other partners, and was also recognized by the sector as a preferred type of intervention in the absence of land for shelter construction. The communal shelters, although initially criticized by some, were also implemented for the first time in Bama and then used across the state for reception facilities for new arrivals.



The engagement of community carpenters from within the camp population supported skills development and livelihood opportunities.



Given the continued population increase in the camp with limited options for site expansion, the levels of congestion within the camp continue to increase.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Speed and scale of camp set-up.** The shelter partners constructed nearly 4,000 shelters in under three months significantly improving living conditions. This was achieved despite security and accessibility challenges.
- √ **Multisectoral coordination and site planning.** The overall planning and camp set-up was well-coordinated within the Shelter/CCCM Sector and with all sectors and partners implementing services in the camp. Having one lead organization for site planning and setting-out and one lead sector for coordinating services ensured that minimum site planning standards could be maintained and partner commitments were coordinated under a joint plan.
- √ **Flexibility of shelter solutions.** Following the large-scale influx of new arrivals and limited land availability, shelter partners defined alternative assistance approaches. Due to site constraints, partners constructed communal shelters and rehabilitated existing buildings.
- √ **Registration and shelter allocation process.** Despite challenges at the beginning of the relocation, camp management was then successful in providing adequate reception and registration services for new arrivals. Shelters were allocated based on communities of origin and the registration and allocation process also enabled reuniting of families who had been separated.
- √ **Engagement of community carpenters.** Despite some challenges related to the payment of workers and speed of approach, hiring IDP carpenters improved skills and livelihood opportunities. Most community carpenters continued to work in the camp in the site maintenance committees.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Initial phases of camp set-up.** Prior to the agreed implementation of the joint site plan, one shelter organization started building without being able to actively monitor construction due to security concerns at the time. This led to some shelters being constructed in flood-prone areas or too close or too far from sanitation facilities and did not maximize the use of available space.
- × **Limited community participation in shelter and site planning.** Due to the limited implementation window and pressure to relocate IDPs to the new site, initially shelter construction and site planning were largely conducted without consultation with, or participation of, the affected population. Engagement then improved following this initial phase.
- × **Lack of proper site development.** Site preparation could not be prioritized and implemented due to limited resources available at the time, leading to several areas in the camp being flooded, even following the adoption of the joint site plan. In addition, there was lack of clarity among donors regarding which sector and funding stream should cover the activity – whether WASH, CCCM or Shelter.
- × **Focus on emergency solutions and limited links to recovery.** Partly owing to contextual factors, shelter partners focused all their resources within the camp and predominantly on temporary shelter solutions. While this was inevitable at first, over time more efforts could have been made to support returnees and recovery outside of the camp. However, at the time of writing, the access in and out of the camp was still highly controlled, so only few IDPs were allowed to live within the host community.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Land advocacy efforts.** In the initial stages of land exploration and site assessments, most options were discarded by the government due to a variety of critical factors. In hindsight, more efforts could have been made at senior inter-agency level to continuously advocate for a larger plot of land in anticipation of future influxes of IDPs and adapting to the ever-evolving context.
- From the shelter and site planning perspective of an implementing agency, the **CCCM-led coordination model** adopted for the planning and set-up of the camp was a success and was later reused for other large-scale camps and relocations in the state. Continuous monitoring visits and adaptations of the site plan were also essential to keep track of construction progress and update all partners and sectors involved.
- **The community mapping process** provided an understanding of the different groups and their expectations for the GSSSS camp. While the relocation process being brought forward before the planned time-frame meant that it was not fully utilized at the start of the relocation process, it still proved relevant in the latter phases of the relocation and the approach was also adopted in other locations following this project.
- Despite limited resources, more efforts should be made by the donor community to support shelter and camp management partners to **ensure at scale and phased site preparation prior to construction and allocation.** Site preparation was a mandatory step in the sector-endorsed site set-up process and following this experience, this was further enforced and funded in the establishment of more recent camps.

CASE STUDY

BAHAMAS 2019–2020 / HURRICANE DORIAN

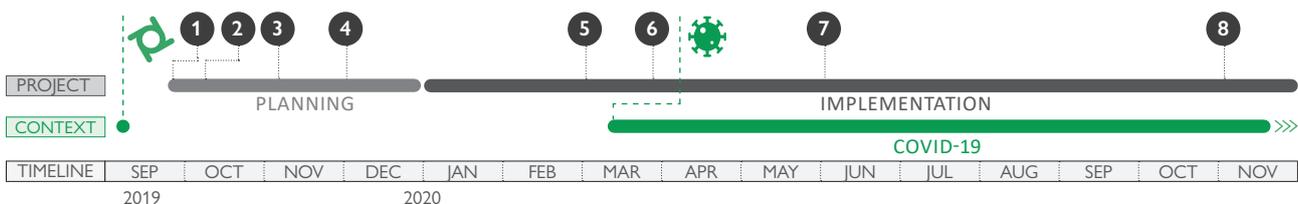
KEYWORDS: Conditional Cash Transfer, Government engagement, Rental assistance

CRISIS	Hurricane Dorian, September 2019
PEOPLE AFFECTED	Approx. 9,000 HHs (29,472 individuals)*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	Approx. 15,000 individuals**
PROJECT LOCATION	Grand Bahama, The Bahamas
PROJECT OUTPUTS	<p>232 HHs received rental assistance (Grand Bahama)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 212 HHs received 6 months of assistance - 20 HHs received 9 months of assistance <p>3,055 HHs assisted with Multi-Purpose Cash support (Grand Bahama and Abaco)</p> <p>567 HHs assisted with minor repairs support (Grand Bahama and Abaco)</p>
SHELTER DENSITY	Approx. 15-20m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 700 per HH/month (rental assistance)
PROJECT COST	USD 5,257 per HH (on average, rental assistance program)
<p>* Source: Assessment of the Effects and Impacts of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas (IDMB, PAHO, UN ECLAC, WHO)</p> <p>** Source: The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)</p>	



PROJECT SUMMARY

A rental assistance program was undertaken on Grand Bahama as part of a wider recovery effort (that included a home repair program, livelihoods support, and multi-purpose cash), in response to Hurricane Dorian which hit the Bahamas in September 2019, causing widespread damage. Rental assistance of USD 700 per month was provided to enable access to safe and adequate rental accommodation for households whose homes had suffered major damage or destruction. The purpose of the program was to “buy time” for recipients to enable them to recover their livelihoods, repair their homes or find alternative housing solutions.



- Sep 2019:** Hurricane Dorian significantly impacted the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama and the surrounding Cays.
- 1 Late Sep 2019:** Multi-purpose cash (MPC) distributions started.
- 2 Oct 2019:** Rental assistance program team set up and assistance modality finalized.
- 3 Nov 2019:** Finalization of target household selection criteria, procedures, assessment and reporting tools.
- 4 Dec 2019:** 1st month rental assistance payment made to the first cohort of 69 HHs.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 5 Mar 2020:** 219 HHs concurrently supported with rental assistance.
- 6 Late Mar 2020:** Switch in transfer modality from cheque to bank transfer.
- 7 Jun 2020:** 13 new households enrolled.
- 8 Nov 2020:** Rental assistance completed.



Hurricane Dorian significantly impacted the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama and the surrounding Cays.

CONTEXT

The Bahamas is made up of over 700 islands and sits within the Atlantic Hurricane Belt. It is typical for the Bahamas to experience several high-speed wind events each year. Housing in the Bahamas is vulnerable to both high winds and storm-surge damage.

The Bahamas is highly dependent on financial services and tourism. It is a low-tax environment and a large number of wealthy individuals are based in the country. This means that the Bahamas has one of the highest average incomes per capita in the world, but this masks significant vulnerability amongst parts of the population, including undocumented migrants for example. The low-tax environment also has the potential to impact the capacity of the government to recover from widespread destruction such as that brought by Hurricane Dorian. The high average income per capita also limits access to international assistance funds.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

The Bahamas has a high rate of home ownership with approximately 59% of homes owned and 35% rented. Within Freeport, the main city on Grand Bahama, housing stock mainly consists of single story houses with concrete block external walls, timber stud internal walls and timber-framed roof structures with asphalt or similar roof shingles. There are also small concrete frame and concrete block apartment buildings. Outside of Freeport structures are typically timber framed or concrete block single story structures.

Some homes had suffered significant damage from past hurricanes without adequate repair which may have caused water damage and weakened structures. The building codes in the Bahamas are considered broadly adequate for wind loading, however, the compliance with the codes by some builders and homeowners (when undertaking work themselves) can sometimes be lacking.

SITUATION AFTER THE CRISIS

Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas between the 1st and the 3rd of September 2019. It was the strongest documented Atlantic Hurricane to directly impact a landmass. The hurricane significantly impacted the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama and the surrounding Cays. The official death count was 74 casualties (63 Abaco and 11 Grand Bahama) and 282 persons missing. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) estimated a total of 15,000 people were in need of food or shelter following the hurricane, with an estimated 5,000 people evacuating to Nassau, the capital. The Government stated Dorian caused USD 3.4 billion in losses and damage in the country. There was very limited official information on overall numbers of houses damaged. As with other contexts which are relatively dependent on tourism and foreign investment exact damage information was very sensitive.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY/RESPONSE

Due to the high cost of reconstruction, the national shelter response by humanitarian organizations was predominately aimed at households whose homes had suffered minor damage. Many organizations provided in-kind assistance for clean-up and repair. Conditional cash for repairs support was offered by humanitarian organizations and the government. The government response included the Small Home Repair Program, which offered cash grants from USD 2,500 for those with minor damage up to USD 10,000 for totally damaged houses. However, it was recognized that this was only a contribution to house reconstruction, since a fully damaged house could cost USD 60,000 to 100,000 to rebuild for a small 2-bedroom permanent house. The Department of Social Services (DoSS) also offered rental assistance of USD 2,100 for three months paid to the landlord for a number of families in need. This was later expanded to USD 4,200 for six months.

With respect to repair and reconstruction support there were gaps related to support for:

- Non-citizens (as government assistance was targeted at Bahamas Citizens);
- Households with totally destroyed homes;
- Households who were under-insured (government assistance eligibility criteria required households to have no insurance)
- Households with damaged houses residing on Crown land or Generational land where lack of documentation caused issues in accessing government assistance or deterred agency assistance.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

The organization provided shelter support through three projects:

- Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) support of USD 3,620 over three months to assist with basic needs including those related to housing, utilities, transport, food and water, communication, furniture, education, clothing and health costs.
- Housing repair support - cash assistance of an average value of USD 6,000 to support repair to homes with minor damage.
- Rental assistance of USD 700 per month for 6 months.



Hurricane Dorian caused extensive damage to homes and infrastructure.

There was no overlap of targeted households between the MPC support, housing repair support and rental assistance. This case study focuses on the rental assistance project.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The purpose of the rental assistance project was to enable access to safe and adequate housing to “buy-time” while households recovered their livelihoods, repaired or rebuilt their homes, or found alternative housing arrangements.

As the Bahamas is a tourist destination, rental housing was available on the market. It was determined that the number of households being supported with rental assistance (both by the organization and by DoSS) could be easily absorbed by the rental market.

Initially the project was due to provide support for 3 months, but further funding becoming available meant this was extended to 6 months. This proved to be very important given the additional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on recovery.

COORDINATION WITH DOSS

The rental assistance project was aligned with the DoSS rental assistance program and aimed to support DoSS with the surge in need for rental assistance. The organization took referrals from DoSS and at the end of the project referred very vulnerable cases back to the DoSS.

The rate of rental assistance provided – USD 700 per month – was consistent across the organization’s project and the DoSS program. Through a design tweak, the organization provided rental payments to the tenant households rather than directly to landlords (which was the approach taken by the DoSS). Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was not the opportunity for advocacy to the DoSS on the benefits of potentially shifting their approach from paying the landlord directly, to making payments to the tenant households.

TARGETING

The rental assistance project focused on Grand Bahama only. There were three distinct ways that applications for rental assistance were received by the organization:

1. Direct applications for assistance were received through the organization’s reception desk and helpline;

2. Applicants were referred through the organization’s caseworkers; and
3. Households were referred by the DoSS.

Applicants were shortlisted based on eligibility criteria: that their home was destroyed or had sustained major damage and was uninhabitable. A vulnerability assessment was then carried out to prioritize eligible applicants, which included questions on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, disability, and the impact of Hurricane Dorian. Washington Group questions¹ were used to ask about disability. A “light-touch” verification was undertaken for the households who were referred to the organization by the DoSS since it was believed households had already gone through a rigorous assessment by the DoSS.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

IDENTIFYING SUITABLE RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Households identified suitable accommodation to rent that met minimum safety and adequacy standards. Criteria included minimum space per person (for example at least 2 separate rooms for sleeping for a family of 4), and requirements for windows, ventilation, lighting, kitchen (with minimum appliances), bathroom, running water and electricity, in addition to the accessibility to jobs, markets, children’s playgrounds and schools. Organization volunteers and staff verified that accommodation met the agreed criteria. Due to the housing market in Grand Bahama having significant rental housing stock it was not difficult for households to find somewhere adequate to rent at a suitable price.

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

Based on the organization’s existing understanding of rental practices in Grand Bahama it was decided that it was not necessary for the organization to check the rental agreement made between the tenant and landlord, as the risk of eviction in the context was low. An agreement between the organization and each tenant household was put in place to ensure that the household understood that the cash support was to be used for rental payments, and that they understood other conditionalities related to the project.

¹ See www.washingtongroup-disability.com



Homes outside of Freeport, the main city on Grand Bahama, are typically timber framed or concrete block single story structures.



Rental assistance applicants were shortlisted based on eligibility criteria and prioritized through a vulnerability assessment.

PAYMENT PROCESS

The rate of rental assistance provided to each household was USD 700 per month, for a six-month period. Cheques were initially chosen as the transfer mechanism for the rental payment. The USD 700 was paid to the tenant household, who then paid rent to their landlord.

All households received the flat rate of USD 700 rental assistance regardless of whether the actual rental accommodation cost was lower. The approach of making the payment to tenants rather than directly to landlords was intended to empower tenants and incentivise them to negotiate rental costs, helping to minimize any potential inflationary impact on the market. This approach was based on learning from the Haiti earthquake response in 2010 where the organization had undertaken a large rental assistance program. Any saving was kept by the tenant household and was used to meet other needs. A review showed that the average rent paid was USD 688 per month.

MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

Each month organization staff and volunteers followed up with the household to check that they were still in the same accommodation – or if they had moved, a fresh minimum housing standards check was required – and that they were still in need of the rental support. Some households were able to leave the project early because they had repaired their damaged homes.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Adapting payment and monitoring mechanisms due to COVID-19. Cheques were initially used as the rental assistance transfer mechanism. To receive the next cheque, tenants would bring the receipt confirming their previous rent payment to their landlord into the organization's branch office. This helped with monitoring and ensuring there were no problems being encountered by the tenant family, and it also supported the organization's finance department with the documentation. To minimize in-person interactions in the context of COVID-19 the transfer mechanism was changed to bank transfers. The information management and monitoring processes also had to be revised. This involved repeated requests to households for the required documentation. Towards the end of the project the COVID-19 risks and restrictions had reduced so it was decided to make the final payment by cheque to ensure the households had provided all the documentation required by the organization's finance team prior to the final payment.

Remote monitoring due to COVID-19. Remote working made follow-up and monitoring more difficult, especially with the elderly and those with certain impairments. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the physical inspections of the accommodation for adequacy, and in person interviews with tenants and landlords had to be replaced by virtual approaches.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY

The rental assistance allowed the “buying of time” post-disaster, where households instead of needing to concentrate on finding the money to pay for rent, were instead able (as described by many in the post-distribution monitoring) to invest in the recovery of their livelihoods, which then had a significant impact on the households' overall recovery. During the period of rental assistance many households were able to recover their livelihoods, access assistance from other humanitarian organizations or the government, or arrange financing through banks or informal (family) means. This allowed them to repair their previous homes to make them habitable and leave the rental accommodation, or through the recovery of their livelihoods to continue paying rent at the end of the assistance. 12 households left the rental assistance project early and moved to their homes after repairing them.

In June 2020, a review found that 60 households would need further rental assistance beyond the six-month support period. Some additional budget meant that the organization was able to extend rental support for 20 extremely vulnerable households for a further three months, while the remaining 40 households were referred to the DoSS.

The organization ran parallel livelihoods and house repair projects. Further consideration could have been given to involving households receiving rental assistance in these other projects to help catalyze their recovery. This was not opted for because the organization determined it was better to help more recipients when needs were high and there were limited resources available.

WIDER IMPACTS

Using much of the learning from this response and others in the region (such as rental assistance in response to the Americas migration crisis) the organization has developed a global step-by-step guide to rental assistance programming which has received positive feedback from the humanitarian shelter sector.



Rental assistance aimed to “buy time” while households recovered their livelihoods, repaired or rebuilt their homes, or found alternative housing arrangements.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **The organization's pre-crisis knowledge of the rental market and rental practices in the Bahamas** (specifically knowledge of risks related to eviction) allowed the response to move quickly into the implementation.
- √ **High standard of accommodation.** The project used existing permanent housing stock for temporary accommodation, which provided a high standard of accommodation.
- √ **Payment made to the tenant rather than the landlord.** This approach helped to empower tenants in negotiations on cost and in the relationship more generally with the landlord throughout the tenancy period, and enabled tenants to retain any saving made. The negotiation may have also had an impact on reducing the potential for inflationary effects on the rental market.
- √ **Aligned approach with the Department of Social Services (DoSS).** The rental payment amount was consistent between the organization's project and the DoSS rental assistance program. A joined-up approach between the organization and the DoSS enabled the organization to receive referrals from DoSS, and at the end of the project to refer households with ongoing needs to the DoSS for further support.

WEAKNESSES

- × **No undocumented migrants received rental assistance.** Undocumented migrants are one of the most vulnerable groups in the Bahamas. It was seen that undocumented migrants were likely to come forward to receive MPC support (which provided 3 months of support) as this was given to all those evacuated, but were unlikely to come forward for more visible types of assistance that required a greater level of follow up. Although undocumented migrants were eligible to apply for the rental assistance project, all households who received rental assistance were Bahamas citizens.
- × **More reflection on the exit strategy from the outset would have been of benefit.** Stronger linkages with other programs supporting repairs or livelihoods could have been made to help catalyze recovery. Options for referral for particularly vulnerable households could have been built into the project strategy from the start.
- × **Stronger verification of DoSS referrals needed.** At first, the organization only did "light-touch" verification of households referred by the DoSS. It was later found that far more rigorous verification was required as a small number of referred households were found to be ineligible.
- × **Stronger information management system needed.** The project experienced information management issues as a comprehensive system was not in place from the beginning of the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Where adequate existing rental accommodation is available, rental assistance should be considered** so that a high standard of temporary accommodation can be made available during the emergency phase.
- **Better learning from Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) support could have improved wider strategy development.** Collecting more nuanced Post Distribution Monitoring data from the MPC program – on housing expenditure, housing conditions, and the ability of households to continue payments for housing once the MPC assistance ended may have led to a different balance of the types of support provided (rental assistance, shelter repairs) or may have impacted the targeting or duration of the rental assistance project design.
- **Ensure appropriate information management systems are in place from the beginning of the project,** considering all processes and activities associated with the project, since it can be difficult to make substantial changes to systems part way through a project.
- **Barriers to inclusion in rental assistance need to be identified and addressed.** In addition to referral mechanisms, direct application routes are needed (as was in place in this case). Relying on referrals could risk excluding specific groups from receiving assistance. In this case other barriers prevented undocumented migrants from applying for rental assistance.
- **The exit strategy needs to be considered and monitored from the outset of the project.** This needs to be considered both in relation to linking to wider programming to support recovery, reducing the need for rental assistance, and in relation to the potential for referral of households who may still require rental assistance when the project comes to an end.

CASE STUDY

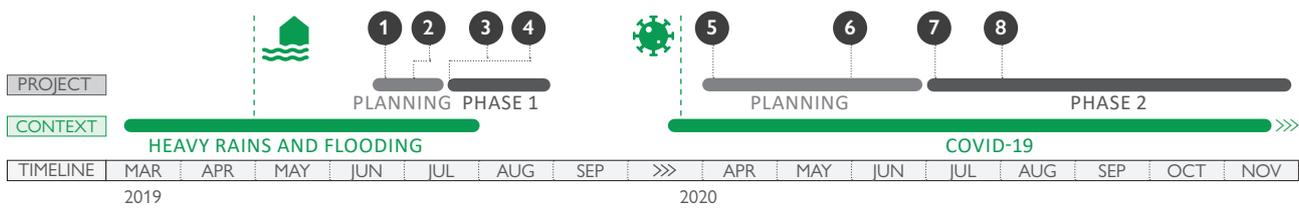
PARAGUAY 2019–2020 / FLOODS

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, IEC materials, NFIs distributions

CRISIS	Flooding & COVID-19, May 2019 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	70,000 HHs (273,000 individuals)*
PROJECT LOCATION	Asuncion, Paraguay
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	2,925 HHs (8,775 individuals): 2019 Flood response: 15,000 HHs : 2020 COVID-19 response:
PROJECT OUTPUTS	2,925 packages of Shelter kits and household items 1,941 individuals trained on use of shelter kits 13,000 HHs received general COVID-19 mitigation messaging 2,000 HHs received shelter specific COVID-19 mitigation messaging
DIRECT COST	USD 100 per HH (Shelter Kits and household items) USD 0.25 per HH (COVID-19 messaging)
PROJECT COST	USD 200 per HH (Shelter Kits and household items) USD 0.80 per HH (COVID-19 messaging)
* Source: Secretariat of National Emergency - Paraguay	

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project provided emergency shelter support and training in the form of Shelter Kits and household items to 2,925 households affected by flooding in Asunción. This was then followed by a COVID-19 specific project in 2020 which provided general messaging on COVID-19 risk mitigation and specific advice on how communities could adapt their shelters to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.



May 2019: Heavy rains affected Paraguay causing rapid flooding of the Paraguay River.

- 1 25 Jun–2 Jul 2019: Needs assessments.
- 2 3–15 Jul 2019: Community engagement and targeting.
- 3 16 Jul–30 Aug 2019: Training, community engagement and distributions.
- 4 16 Jul–30 Aug 2019: Post Distribution Monitoring.

11 Mar 2020: WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.

- 5 Apr–May 2020: Needs assessment and planning.
- 6 Jun 2020: Project design.
- 7 Jul–Aug 2020: Distribution of messaging.
- 8 Aug–Nov 2020: Post Distribution Monitoring.



Throughout the project the partners consulted with community members and community leadership structures.

CONTEXT

From March to July 2019 intense rains affected Paraguay causing rapid flooding of the Paraguay River and affecting more than 70,000 households, including 13,000 households in Asunción. The flooding caused internal displacement, forcing households to move to both planned and spontaneous camps.

In Asunción, the areas along the Paraguay River are occupied by informal settlements, characterized by precarious housing, a lack of infrastructure, lack of access to services and irregular land tenure. An estimated 45,000 people live in flood-prone areas within the capital city. The river usually experiences a flood every 10 years but since 2014 the frequency has increased, becoming almost annual. Floods can last between two to ten months. The heavy rainfall between March - July 2019 resulted in floods that lasted for seven months.

SITUATION AFTER THE FLOODS

As households living in flood-prone areas of Asunción experience floods on a recurring basis, over the years many households have identified nearby areas of land where they can take refuge during floods. The 2019 floods occurred with very little notice, and households had to leave homes as quickly as possible and move to open areas of land and public spaces where they could take refuge, initially building make-shift shelters using materials such as plastic sheeting and cardboard. In Asunción, 118 planned and unplanned sites were established following the floods. The government administered some sites as emergency camps while in other cases households were forced to spontaneously occupy unsafe and unprepared public spaces.

Coordination was organized locally, from grassroots and municipal organizations. The declaration of a national emergency was made almost four months after displacements had started. The mobilization of resources from the national government was limited. Whilst the government provided some shelter materials such as plywood and metal sheeting to some displaced households, the shelter needs of all households were not met.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project aimed to augment the Government response by providing Shelter Kits (tarpaulins, tools and fixings) and household items (solar lights, mosquito nets and blankets) to displaced households to provide protection from the elements, provide improved privacy and security, make living conditions more dignified and provide protection from vector borne diseases.

The project was designed as a partnership between three organizations and was embedded within a global level partnership agreement. Governmental support for the project was sought and given by the department responsible for disaster management.

The “response package” to be distributed by the partners was based on the standard response to emergency shelter needs adopted by the partners globally. Through needs assessments and community consultations, the response package was locally adapted in relation to cultural appropriateness, items needed, infrastructure conditions and affected population capacities.

The partners opted for an in-kind approach rather than using cash-based interventions as they felt the required shelter outcomes were most efficiently met through in-kind. The partners’ capacity to include cash-based modalities as well as in-kind was low and so it was felt that the most equitable approach was in-kind to achieve the shelter outcomes.

With the exception of some additional blankets procured locally, all goods were imported from prepositioned stocks in order to maximize project efficiencies and timelines. The partners were able to import stocks within three weeks of the project starting, a timeline that would have been much longer had local procurement been a main pillar of the response. Through consultations with communities and Government early in the project, it was thought that certain key materials required for the project were of lower quality locally than could be imported from prepositioned stocks.

TARGETING

Targeting was carried out in coordination with National Government and key sections of Municipal Government in Asunción. The aim was to identify sites hosting displaced households who had received the least assistance so far. As the overall capacity of the project partners to cover all shelter needs of this kind in the city were limited, prioritization was given to sites hosting households whose status prior to the flood was the most marginal and who it was felt would be displaced the longest. The partners decided to take a blanket approach to distribution within identified sites as the majority of households within these sites were in a similar position.



Trainings were undertaken on the use of shelter materials and household items.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the project the partners consulted with community groups and community leadership structures to orient communities on the proposed project, understand their needs and wishes, and to make arrangements for distributions and trainings. Whenever possible, community members were involved in supporting orientations, trainings and distributions. Communities were consulted on technical matters such as Information Education Communication (IEC) material development, and suggestions made during focus group discussions led to significant changes to the messaging and language used in IEC materials. There were some protection concerns within some of the communities and the partners worked with community representative structures to try to understand these concerns and ensure that the project did not exacerbate them. One reason for taking a blanket approach to distribution was to lessen feelings of disparity within communities, which it was felt could heighten protection concerns.

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Orientations on the overall project were carried out within communities. Orientations were supported by more technical training on the use of shelter materials and household items. During orientation sessions it was outlined that distributed materials could be useful both during households' period of displacement and also to enable and facilitate return to their usual areas of residence. The partners carried out 'train the trainer' sessions where community leaders and identified community members were enabled to further continue trainings and share explanations to those unable to attend, and all participants were encouraged to spread the trainings to others and to assist those who had reduced capacities. In this way the partners aimed to foster a sense of community ownership and participation in the use of materials post distribution.

DISTRIBUTIONS

Distributions were carried out centrally in each target community. Community members were mobilized to support distribution set-up and further orientations, distribution marshaling and assistance in taking items home. Households identified as having specific vulnerabilities were assisted with transportation of items from distribution points, and certain community members were identified and trained in offering construction and repair assistance. Exit surveys were carried out at all distributions so the partners could gain an understanding of community members' views on the distribution process, fostering continuous improvement in the distribution process. Feedback mechanisms were put in place through community leaders enabling community members to bring any issues that were not captured in exit surveys to the attention of the partners. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was carried out approximately seven days after each distribution was carried out.

COVID-19 FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE

Eight months later, with the intensifying of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners planned follow-up programming to assist national efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in vulnerable communities in Asuncion.

The project was primarily aimed at the communities previously assisted with Shelter Kits, but was then expanded to include further communities in which one of the partners had ongoing projects. Households had returned to their original community areas once the floods had subsided, but their shelter typologies remained very similar as those utilized during their period of displacement.

The partners worked with the Department of Health on key messages, including on social distancing, washing hands, and cleaning of shelters. The partners also designed a bespoke set of messaging related to shelter and COVID-19 mitigation, with information on how previously distributed shelter materials could be used to create additional living space and create divisions between living spaces, how to improve ventilation of shelters, and how to construct an isolation space if a household member was taken ill and could not isolate elsewhere.

Due to COVID-19 contact restrictions, messaging was distributed to households and community leaders via WhatsApp. Materials were also printed as posters and banners that were publicly placed in communal spaces within communities.

"Response Package" content:	
Item	Quantity/HH
Household Items	
Thermal quilted blanket	3
Cotton blanket	1
Solar light	2
Mosquito net	2
Shelter Kit	
Tarpaulin (4m x 6m)	2
Rope	1
Handsaw	1
Nail for roof sheets	1/2kg
Shovel	1
Hoe	1
Machete	1
Shears	1
Nails (large)	1/2kg
Nails (small)	1/2kg
Tie wire	25m
Claw hammer	1
Woven sack	1

MAIN CHALLENGES

Importation of relief items. Some initial challenges were faced in relation to the importation of relief items. Stocks in country were low and it was decided that importation was the most feasible option to bring items to those in need. The partners coordinated with Government departments to arrange permissions and exemptions and then worked with regional partners to access stocks and import items.

Limited budget. The partners had limited budget, meaning that the number of households targeted would be lower than the overall needs. The partners coordinated with national and local Government, other NGO actors and community groups to identify the communities that were in most need. This information was triangulated by the partners and assisted in decision making. Decisions were then fed back to stakeholders and discussed prior to the intervention beginning.

Coordination between partners. There were three main partners to the project. This led to some initial challenges in terms of coordination and planning. However, the national partnerships were embedded in regional and global partnerships held between the partners ensuring that challenges of this nature were quickly overcome.

Restricted access due to COVID-19. In the COVID-19 programming, the greatest challenge to overcome was one of meaningful access. There was a great need to reach communities, but physical access was constrained. After discussion with community leaders and representatives, the partners and communities decided upon an electronic transmission modality, coupled with the placement of IEC banners in communal spaces where COVID-19 risks could be minimized. Restricted access also created challenges to monitoring the effectiveness of messages. A survey was initially embedded in a QR code on the messaging but the uptake was low, so the modality switched to conducting surveys over the phone.

Scarcity of existing IEC materials on COVID-19 shelter adaptations. In developing IEC materials in the context of COVID-19 there were very few existing resources that the partners could draw upon. A literature review was conducted and whilst there was information around general COVID-19 mitigation measures, the partners could not find existing literature on the shelter specific consideration. Therefore, the partners needed to conceptualize and design the messaging, and create designs that would be easily understood by households, which required coordination with subject matter experts in a variety of countries.

WIDER IMPACTS

Some of the impacts shown from PDM data following the 2019 distributions included that 92.5% of households reported that receiving shelter materials meant that they were then **able to focus on other household needs**, 44.3% reported **feeling less stressed** as a result of receiving materials, 86.7% reported feeling **better protected**

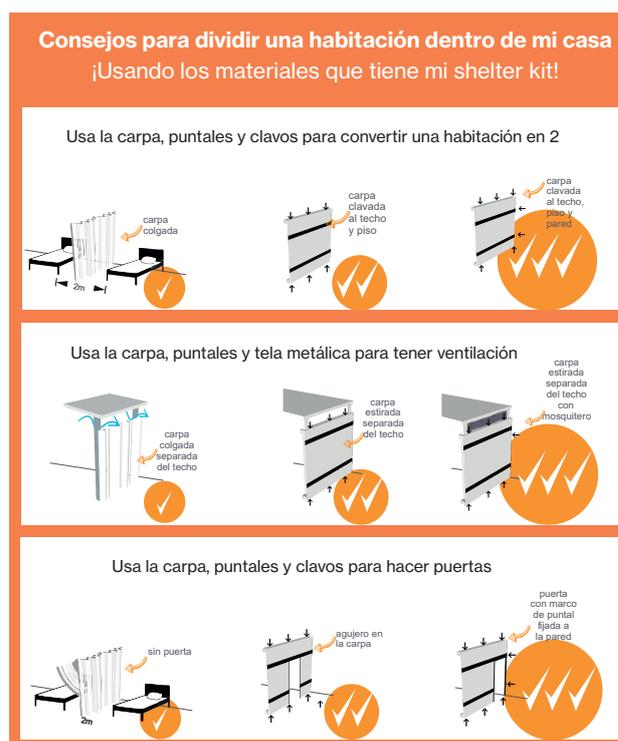
from mosquitos, and 71% reported **feeling safer** due to receiving the solar light.

The displacement cycle within these communities follows a pattern of movement from marginalized areas prone to flooding to displacement sites within the city during flooding. Many households take materials from their usual shelters with them to a new temporary location and then rebuild, and then reverse the process when return is possible. Many households reported that the **items received would be valued during their period of displacement, for use when returning to their homes, and for use during future expected displacements.**

Relationships, trust and acceptance built with target communities through this project acted as a gateway enabling the national partner organization to maintain a good connection to communities, enabling further dialogue as to their long-term housing needs.

At national Government level it was noted to the partners that the involvement of international actors **drew governmental focus to the issue of recurring floods**, which it was noted had become relatively normalized. A sense of solidarity or psychosocial support was also anecdotally noted by community members due to the attention brought to the flooding issue through the involvement of international actors, which was not a usual part of their cyclical displacement patterns.

The project served as an **opportunity to build a response mechanism between the partner organizations** that serves as the basis for partnership responses in other countries. Additionally, IEC materials created specifically for this project have been further used in other countries and contexts.



A series of IEC materials were developed to communicate key messaging related to shelter and COVID-19 mitigation.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Strong community engagement.** The project partners engaged with communities throughout the project design and implementation, with many suggestions from communities being incorporated into the project design and the distribution processes.
- √ **Trust and flexibility between partners.** This project was embedded within a global partnership framework between the partners. Continued dialogue and joint efforts on partnership development at regional and global levels brings benefits at national response level.
- √ **Multipurpose uses of shelter materials.** The materials provided could be used in a variety of ways. The approach taken was intended to facilitate the ability of each households to meet their own shelter needs in their own way, rather than promoting a design based single solution for all households. Both anecdotally and through PDM it was seen that communities and households had a wide variety of uses for the items, which met their individual needs.
- √ **Joined-up nature of follow-on Covid-19 programming.** Partners maintained continuity of contact and support with communities, and built on relationships and trust built in the flood response project to provide further assistance in response to COVID-19.
- √ **Exit surveys and Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM).** Successes and failures were measured through exit surveys immediately following distributions, and PDM, with feedback used to improve the project while it was still ongoing.

WEAKNESSES

- × **“Train the trainer” approach had limited success.** Sessions with community members during the 2019 flood response intended for those trained to then assist other community members with utilization of items. Evaluation of this process showed some weaknesses. It appears that many people identified as community trainers did not feel they had the time and knowledge to conduct further trainings or support within communities.
- × **Appropriateness of IEC materials.** IEC materials to support the 2019 flood response were developed from global tools. Feedback suggested these materials were too technical and were difficult to understand. Development of IECs was discussed with communities but less so than other aspects of the project.
- × **Evaluation of COVID-19 support limited.** Evaluation was challenging to undertake due to restricted access. An opt-in approach was utilized, which had little uptake within communities. Therefore, it was not possible to obtain enough data to make a statistically viable evaluation.
- × **Unable to provide longer-term support.** Although providing much valued assistance, the project was not able to adequately address the longer-term needs of the affected population in terms of adequate housing and increasing resilience.
- × **Trade-offs in providing imported in-kind items.** Project partners opted for an in-kind approach using imported items as it was felt this was the best approach to support the timeliness of response and ensure better quality items. Trade-offs in taking this approach related to potential missed opportunities in enabling greater choice to households and supporting local markets.

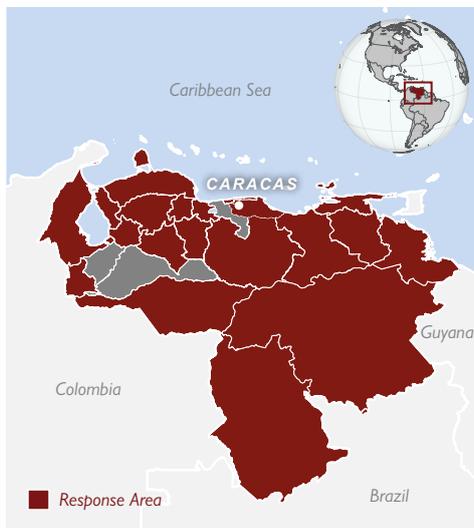
LESSONS LEARNED

- **Further work is needed to improve the ‘train the trainer’ model.** This could include enhanced engagement on roles and responsibilities, clarifying expectations, and ensuring that adequate resources and support are made available to the community trainers.
- **More time spent with communities on development of IEC materials would have been beneficial.** Some changes were made to draft IEC materials following engagement with communities, but enhanced community dialogue on IEC messages and communication would have been beneficial.
- **Humanitarian actors have a role to play in drawing attention to recurring crises.** Involvement of international actors in the form of surge capacity can help to raise awareness and lead to an enhanced sense of focus from national governments and agencies in situations of recurring crises, where events can become relatively normalized and become challenging to resource. Through engagement with coordination architecture more could be done to elevate levels of donor interest which could lead to greater levels of response capacity.
- **Relationships built through emergency response can link through to longer-term support.** Resources and mandate permitting, emergency responses projects can lead to enhanced community dialogue and involvement in longer-term development focused programs.

OVERVIEW

VENEZUELA 2020 / COMPLEX CRISIS

CRISIS	Complex crisis, October 2018 onwards (UN scale-up strategy for humanitarian needs in Venezuela)
PEOPLE AFFECTED	7 million people in need*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	5.4 million people , including refugees and migrants living abroad and 4.6 million of them in Latin America and the Caribbean**
LOCATIONS	Amazonas, Anzoátegui, Apure, Bolívar, Carabobo, Cojedes, Delta Amacuro, Distrito Capital, Falcón, Guárico, La Guaira, Lara, Miranda, Monagas, Nueva Esparta, Portuguesa, Sucre, Táchira, Trujillo, Yaracuy, and Zulia.
PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN THE RESPONSE	515,395 people received assistance to improve their shelter conditions, have access to energy and basic NFI distributions
RESPONSE OUTPUTS	<p>239,092 people received kits and NFI distributions</p> <p>249 solar street lamps installed</p> <p>237,493 people benefited from repair of community spaces in collective centers</p> <p>84 collective centers rehabilitated.</p> <p>217 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) were installed. 117 for health and collective facilities.</p> <p>56 health establishments rehabilitated</p> <p>16 state-led institutions repaired</p> <p>23 trainings for 763 people in CCCM</p>
	<p>* Source: Humanitarian Response Plan (July 2020).</p> <p>** Source: Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan 2021 (R4V)</p>



SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

As a result of economic instability compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the dynamics of human mobility, humanitarian shelter and NFI needs in Venezuela increased in border states and in migrants' areas of origin (AoO). The Cluster contributed to improving safe access to essential services, including better access to energy. Shelter activities, included construction, repairs, and expansions in community centers, temporary shelters (collective centers) and key institutions such as health centers and schools.



By Oct 2018 the ongoing political, human rights and socio-economic developments in Venezuela had led to the outflow of more than three million Venezuelans into neighbouring countries and beyond.

- 1 **Oct 2018:** UN Scale-up Strategy.
- 2 **First half of 2019:** Shelter, Energy and NFI was set up as a working group within the Protection Cluster.
- 3 **Jul 2019:** Shelter, Energy and NFI Cluster activation.
- 4 **Dec 2019:** Increase in spontaneous returns to Venezuela.
- 5 **Feb 2020:** Strategy Advisory Group (SAG) formed.
- 6 **Mar 2020:** COVID-19 State of Alarm and government request to UN for support.
- 6 **Jun 2020:** CCCM functions assumed by Shelter Cluster.



With people on the move within Venezuela, and mass migration to neighboring countries, there was a need for NFI support along with other forms of Shelter and Energy assistance.

CONTEXT

As a result of a contraction affecting Venezuela's economy, exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the country experienced a deterioration of essential services, including power outages and limited access to fuel. Hyperinflation affected purchasing power, impacting access to food and livelihoods. The population suffered reduced access to health care and education, water shortages, and increased levels of insecurity.

The ongoing political and economic situation in Venezuela led to more than five million nationals leaving Venezuela into other countries. This led to humanitarian needs related to Shelter, Energy and NFI and impacted dynamics of human mobility. In general, migrants moved towards the Colombian-Venezuelan border for daily work in Colombia or migrated to a third country (e.g. Brazil or Ecuador) in search for social and economic integration.

Within Venezuela, people moved to large urban areas such as Distrito Capital where the access to basic services and livelihoods was not heavily affected. The human mobility to border states and urban areas has also increased the need to access the already limited basic services and livelihood opportunities. Given the limited economic capacity of most of the persons on the move, they were not able to access decent accommodation or hotels. This led to many people living in overcrowded homes or in substandard conditions, either without access to basic services or in poor quality shelter.

Since the last quarter of 2019, an influx of Venezuelan returnees led to a corresponding escalation in humanitarian needs. People returning to their areas of origin (AoO) represented a new complex humanitarian challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Temporary shelter arrangements (collective centers), including the Government-led Puntos de Atención Social Integral (PASI) were established, mainly in border locations to support the influx of individuals and families, with different shelter conditions, and different levels of access to NFIs and essential services.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

Shelter conditions in Venezuela have been affected by significant demographic growth and oil booms linked with a massive increase of its urban population, especially in the northwest of the country. Urbanization trends, accelerated by the oil incomes, have been impacted by an unequal wealth distribution and a lack of urban planning, leading to informal settlements categorized as:

- consolidated (located in areas that do not present any geotechnical issues and have basic and acceptable infrastructure);
- to be consolidated (located inside and outside the urban perimeter, in some cases located on unstable land areas with limited access to sanitary services, inadequate shelters and overcrowded conditions); and
- unstable neighborhoods (located in areas that are at high risk of flooding).

In Venezuela, according to the most recent national census (2011), 70% of people live in their own accommodation, including urban and rural houses and apartments. Several policies have been put in place to reorganize populations in urban and rural areas and provide partial shelter solutions.

In the decade from 2000-2010, social and economic advances took place in Venezuela, namely poverty reduction and improved access to essential services. These improvements have been associated with an increase in social expenditure linked to high returns from the petroleum industry and increased public expending.

However, more recently, Venezuelans suffered from the impact of a significant contraction in their economy, devaluing the national currency and negatively impacting private consumption, public spending, investment and prices.



Within Venezuela, people moved to large urban areas, often into existing informal settlements. Many migrants have also moved to other countries in the region, including Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador.

NATIONAL SHELTER, ENERGY AND NFI STRATEGY

Humanitarian needs were identified for shelter, energy and NFIs, with a focus on persons on the move and vulnerable people living in communities impacted by the crisis. Assistance was given to improve shelter conditions and provide better access to energy and NFIs. The response was focused on the following main areas:

1. SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF COLLECTIVE CENTERS

During 2020, despite movement restrictions due to COVID-19, more people were moving locations than prior to the pandemic. Persons on the move, including returnees, needed improved access to safe and dignified collective centers and basic NFI assistance across the main routes in central and border states. Part of the Cluster response focused on supporting the network of collective centers through shelter repairs and rehabilitation. NFI distributions were also made, targeting both returnee populations and vulnerable persons on the move. Also, some Refugee Housing Units were installed in collective centres to increase their capacity.

2. COMMUNITY-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

Access to essential services, such as electricity and domestic gas deteriorated, worsening living conditions in communities also impacted by COVID-19. Limited access to energy had a negative effect on other essential services such as water, health, and telecommunications. Partners' responses focused on improving access to energy at the community level. Key interventions included electric solutions such as the installation of solar street lamps and photo voltaic systems. These were installed in institutions, community spaces and centers that provided essential services to affected populations (i.e. health centers and schools).



Community-level interventions included the rehabilitation of water pipelines.



Community-level interventions included the creation of recreation areas such as soccer fields and playgrounds, creating safe spaces where vulnerable children are able to play.



Before & after. Part of the response involved rehabilitating buildings that could be used as collective centers.

3. IMPROVING SUB-STANDARD SHELTERS IN BORDER AREAS

Border closures from March 2020 impacted living conditions, including livelihoods, economic opportunities, and the quality of essential services mainly in border states. Cross-border movements continued through irregular pathways, leading to an escalation of protection risks in host communities, especially where shelter conditions were deficient. The Cluster response targeted individuals and families living in overcrowded conditions and/or inadequate shelters in host communities, with repairs and NFI distributions. This included areas of high returns with a focus on achieving durable solutions for returnee populations.

4. COVID-19 RESPONSE

Within the Venezuela Intersectoral COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan published in April 2020, the Cluster strategy was adapted to address the escalation of humanitarian needs in shelter, energy and NFIs due to the COVID-19 emergency and the influx of returnees.

National authorities established temporary collective shelters in locations such as schools, public buildings and hotels. Called Puntos de Atención Social Integral (PASIs), these were mainly in border municipalities where returnees had to remain for quarantine. These sites required better access to dignified and safe shelter, including access to energy and basic NFI distributions. The Cluster temporarily assumed Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) functions to support authorities in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 Cluster response was focused on the provision of assistance in PASIs through shelter repairs and NFI distributions, adapting NFI kits with articles to prevent the virus and shelter support in prioritized health facilities (in coordination with authorities and Health Cluster), and also the mapping of temporary shelter arrangements.

Some Refugee Housing Units were set up in health facilities to create triage areas and quarantine zones. Some solar lighting was also installed.



Before and after: housing rehabilitations supported durable solutions for returnees.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Security. Some of the prioritized areas had inadequate security conditions and limited humanitarian access. The presence of irregular armed groups, as well as robbery and vandalism during the implementation impeded distribution of basic NFIs and equipment to communities and institutions. Liaison with authorities at local and national level was established in order to improve security conditions and expand humanitarian access in prioritized areas.

Alternative energy sources. Local organizations had limited technical knowledge and resources to integrate alternative energy generation systems. In order to strengthen local capacities, the Cluster organized trainings for partner organizations with a focus on sustainable sources of energy including solar energy for cooking and for electricity generation.

Operational level. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to prevent the spread of the virus, mobility has been significantly affected by the restrictions on air, sea and land travel in the country. Fuel shortages further limited the response capacity of the organizations.

Presence and capacity of organizations. Partners' limited operational capacity and the restricted number of organizations operating in prioritized states (especially in the eastern region of the country), is a challenge to ensure the delivery of the required assistance. Efforts have been made to strengthen organizations' capacities and coordination in the eastern region of the country, including the possibility to activate the subnational Cluster. However, this remains a priority challenge to be addressed.

Funding. The funding of the organizations that are part of the Cluster has been limited, affecting the capacity of the partners to respond to the identified needs of the target populations. Partners' activities and operational functioning have also been affected by the ongoing currency devaluation and other financial challenges such as foreign exchange operation. The Venezuelan Humanitarian Fund was established in late 2020 to generate an alternative financial mechanism to support the humanitarian response in Venezuela.



Politicization of humanitarian assistance: Humanitarian assistance in Venezuela is at risk of being used for political purposes. This constitutes a risk for humanitarian action.

Appropriate timing for activities like NFI distributions is evaluated considering political activities like regional and national elections to minimize the risk of politicization. Where possible assistance is directly delivered to affected people to mitigate this challenge.

Limited access to countrywide data: There is a need to gather primary data on humanitarian needs to be able to inform strategic decisions on the main priorities of the affected population, to support actors working in the context of the Venezuelan crisis more effectively, and to provide an analysis of the humanitarian situation.

Multi sectoral efforts have been made to access the most recent official statistics in order to prioritize the response. Cluster approaches to national authorities have been put in place to obtain specific information regarding Shelter, Energy and NFI needs.

WIDER IMPACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic enabled better relations and liaison capacities with relevant Governmental authorities at both national and local levels. As a result the overall humanitarian access improved. Partners became more aware of the need to work jointly with the authorities and working relations have improved.



The COVID-19 pandemic created multiple operational challenges, but also led to building better relationships with Government authorities, more joined-up working between partners, and improvements in humanitarian access.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Drawing from lessons learned and evidence-based actions, the COVID-19 emergency flagged the need to advocate for a prompt and joint response together with the relevant national and local authorities in order to support the actions of the state and its primary role in the humanitarian assistance. A closer coordination with authorities has strengthened humanitarian actions in relation to Shelter, Energy and NFIs.
- Early response of the Cluster to recurrent disasters such as floods needs further coordination and preparedness. Civil society groups and other relevant stakeholders need to work on contingency plans for recurrent disasters and other emergencies that may have an impact on the populations in Venezuela.
- Subnational coordination is required to have an effective and timely response to humanitarian needs related to Shelter, Energy and NFIs.
- In early 2020, the first Strategic Advisory Group of the Shelter, Energy and NFI Cluster was established. This group supported the technical validation of project proposals for HRP 2020 and 2021 and the development of the first strategy for HNO/HRP 2021. Further active collaboration in decision making strategies and in the advocacy strategy for resource mobilization is required.

CASE STUDY

BANGLADESH 2018–2021 / ROHINGYA CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Bamboo treatment, Coordination and partnerships, Environmental sustainability

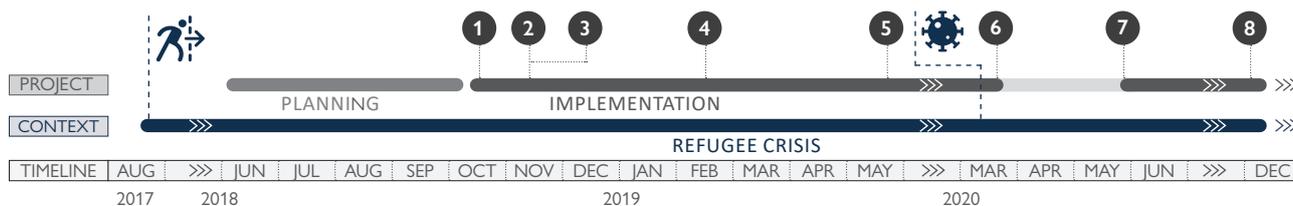
CRISIS	Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Cox’s Bazar, 25 August 2017 onwards
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	289,660 HHs (884,042 individuals)*
PROJECT LOCATION	Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	92,492 HHs (385,411 individuals) received treated bamboo as part of shelter assistance. Treated bamboo has also been used to build community facilities. Livelihood opportunities created: 254 host community members per day (on average) work in the treatment facility.
PROJECT OUTPUTS	665,220+ treated bamboo poles: 583,020 large bamboo poles (Borak) 82,200 smaller support poles (Muli)
DIRECT COST	USD 4.01 untreated bamboo pole per piece USD 1.69 labor cost per pole treated USD 0.20 chemical cost per pole USD 5.90 total cost per treated pole
PROJECT COST	USD 657,600 Facility set-up cost (including construction, labor, tools and equipment)
*Source Joint Government of Bangladesh - UNHCR Population factsheet as of March 2021	



PROJECT SUMMARY

This project was implemented to support existing shelter and infrastructure programming in order to strengthen and extend the lifespan of structures in the camps, by reducing the costs of repairs but above all, making structures safer and more resistant to hazards. Working within established sector guidelines, treating bamboo increased its durability and decreased supply chain pressure and environmental impacts on the bamboo forests of Bangladesh.

The program works as a common pipeline for sector partners, supplying partners with treated bamboo.



25 Aug 2017: Beginning of violence in Rakhine State which drove an estimated 655,500 Rohingya across the border into Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

- 1 Oct 2018:** Pilot treatment facility construction began.
- 2 Nov 2018:** Pilot facility completed, and treatment of bamboo began.
- 3 Nov 2018:** Main facility design began.
- 4 Feb 2019:** Main facility construction began.
- 5 May 2019:** Main facility began operations.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 6 Apr 2020:** Production halted due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- 7 Jun 2020:** Production resumed to support COVID-19 programming and continued response activities.
- 8 Dec 2020:** 500,000 large bamboo poles treated to date.



The facility has a daily production capacity of treating 2,500 bamboo poles.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the Rohingya Crisis see the [response overview in Shelter Projects 2017-18](#).

On 25th August 2017, a mass exodus of Rohingya refugees travelled from northern Rakhine State, Myanmar, to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Over 712,000 individuals arrived during the first few months of the crisis, joining the 200,000 plus individuals who had arrived in previous influxes since 1978 – bringing the total population living in camps to more than 930,000 by August 2017.

SHELTER SITUATION

Following the 2017 influx, newly arrived refugees were accommodated in self-built, makeshift shelters made of bamboo, sticks, and low-grade plastic sheeting. These have been progressively upgraded with Shelter & NFI assistance, but conditions remain very challenging. Due to the rapid formation of the camps, they suffer from lack of site planning, low quality infrastructure and risks from landslides, flooding and fires. Families often reside in a single room shelter, with a covered area of 2 to 2.5m²/person on average, including cooking space. Such over-crowdedness exacerbates security, health, and protection risks.

With the distribution of upgrade shelter kits and tie-down kits, plus training and technical assistance, the immediate need to improve the robustness of the shelters to better withstand the climatic conditions expected during the monsoon/cyclone season, was partially addressed. The space per person however remained below the minimum desired of 3.5m² per person, and the extent to which DRR features, such as bracing, tie down, strong connections etc., were incorporated varied from household to household. The lifespan of the materials, and therefore of the shelters, was measured in months rather than years, compromising

the sustainability of the shelter response on a mid-term perspective. The structural resistance of the shelter is of critical importance to reduce risk.

PROJECT APPROACH

Due to the ongoing displacement, shelter durability within the camps is an ongoing major concern. The initial rapid response used both poor quality bamboo and unsustainable building methods due to the spontaneous nature of the initial settlement process. These practices promoted both rot and infestation of boring beetles, leading to the fast and widespread degradation of structures within camps in a short time frame. As a policy of non-permanent structures is maintained in the camps by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) – meaning that the use of building materials such as CGI, concrete, steel, brick, and mud are restricted – the Shelter Sector in 2018 assessed the strength of bamboo and its long-term structural integrity. The conclusion of the study recommended the treatment of bamboo to increase its lifespan and to reduce frequency of replacement while increasing the structural resistance of the shelters to the impacts of the monsoon.

The primary goals of the program are to increase the lifespan and structural integrity of shelters within camps, reduce long-term shelter costs by decreasing the frequency of bamboo replacement, and lessen the impact of sustained bamboo usage on the bamboo forests and groves of Bangladesh by the treatment of bamboo in an environmentally friendly manner.

As the GoB maintains a policy of non-permanent structures within camps, the project was designed to support and integrate with the ongoing upgrading and maintenance of the camps. The size of the project reflected the overall scale of the response and the ability to treat and distribute bamboo as quickly as possible.



Bamboo is the primary building material in the camps. A GoB policy for non-permanent structures in the camps means that the use of materials such as concrete, brick and steel is restricted.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE I: UNDERSTANDING, PLANNING AND PILOTING

Within the first six months it became evident that a solution was needed to increase the longevity of the bamboo being used. Clarity was provided through studies commissioned by the Cox's Bazar Shelter Sector to understand perceived bottlenecks in bamboo supply and to address the visible damage seen within camp structures. Existing studies by the Bangladesh Forest Research Institute indicated deficits in supply before the response began. The response's heavy use of bamboo exacerbated the existing problem. Compounding this issue would be the need to replace the bamboo yearly to maintain structural integrity of shelters.

By June of 2018 planning began for the development of a bamboo treatment facility. This planning period revolved around finding a suitable location, designing a pilot treatment facility, studying boron treatment methods, and identifying chemical suppliers. In October 2018 construction began on the pilot facility in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar. This facility began operations in November with the first treated batch of bamboo ready in December. The pilot treatment facility allowed the program to understand and develop a working understanding of the process, establish testing procedures, hone production techniques, and begin the planning for the main facility.

Construction of the bamboo treatment facility began in February 2019 with operations commencing in June. The planning and design of the main facility considered the production needs of the organization, direct implementing partners, and pipeline capacity for bamboo treatment for shelter partners.

The facility has a daily production capacity of 2,500 poles. The common pipeline is open to all operational agencies with a formal agreement. The pipeline provides a reliable steady stream of quality controlled treated bamboo. Partner agencies purchase and deliver untreated bamboo of a certain quality standard and receive treated bamboo in exchange.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As the facility is constructed outside of the camps, Bangladesh labor laws dictate the strict use of non-refugee labor. The treatment facility's labor force is comprised wholly of the host community, and in compliance with national labor guidelines. The program in full production employs 440 laborers daily to complete the production cycle and added almost USD 995,000 in wages to the host community in its first year. The program strives to be an inclusive environment and currently twenty percent of the workforce is female. This targeted goal was implemented incrementally to address cultural sensitivities to women working alongside men in labor intensive roles.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

The large bamboo used for structural construction is supplied predominantly from Rangpur, the northern most state of Bangladesh. As it starts with growers and harvesters the supply proceeds to local markets where brokers purchase in bulk selling on to individual vendors who then transport to response purchasers. The supply chain can respond quickly when a direct purchase order is made with brokers. Generally, from signed purchase order to first delivery takes one month.

The initial response had significant impact on the bamboo supplies of Bangladesh. As the program has continued, efforts have been made to purchase bamboo in the appropriate season. The treatment of bamboo will extend the lifespan thus further decreasing the impact of the response on the bamboo forests and groves of Bangladesh.



Bamboo for construction is mostly supplied from Rangpur in the north of Bangladesh.



When in full production the treatment facility employs 440 laborers, all from the host community.

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

The technology of treating bamboo with orthoboric solutions at scale was introduced to Bangladesh during the Rohingya refugee crisis. This option was introduced through consultancies and multiple actors with experience in treatment of bamboo. It was chosen for its simplicity of treatment and because it is a nontoxic environmentally sustainable solution.

The orthoboric solution is a mixture of forty five percent boric acid and fifty five percent borax, which is maintained in a seven percent solution. Soaking the poles for eight days in the solution allows for complete penetration of the vascular tissue of the bamboo walls. The treated poles become insect resistant as plant sugars are replaced with orthoboric solution. As the poles dry out the orthoborates remain in the poles working as an insecticide against boring beetles and termites. The treatment also provides mild fungus resistance.

The solution is maintained in a circular loop. All solution is preserved after each treatment and additional water and orthoboric chemicals are topped up as needed. Periodically the solution is filtered through an established gravel, sand, charcoal filtration system to remove dissolved organic carbons. The charcoal used for the filtration is produced in custom kilns designed to use the bamboo wastage to both produce charcoal and fire the kilns.

Additionally, sound shelter elements such as metal footings were added to shelter designs to protect the bamboo from ground contact, rain, and ultraviolet sunlight preventing damage and decreasing the quantity of structural bamboo need in the camps over time.

In designing a facility with capacity of producing 60,000 poles per month (which is enough poles for 7,500 transitional shelters per month) all program and pipeline partner implementation requirements were covered allowing distribution timelines to be met.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The improved lifespan of the bamboo increases its long-term durability as a building material allowing it to resist inclement weather for longer periods. The treatment process can increase the bamboo's use by three to five years and if fully protected from the elements and ground contact can last ten plus years. The lifespan increase, combined with the structural shelter components, in which household members are trained, allows a general decrease of risk due to structural failure and collapse during the monsoon. Repairs and maintenance to non-structural elements will continue to be needed but households will be safer and better protected from natural hazards. This also represents a cost saving that can be directed toward improving other areas of risk in camps such as slope stabilization, drainage and access, all factors contributing to a decrease of the risk of disasters.

The complete treatment process from intake to distribution is completed in **two weeks**:

- Quality control intake - **1 day**
- Cutting, cleaning, and drilling nodes for solution penetration - **1 day**
- Soaking tank loading (2,000 poles) - **1 day**
- Soaking in orthoboric solution to penetrate ninety eight percent of vascular tissue - **8 days**
- Soaking tank unloading (2,000 poles) - **1 day**
- Vertical drying - **1 day**
- Stacking horizontal distribution racks - **1 day**

Treated bamboo is ready for distribution to camps.



The orthoboric solution used for the treatment of bamboo was selected for its ease in processing and its non-toxic nature.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Due to the nature of the Rohingya refugee camps being inside Government of Bangladesh forestry land there is a mandate to construct in a manner which will allow the land to return to forestry use in the future. From inception, the aim of the program is to reduce the impact of camp shelters and structures on the forestry land while continuing to strengthen and develop long-term structural solutions. This is done in tandem with environmentally sound solutions to protect households from disasters and the continual disruption of rebuilding structures yearly.

The program's major contribution to environmental sustainability is the increased lifespan of the bamboo and therefore the decreased need for maintenance and replacement. By decreasing the need to replace bamboo annually the production pressure on the bamboo forests and private groves decreases, allowing the groves to develop to full maturity.

Additional ways environmental sustainability is integrated into the program include:

- A quality control team ensures mature bamboo of three to five years of age is purchased. The team works with vendors to assure only mature bamboo is purchased ensuring immature bamboo is not harvested prematurely.
- The program works to buy bamboo in season which protects the bamboo groves during the monsoon season, allowing them to regenerate new growth and assuring future crops.
- The program works with the Bangladesh Forestry Research Institute to develop better harvesting practices: training agencies, growers, and vendors in methods to assure future crops of bamboo are available for all uses in Bangladesh.
- The program has secured environmental and fire licenses for operation of the facilities with the Bangladesh Department of Environment in order to be within best practices guidelines.

LONG TERM COST SAVINGS

Before treatment was initiated bamboo had to be replaced cyclically every 6-12 months in order to maintain minimal structural integrity. By providing treatment, the decreasing need for cyclical replacement of bamboo reduces the amount of bamboo needed for distribution for the structural maintenance of shelters.

The long-term savings is determined by comparing the cost to replace the bamboo each year or one cycle which would cost USD 2,727,416 for full replacement of all structural bamboo poles. As the treated bamboo is expected to have a life span of three to five years plus, the cost savings of not distributing each cycle is seen as the overall savings:

- If the treated bamboo is degraded at the earliest estimate of three years and is replaced the program will have a cost savings of USD 8.2 million.

- If replacement is needed after five years, the cost savings will be USD 13.6 million.
- As research shows that the treated bamboo life cycle can be ten plus years if protected from the elements the savings could end up being over USD 27.3 million.

MAIN CHALLENGES

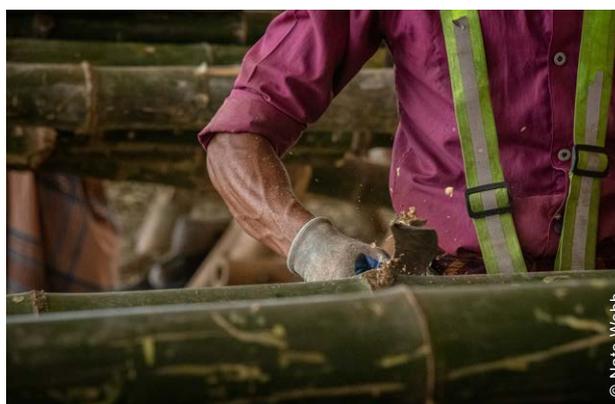
The top challenge for the program has been **fostering a healthy supply chain which understands the quality control protocols of the program**. These quality control measures are now in place to assure mature structural grades of bamboo are delivered for production into treated poles and to allow younger poles to reach maturity decreasing the impact on bamboo forest and private groves of Bangladesh. The issue was addressed through workshops with partners and education of vendors. Additionally, a strong quality control team was built to interface with deliveries and reject substandard materials. Through these efforts the program has lessened the impact and works to assure future crops of bamboo are available in addition to strengthening and increasing the lifespan of shelters in camps.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The program highlights the ability to **overcome a specific material constraint**, while **considering environmental sustainability throughout the process**. By developing the bamboo treatment facility, the program was able to add value by **increasing the lifespan and durability** of a strong but short-lived building material leading to **increased resilience of camp structures and considerable long-term cost savings**.

The program can both **scale up and scale down** based on material needs of programming. It can facilitate all programming and pipeline partners treated bamboo needs. **The program has so far produced 665,220 treated bamboo poles which have been used in transitional shelter, mid-term shelter, community shelter upgrades, site development projects, protection safe spaces, and COVID-19 isolation and treatment centers**.

Additionally, the program provides **regular income for host community members**.



The program has been designed to integrate a range of environmental sustainability considerations, including a strong focus on the sustainability of the bamboo supply chain in Bangladesh.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Reduced shelter maintenance costs.** The treatment of bamboo has increased the structural lifespan of bamboo from three to five years. If the bamboo is kept dry it has the potential to maintain strength up to ten plus years.
- √ **Environmental impact reduction.** By increasing the lifespan of the bamboo poles, the need for continual distribution of structural bamboo has been reduced. This will have a direct impact on allowing the bamboo forests and groves of Bangladesh to recover from the impact of the continued response needs for bamboo.
- √ **Quality standardization of bamboo.** Through the implementation of a quality control program, the program has standardized high-quality bamboo for the organization's shelter programming and bamboo supplied to the pipeline partners. The program has further become a catalyst for research on the potential of treated bamboo for other uses than shelter.
- √ **Host community livelihoods and skills development opportunities.** The need of a regular workforce for the treatment process has created a new livelihood for members of the local community. The program has provided training and reliable employment in a rural area.
- √ **Scale of the program and pipeline creation.** The creation of a pipeline allowed partners to focus on implementation of projects rather than many organizations having to divert focus to build a treatment process.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Shelter programs were directly affected by slow initial construction and operational delays.** Early delays led to an initial phase of low production which effected both direct and pipeline partner implementation in camps until the facility became fully operational. Many of the delays can be traced to contractor delays and facility design changes which would increase long term productivity but brought initial delays to shelter material distributions.
- × **The treatment's long-term effectiveness is dependent upon multiple factors.** The treated bamboo must be protected from fungal rot, rain, and UV light as all will work to break down the material. As such, the bamboo must be used with a steel or concrete footing and covered to assure extended lifespans. As the materials are distributed to households for shelter construction some chose to sell DRR items such as metal footings and place the bamboo poles into direct contact with the ground leading to water penetration and fungal rot during monsoon season.
- × **Assurance of best harvesting practices by bamboo producers is extremely difficult.** Due to the nature of programming, bamboo is purchased throughout different irregular funding cycles and is not purchased as a regular and predictable commodity. Furthermore, as bamboo should only be harvested outside of monsoon season it needs to be stockpiled but creating a large stockpile seasonally is a continued challenge due to many factors in the market and the nature of funding mechanisms.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Development of a core team to focus exclusively on the project was essential** to its success and increased the implementation timeline.
- **The programming learning curve was steep due to the introduction of new techniques and processes.** Through continued small improvements and redesign the program increased efficiencies allowing the program to scale up and down as needed. During COVID-19 this resilient capacity was quite evident and addressed with shifts and rotational staff cycles.
- **Timely inputs from outside experts were vital** to the overall long-term success of the program. As the program began from an idea and grew into a full program many ideas were not fully conceived from the beginning and there were multiple practical challenges. More technical consulting in the start-up phase could have reduced the steep learning curve of the process.



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CASE STUDY

BANGLADESH 2019–2020 / ROHINGYA CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Disaster Risk Reduction, Site improvements, Site planning

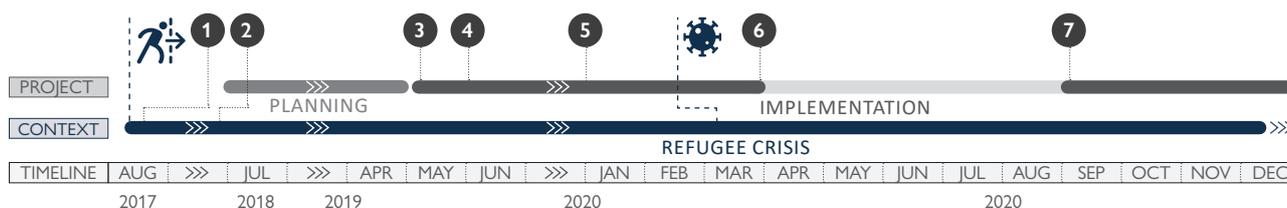
CRISIS	Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Cox’s Bazar, 2017 onwards
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	289,660 HHs (884,042 individuals)*
PROJECT LOCATION	Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	563 HHs (2,646 individuals) supported through the Mid-Term Shelters Program
PROJECT OUTPUTS	Usable area of the Camp 20 extension increased by 40% 563 Mid-Term Shelters constructed 620 Cash-for-Work participants engaged per month
SHELTER SIZE	21m²
SHELTER DENSITY	3.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 828 per Single shelter (up to 5 member HH) USD 1,067 per Mezzanine shelter (6+ member HH)
PROJECT COST	Approx. USD 1,855 per HH (USD 1,500 shelter construction + USD 355 site development)



PROJECT SUMMARY

To reduce congestion in the main Kutapalong-Balukhali refugee camp, two planned camps were created in 2018, accommodating 1340 and 995 households. Starting in 2019, the project team further developed the second camp, using flood modelling to demonstrate that the flood risk in the valley areas was low and could be mitigated with sustainable site improvement works, increasing the capacity of the camp by over 40% with minimal impact on the environment. Alongside this, the project team also developed a new Mid-Term Shelter design for use in these areas.

* Source: Joint Government of Bangladesh - [UNHCR Population factsheet as of March 2021](#)



25 Aug 2017: Beginning of violence in Rakhine State which drove an estimated 655,500 Rohingya across the border into Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

- 1 Aug 2017 - Mar 2018:** Kutapalong-Balukhali Expansion camp (pop. 460,000) formed by refugees self-settling close to pre-existing camps.
- 2 Apr - Nov 2018:** Govt approval and subsequent construction of two new planned camps, with 1,340 and 995 shelters constructed in the first phase.
- 3 May 2019:** Project approval to construct a further 539 shelters using a new mid-term shelter design in the second camp.
- 4 Jun 2019:** First group of 12 shelters completed.
- 5 Jan 2020:** Approval from local authorities for additional 1,611 shelter units.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.

- 6 Apr 2020:** Works temporarily stopped after completion of 563 units due to COVID-19.
- 7 Sep 2020:** Restart of works.



Mid-Term shelters were constructed in the valley areas.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the Rohingya Crisis see the [response overview in Shelter Projects 2017-18](#).

On 25th August 2017, a mass exodus of Rohingya refugees traveled from northern Rakhine State, Myanmar, to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Over 712,000 individuals arrived during the first few months of the crisis, joining the 200,000 plus individuals who had arrived in previous influxes since 1978 – bringing the total population living in camps to more than 930,000 by August 2017.

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND SHELTER SITUATION

Following the 2017 influx, newly arrived refugees were accommodated in self-built, makeshift shelters made of bamboo, sticks, and low-grade plastic sheeting. These have been progressively upgraded with Shelter & NFI assistance, but conditions remain very challenging. Due to the rapid formation of the camps, they suffer from lack of site planning, low quality infrastructure and risks from landslides, flooding and fires. Families often reside in a single room shelter, with a covered area of 2 to 2.5m²/person on average, including cooking space. Such over-crowdedness exacerbates security, health, and protection risks.

With the distribution of upgrade shelter kits and tie-down kits, plus training and technical assistance, the immediate need to improve the robustness of the shelters to better withstand the climatic conditions expected during the monsoon/cyclone season, was partially addressed. The space per person however remained below the minimum desired of 3.5m² per person, and the extent to which DRR features, such as bracing, tie down, strong connections etc., were incorporated varied from household to household. The lifespan of the materials, and therefore of the shelters, was measured in months rather than years, compromising the sustainability of the shelter response on a mid-term perspective. The structural resistance of the shelter is of critical importance to reduce risk.

In early 2018, the Government of Bangladesh extended the boundary of the main Rohingya refugee camp in Cox Bazar district to create space for new arrivals and allow families to relocate from the most congested and high-risk areas of the camp. The topography in this area is very challenging for developing settlements, comprising steep, tightly knitted hills with almost no flat areas, so significant earthworks were required to create safe areas for shelter construction. However, by 2019 the Government had banned further cut-and-fill interventions, meaning that space had to be found in the leftover parts of the camp for new shelter developments.

PROJECT APPROACH

The primary goal of the project was to increase the capacity of the camp, accommodating families relocating from more congested, at-risk areas. The project also presented an opportunity to develop integrated shelter designs and site planning standards that could be followed for the eventual redevelopment of the entire camp. The Government restricted the use of permanent materials, as the camps are deemed to be temporary. Therefore, the Shelter/NFI Sector approach for the new areas was to construct Mid-Term Shelters.



The newly constructed shelters provided accommodation to families who were being relocated from other areas of the camp that were congested or faced disaster-risk.



Over-crowdedness in unplanned areas of the camps can exacerbate security, health and protection risks.

There was strong pressure from the Government to maximize the number of shelters that could be accommodated, as no further expansion of the camp would be allowed. Therefore, Site Management and Shelter/NFI Sectors and implementing actors advocated to the Government on the importance of maintaining minimum spatial standards and developed context-specific indicators for site planning. This advocacy was successful, in that the site plans were finally approved and pressure to maximize the shelter density were successfully countered, though the same standards were not formally approved by the Government for use across all the camps.

All site development activities and shelter construction was managed through Cash-for-Work (CFW), to provide income generating opportunity and skills training to the community, as well as to foster their ownership. The Site Management agency in the camp managed the recruitment and rotation of CFW labor for Shelter and Site Development teams, according to their requirements and ensuring that vulnerable families were included. At the outset, the intention had been to integrate the female Cash-for-Work participants into the regular activities. However, the women preferred to work in separate activities away from the men, such as producing bamboo crafts.

The Mid-Term Shelter strategy included stipulations that new shelters should be planned using a settlement approach, to ensure that the wider needs of the community were met. Site plans were prepared, setting out the

access and drainage networks, shelter and WASH layouts, and providing space for community facilities and open areas for recreation and community gardens.

The shelters were intended for households relocating from other areas of the camp, due to flood or landslide risks, congestion, protection concerns, or to accommodate new infrastructure. This process was managed by the Site Management team, in coordination with Protection actors and local authorities. Therefore, completed shelters had to be available and handed over to Site Management before the eventual occupants arrived, which meant that shelter actors had to construct the shelters directly, rather than providing materials for the community to build their own shelters. Close coordination between Site Planning, Site Development, Shelter, WASH and Site Management teams in the camp was necessary for teams to work in parallel and avoid delays.

All the construction techniques, for both shelter and site development activities, were based on local common practices, well known also among the refugees. Skilled laborers were identified from within the camp to act as supervisors and to carry out the various skilled tasks. The shelters, and the civil infrastructure of the settlement were 100% built by the refugees themselves through Cash-for-Work, providing an important livelihoods support to the community. This opportunity was extended as widely as possible by systematically rotating laborers every 15 days.



Planning for Mid-Term Shelters was done as part of an integrated site planning and site development approach that ensured space was also provided for infrastructure, community facilities and open areas.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE I : SITE PLANNING AND SITE PREPARATION

From the start, a ‘whole settlement approach’ to the project was taken, integrating Site Planning, Site Development, Shelter, WASH and Site Management.

By 2019, the only remaining land available for development in this area of the camp was in the valley floor. According to the 2018 flood risk map, these areas were flood-prone. However, there was no significant flooding in these areas during the 2018 monsoon, despite periods of very heavy rainfall, indicating that the original flooding assessment may have been overly conservative. Therefore, new flood models for all the camps were commissioned, which confirmed the engineering judgment that it would be safe to develop the valleys for shelter.

An initial drainage masterplan of the area was developed, creating catch drains around the edge of each shelter area to intercept water washing off the slopes, linked to primary drains through the center of each valley. Soil excavated in digging the primary drains was used to raise the level of the shelters. The project prioritized the use of environmentally sustainable DRR measures, such as using natural drains with earth bedding to promote water infiltration and reduce flood risks for downstream communities, and planting quick growing, deep-rooted grasses along the embankments and on slopes to prevent erosion. In addition to this, several actors carried out major tree plantation and reforestation activities across the camp, to restore the environment, protect the slopes from erosion, and reduce flooding.

GBV risks were considered during site planning, including the placement and width of pathways, the segregation and

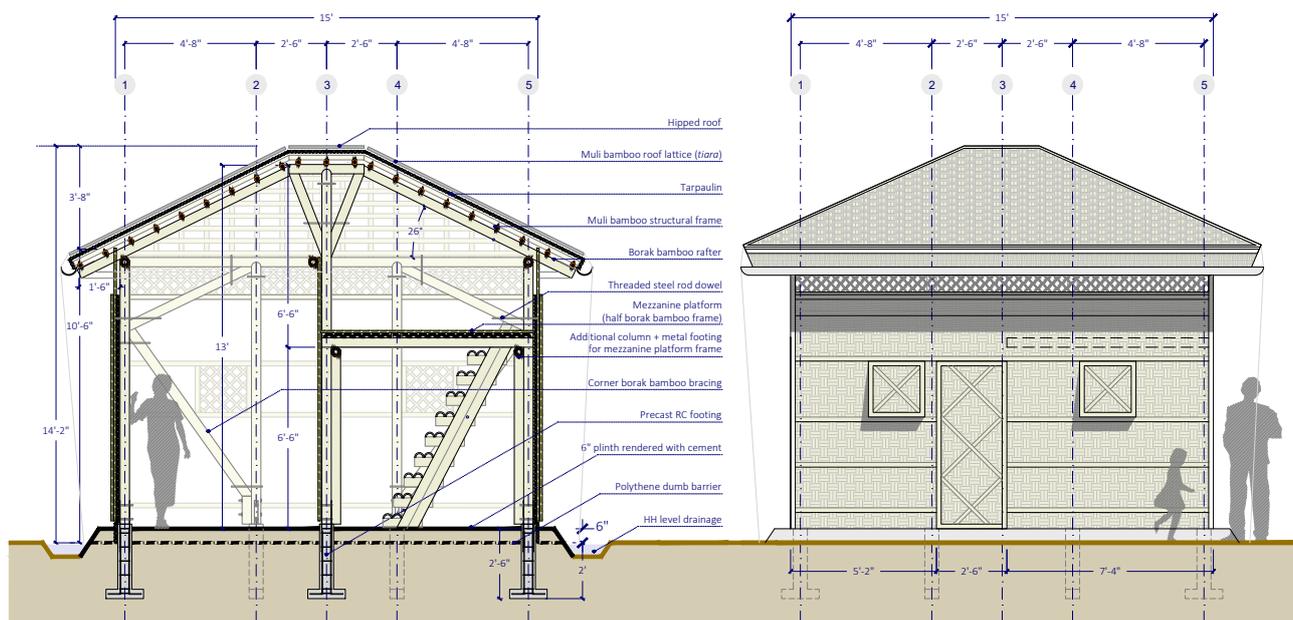
placement of latrines, bathing spaces and water points, street lighting, and consideration of typically male-dominated spaces.

The project provided over 500 Mid-Term Shelter plots in these valleys, increasing the shelter capacity of the camp by 40% without requiring major earthworks, minimizing the impact on the environment.

PHASE II: SHELTER BLOCKS & WASH FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

Upon completion of the site preparation works, the Site Planning team demarcated the allocated spaces for WASH and shelter blocks, which were then constructed in parallel. The WASH facilities (tube wells and gender-segregated latrines and bathing spaces) were constructed by local contractors. Soil excavated from the soak pits and latrine pits was used to raise the plinths of the shelters.

On average, 300 CFW laborers were engaged each day for the shelter construction. Laborers were set up in teams (based on needs, skills and experience), and assigned to a specific task as per the sequential process of the shelter construction and the support functions required. Each labor team received an initial orientation training when joining the program or performing a new task for the first time. This approach allowed the organization to engage unskilled laborers in a way that was both safe and productive, while ensuring that they were engaged on each task for enough time to develop skills. CFW teams also constructed catchment drains around the blocks and connected each block to the main drainage network, installed brick-paved access routes and bamboo bridges within and between blocks and implemented environmental restoration measures such as tree planting.



The Mid-Term Shelter design was based on local common construction techniques.



Focus Group Discussions ensured that the inputs of camp residents directly fed into the design of the Mid-Term Shelters.

MID-TERM SHELTER DESIGN

The shelter technical design was developed in parallel and in accordance to the guidance note prepared within the Technical Working Group of the Shelter/NFI Sector for the construction of Mid-term shelters in the camps. This included reference standards to be met such as the covered space and expected shelter lifespan to be considered, minimum figures for technical aspects such as the plinth height and the free head height to be respected, also roof slope and overhang, recommendations for the materials to be used in the different elements, and DRR features to be incorporated (bracing, wall protection for cooking space, tie-down), as well as considerations related to Protection (internal partition, lockable doors and windows), Health (cross ventilation), and a range of overall cost. The bamboo for the Mid-Term Shelters was treated in the Bamboo Treatment Facility. *For more information on the Bamboo Treatment Facility see case study A.11.*

Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with participants living in the camp (selected to include both genders and a wide range in age and family size) were organized and moderated by Shelter and Communication with Communities (CwC) teams, in order to discuss the draft design of the Mid-Term Shelters and get the refugees’ feedback, especially in terms of sufficiency of the proposed space, cooking area, and how the shelters should relate to each other. For the purpose of the FGDs, 3 shelter prototypes were built with the support of skilled carpenters among the refugees, testing also the technical solutions proposed as mentioned above.

The main findings from FGDs incorporated in the design:

Cooking/ Storage Space	Female participants requested a fire-resistant material behind the cooking wall to protect the bamboo.
Room to Room relationship	Female participants requested for the door of the private living space (bed-room) to be placed far from the entrance door noting security and privacy as their reasons.
Space requirement	The standard shelter size would not be comfortable for larger families. Participants liked the option of making the shelters higher to create additional mezzanine space for sleeping, which was incorporated for 20% of the shelters, assigned to families with six or more members. The site planning considered the locations less exposed to the wind for these slightly higher blocks. The structural performance of both designs against wind loading was reviewed by an external engineering consultant.
Shelter to shelter relationship	The option of swapping the layout symmetrically for the neighboring shelters was preferred, with the common wall separating cooking space and cooking space between neighbors, or bedroom and bedroom. Participants preferred to be assigned a shelter near their relatives, but didn’t prefer internal connections with doors between shelters even if they were relatives.
Mobility and access	Specific obstacles in the shelter design for Persons with Disabilities, other than the level at the access to the raised plinth, to be solved with a ramp on an ad hoc need basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As this project was a continuation of the organization’s ongoing work in the camp, a specific Environmental Impact Assessment was not carried out. However, minimizing any negative environmental impacts of the project was a priority consideration at all stages of the project, from protecting what vegetation remained following the deforestation of the previous years, respecting existing community gardens in the site plans, planting alongside drains and on exposed slopes, and using natural drains to promote infiltration and reduce discharge rates and possible flooding downstream.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Multiple approaches were taken in site planning, site development and shelter design to reduce disaster risk, including for example:

<p>Heavy Rains and Floods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based site planning, using catchment area calculations, flood models and empirical data to ensure that the valleys were safe for development. • Natural drainage to reduce run-off speeds and promote infiltration, thereby reducing the risk of flash floods. • Individual HH level drainage connected to catchment or primary drainage. • Hipped roof, slope 20°, tarpaulin tightly fastened to roof structure to prevent ponding, gutter system. • Plinth of 6" over polythene layer as damp barrier, boundary protected with geotextile or sandbags to prevent its erosion.
<p>Fire Hazard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of six shelters per block. • Minimum of 6' space in between shelter blocks (from roof to roof). • Ensuring water/sand buckets areas close to shelter blocks. • Cement plastered wall for cooking space.
<p>Strong winds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing the shelters in the valleys reduced their exposure to winds. • Square shape of shelter, hipped roof, footings anchored 2.5' to the ground, ties and connections, bamboo bracing, tie-down, shelter cladding of bamboo weave mat as protection from flying objects.
<p>Landslides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landslide risk maps and risk assessments to identify safe locations for construction. • Bioengineering used to stabilize loose slopes. • Integrated drainage network created to reduce erosion on slopes.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Removal of lean-to from shelter design. The initial shelter design included a lean-to connected to each shelter that would provide space for cooking and bathing. However, the local authority stipulated that the lean-to be removed (that bathing space should be removed entirely and the cooking space incorporated within the main structure). This resulted in a smaller living space and added complications of incorporating fire protection, adequate ventilation, and gray water drainage.

During the monsoon season, the soil in the valleys became saturated, creating lateral infiltration into the latrine pits, which required frequent desludging. In the new site plans, the latrine blocks have been located at a higher level, in terraces on the lower part of the hill slopes, accessible from the valleys. Where this is not possible, a combined system has been developed, using infiltration trenches in the dry season and a sealed storage tank during the monsoon season.

The Cash-for-Work system in place is based on a 15-day rotation of laborers. However, to ensure quality and progress, it was necessary to maintain a small team of skilled laborers who didn't rotate. These skilled laborers acted as team leaders, monitoring the works, guiding the unskilled laborers in their activities, and taking responsibility for the activities that required a high level of technical skill.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The additional shelters proved crucial in 2019 and 2020 to accommodate new arrivals in the camp as well as families relocated from other areas of the camp. The process undertaken, of using flood modeling to identify areas suitable for development, following a settlement approach to site planning and using environmentally sustainable infrastructure, has been continued in other areas of the camp.

Post Distribution Monitoring confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the shelters. The next stage of the project will be to replace the 1300 temporary shelters that were built on the surrounding hilltops when this area of the camp was first settled, in 2018.



Bamboo for the Mid-Term Shelters was supplied from the camp's Bamboo Treatment Facility.



All shelters were constructed by teams of camp residents through Cash-for-Work.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Integrating Site Planning, Site Development, Shelter and WASH from the start of the project** meant that adequate standards could be achieved in all areas, with competing priorities assessed by the full project team and balanced to maximize the benefit to the camp residents. This was in contrast to the majority of the camp, which was settled spontaneously, with the effect that shelters squeezed out almost all other considerations, such as public space and pathways.
- √ **Specific camp-level coordination structures were developed** between the different project teams and with the local authorities and community representatives for implementing this project. These ensured smooth project implementation.
- √ **The use of detailed flood models, engineering calculations and empirical data to determine safe areas for construction** allowed the project team to significantly increase the usable area within the camp.
- √ **The shelter design was based on community feedback and locally available materials and techniques** which built upon the existing construction knowledge of the refugee community, adapted to the limitations of the context after 2 years of constant self-building of their whole camp. From the initial FGDs with skilled carpenters, their own ideas were incorporated into the design, for example for the mechanism of opening and closing the windows pulling from vertical ropes. FGDs and model shelters were used to invite feedback on the draft shelter design from the refugee communities and the design was adapted accordingly.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Cash-for-Work can be an inherently inefficient modality, which doesn't incentivise sharing of skills within the teams or developing improved working practices.** The team has since developed a Cash-for-Work modality that incorporates increased skills training with an element of payment-by-results, while still maximizing livelihood-generating opportunities by frequently rotating Cash-for-Work participants.
- × **Limited lifespan of shelters.** Shelters were designed to be more durable than the emergency shelters that had been built previously. However, the lifespan of shelters was limited by government restrictions on the materials that could be used. Using treated bamboo for the structural elements, plus precast concrete footings will ensure a significant lifespan for the main structure, but the cladding and roof, exposed to heavy rain and intense UV radiation, will need regular maintenance.
- × **Challenges to scaling up of approach.** Development of the valleys demonstrated an approach that could be applied in other areas of the camp, as part of a camp-wide redevelopment. However, the scale of the camps, funding constraints and need for government approvals, means that it's not been possible to roll it out camp-wide as yet.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The importance of accurate risk maps for site planning and revisiting past assumptions.** This proved important not only for the obvious reason of identifying risks so as to prevent harm, but also to prevent an overly conservative approach to risks, which can cause harm in other ways. Risk maps developed in 2017/18 erred heavily on the side of caution, which is understandable considering the limited information available at the time and the urgency of the situation. In retrospect this had various negative consequences, including that the opportunity to develop valley areas was missed and fewer families could be relocated from areas that were at genuinely high risk, while more expensive and environmentally damaging strategies were pursued instead. The proposed road network across the camp followed the ridgelines (which would have required a huge amount of cut and fill, at vast cost). This was later revised to follow the valleys, in light of the revised flood modeling.
- **The importance of first-hand experience and engineering judgment.** While the revised flood modeling was important to demonstrate that the flood risk in the valley areas was low, the project team already had a high degree of confidence that the areas were safe, considering their experiences from the preceding monsoon season (cross-checked against the rainfall data from that period) and field-level engineering flood risk assessments.
- **Site Planning teams should engage closely with different sectors on the design of their facilities and to understand their technical requirements.** This can support the effective use of space and inform any necessary trade-offs and balancing between competing priorities.

CASE STUDY

INDONESIA 2018–2020 / EARTHQUAKE

KEYWORDS: Coordination and partnerships, Disaster Risk Reduction, Transitional shelter

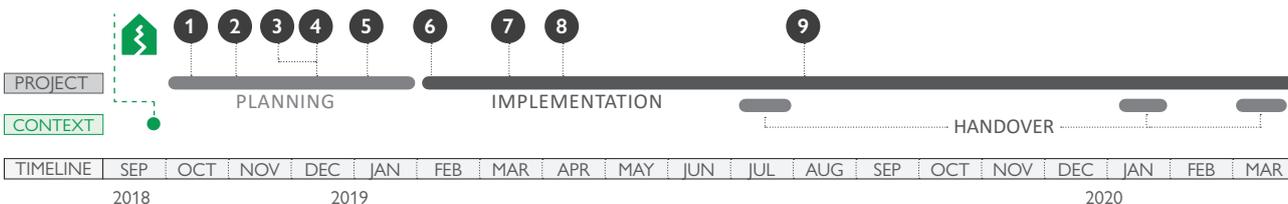
CRISIS	Earthquake, Tsunami, Liquefaction, and Landslides, 28th September 2018
PEOPLE AFFECTED	181,413 people*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	68,451 homes*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	100,118 HHs*
PROJECT LOCATION	Lombonga Village, Balaesang Sub District, Donggala District, Central Sulawesi
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	1,959 people
PROJECT OUTPUTS	527 transitional shelters built 383 individual toilets built Water supply access for 500 families 80 rubble removal kits 262 participants engaged in DRR workshops
SHELTER SIZE	18m²
SHELTER DENSITY	4.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 935 – USD 972 per shelter
PROJECT COST	USD 1,300 per HH



PROJECT SUMMARY

In partnership with a local community organization, this project supported the recovery of community members in Lombonga village, Central Sulawesi through the construction of transitional shelters, toilets, and community buildings. The project also had a strong DRR component, building community members' awareness and capacity on disaster mitigation through the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) and Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) trainings.

* Source: National Disaster Management Agency (2019)



28 Sep 2018: Major earthquakes, the largest with a magnitude of 7.4, struck Central Sulawesi, triggering a near-field tsunami, major liquefaction, and landslides.

- 1 **7 Oct 2018:** Rapid Response Team assignment.
- 2 **21 Nov - 19 Dec 2018:** Project location assessment.
- 3 **Dec 2018:** Construction worker training and material procurement began.
- 4 **Dec 2018 - Mar 2019:** Family selection.
- 5 **Jan 2019:** Partnership and agreement with Community Post for Disaster Response, *Pos Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana*.
- 6 **Feb 2019:** Distribution of Community Rubble Removal kits.
- 7 **Mar 2019:** Transitional shelter design and construction of model shelters in 6 hamlets.
- 8 **Apr 2019:** Construction of transitional shelters began.
- 9 **Aug 2019:** Trainings and Workshops on Disaster Risk Reduction.



The project supported household and community level recovery following the earthquake.

CONTEXT

A magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck Central Sulawesi Province on September 28, 2018 around 6pm local time, affecting four Districts (Palu City, Donggala, Sigi and Parigi Moutong). A 6-meter tsunami followed the earthquake and flattened homes and buildings in the coastal areas of Palu City and Donggala. The earthquake triggered soil liquefaction in the sub-district of Balaroa and Petobo in Palu City and also caused landslides and mudslides in other districts.

The project targeted Lombonga Village, which is located on the southern coast of Balaesang Subdistrict. Lombonga Village is divided into six hamlets. The main livelihoods in Lombonga are fishing and farming. There has been a trend of migration out of the area, causing a reduction in the population. Most homes prior to the disaster were built from concrete blocks but did not meet construction standards – for example did not include reinforcement bars – which led to high levels of destruction.

SITUATION AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

After the earthquake, 90-95% of homes in Lombonga were either severely damaged or completely destroyed. The 6pm earthquake occurred after a smaller one at about 3pm which served as a warning, giving people time to flee to the surrounding hills before the larger earthquake hit. Lombonga Village experienced a major earthquake in 1968 and villagers heeded the advice of village elders to immediately run to higher ground in the case of an earthquake. Therefore, despite the severe damage, the casualties were relatively few. The community took refuge in the hills surrounding the village for between 2 weeks to 3 months in makeshift shelters. On returning to the village people set up makeshift shelters on their plots or in open spaces.

NATIONAL SHELTER RESPONSE

Following the disaster, the Indonesian Government's National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB) issued guidance on the involvement of foreign aid workers and international organizations, stating that all activities needed to be conducted through local partners, and that organizations needed to be registered with government agencies.



Following the earthquake, 90-95% of homes in Lombonga were severely damaged or completely destroyed.

Support from INGOs that were already registered as national entities was allowed. Support from NGOs and INGOs was coordinated through BNPB. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) facilitated the Shelter Sub-Cluster, coordinating more than 100 organizations that built temporary shelters in Central Sulawesi. The project involved local government from the beginning of the process, and the organization received a letter of recommendation from Donggala district giving the go-ahead for the implementation of this project.

PROJECT APPROACH

The organization's Rapid Response Team conducted assessments that identified Lombonga Village as being a very remote area that was not already receiving aid from other shelter organizations. The project took a participatory approach and aimed to address the immediate needs for secure and safer shelter, and access to clean water and sanitation.

The project involved multiple components:

- Rubble removal support – through providing community rubble removal toolkits;
- Transitional shelter construction;
- Construction of toilets;
- Construction of community infrastructure – such as the clean water provision through 4,500 meters and village meeting hall building; and
- Disaster Risk Reduction - The project organized community empowerment training on disaster preparedness through Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) and Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) trainings.

For transitional shelter construction, the organization procured the materials for construction directly and mobilized and trained local construction workers. Direct procurement was done as local suppliers did not have the capacity to provide enough materials, so bulk purchasing was needed.



The project involved multiple components, including rubble removal support to help with the clearing of family plots.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH PMPB

In a disaster response, usually the organization would form a community reconstruction committee. In Lombonga however there was an existing community group – the Community Post for Disaster Response or *Pos Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana* (PMPB) – formed by a group of local volunteers who were specialized in community organizing. Therefore, it was decided to maximize the role of PMPB in the project rather than forming a new reconstruction committee.

PMPB's role included leading the household selection process; involvement in the distribution of construction materials; facilitating communication between the organization, the community, and mason groups during construction; and taking care of the administration of households. Standard criteria, regulations and guidelines were developed for the selection process.

The initial approach had envisioned that PMPB could also support with quality control of construction work in collaboration with the implementing organization. However, there was a limited number of technical staff in PMPB as many community members with construction skills preferred to engage in the project as contractors or material suppliers, and so could not then also be involved in PMPB with quality control as this would be a conflict of interest. Therefore, the organization staff took on this role.

The project provided an initial orientation to staff which included orientation on child protection, conflict of interest, safety & security, and internal organization policy on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

Initial meetings were held with different groups in the community, including the village and hamlet governments, other village institutions such as the Village Consultative Body (BPD) and Community Empowerment Office (LPM), and community-based organizations. Throughout the project the organization and PMPB engaged with community members to gather their input and feedback.



Community meetings were held throughout the project to discuss project scope, progress, challenges and solutions.

TARGETING

To set the selection criteria, the project involved the community members and community leaders through several meetings. The agreed selection criteria were:

1. Owners of houses that were completely destroyed or severely damaged.
2. Vulnerable groups were prioritized, namely the elderly, widows/widowers, female headed households, larger families, and Persons with Disabilities.

PMPB provided information regarding the affected families and conducted joint verification together with the project team, and gave feedback to families on whether they were eligible or not. Public verification of household selection was carried out, with lists of households posted publicly. Community members could file their complaints directly to the project office, individually or collectively.

SHELTER DESIGN

The initial transitional shelter design was adapted from another project in Sigi District. The shelter was 18m² and consisted of a light steel frame with 1m of hollow block and silica board above for the walls. The overall height of the shelters were 3m, and including the zinc roof, the shelters were approximately 4.5m tall, complete with wooden doors and windows.

Although light steel was an unfamiliar construction material in the community, it was considered to be the most appropriate option as it is durable, a widely used construction material in Palu city (three hours drive from the project location), and the use of timber in Central Sulawesi was not allowed due to environmental reasons. It was also considered that training construction workers on using light steel could provide new skills and livelihood opportunities beyond this project.

The project conducted community meetings to get community member's input into the design. For some families, the designs were also adapted to support the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities. The project also accommodated the community's wishes to expand and improve the quality of buildings at their own expense without changing the existing design. The project disseminated information about the designs by posting them in places that were easily seen by community.

SHELTER CONSTRUCTION

The safety of family plots was considered in relation to risk mapping. Shelters were mostly built on the original plots on or next to the location where the family's home had been. In general, there were no land ownership issues encountered during this project as the previous land boundaries were still clear following the disaster. The project provided 80 community rubble removal kits to ensure that plots could be cleared ahead of construction beginning.

The project engaged with local suppliers as much as possible, particularly for cement bricks, sand, cement,

doors and windows. However, many other materials such as calcium silicate board, light steel and metal sheeting for the roofs needed to be bought in bulk from large suppliers in Java.

As steel frame construction was not very familiar to the community, trainings were carried out with construction workers to build up their skills and experience. Six model shelters were constructed – one in each of the six hamlets – to demonstrate the construction process and to enable community feedback on the design. The model shelter construction helped the community to assess challenges in every construction stage, and worked as an on-site training to introduce steel framing technology. Each experienced construction worker was assisted by three or four workers, while a technical team or project construction supervisor provided the much-needed technical guidance, supervision, and quality control.

Each family received building materials and the organization directly engaged local construction workers on the households' behalf to build the shelters. In some cases, where household members themselves had the skills and experience to construct their own shelters, the organization paid the household the equivalent amount to the amount that would have been paid to construction workers. In all cases, construction works were supervised by organization staff.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

PASSA workshops were held with participants from the six hamlets. Participants included local government representatives, community leaders, women, Persons with Disabilities and youth.

The PASSA group identified that their community had 12 hazards which they are susceptible to: earthquakes, landslides, coastal abrasions, epidemic, theft, fire, drought, poor or failed harvest, floods, windstorms, tsunamis, and social conflict. They identified 32 projects or activities to improve their resiliency to these hazards. Among the 32 projects/activities identified, the group selected two priority projects as they addressed multiple hazards: 1) increasing community awareness and capacity on disaster mitigation, and 2) identifying safe evacuation routes and assembly points. These two actions were considered as urgent and followed by four activities; CBDRM training, assembly point identification in six hamlets, evacuation sign installation in 30 locations, and emergency/evacuation training by local fire fighters and the disaster management agency.

A Community Action Plan was developed by participants of the PASSA sessions. The PASSA group also recommended that training be conducted on safer construction so that the community has the knowledge and capacities to build houses that meet the building codes and quality standard. In addition, they also included actions to build retaining walls to anticipate cliff landslides and sea walls for abrasion prevention.



The project engaged local suppliers as much as possible for the production of materials that could be made locally, such as concrete blocks, doors and windows.



PASSA workshops involved identifying hazards that the community was vulnerable to and developing practical plans and actions for increasing resilience.

EXIT/HANDOVER

The four months of PASSA and CBDRM workshops prior to project completion were a crucial part of the exit strategy. Through a series of activities, the community identified the hazards that exist in their environment, mapped hazard prone areas, prioritized threats based on the magnitude of the impact and frequency and hazards, identified possible solutions to be done, developed plans of changes, developed monitoring and evaluation plans, and planning for how to maintain their shelters and other community facilities. These activities involved a lot of stakeholders such as local government representatives and village organizations, such as women's and youth groups.

Households signed handover letters and a symbolic handover ceremony was held to mark the closure of the program in Lombonga Village. The ceremony turned into a village festival and was predominantly organized by community members themselves.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Limited local capacity for material production. The procurement approach for the project was adapted due to some materials being unavailable locally due to high demand, and vendors for other materials (such as blocks, doors and windows) having limited capacity to scale up production. The project ended up procuring some materials locally and bulk buying others from Java.

Multiple delays to originally planned procurement and construction processes. A large delay was created by the project planning not considering harvest time, as the clove harvest took 14 weeks, during which time the majority of the community needed to focus on clove harvesting and drying rather than on the project. Additionally, damaged infrastructure, such as the reduced number of operational cranes to unload materials at the port created procurement delays. Also, the organization's centralized payment system that required all construction workers to open a bank account, created further delays.

Lack of familiarity with light steel construction. This was identified at the start of the project and trainings with construction workers on construction of the transitional shelters was undertaken. However, the lack of familiarity resulted in shelters taking a longer time to complete, and more supervision time being required to supervise and teach the construction workers how to fix the works that did not meet the quality standard. To address this challenge, the project conducted trainings for the construction workers specifically on light steel construction skills.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Personalization and adaptation of transitional shelters. The project gave opportunity for households to choose the shelter layout. Some were elongated, while others were widened, depending on the shape of the plot. Each shelter's position was designed with the future plan of each family in mind, since they may want to expand the shelter or later build a permanent house. The shelters were also painted in different colors, chosen by each inhabitant. The variations in design, layout, and color, added dynamics to the village of Lombonga. The shelter quality increased the sense of security and permanency among households who considered the transitional shelter just as good as a permanent house, and some had already added room extensions and terraces. Approximately 20% of households modified their shelters to support home based enterprises such as grocery stalls, sewing, and electronics repairs businesses.

The project also **improved the local economy due to cash circulation** inside the village as well as **the creation of new livelihood opportunities directly related to the shelter program** such the production of hollow blocks, doors and windows.

The project activities made **social cohesiveness stronger**. The PASSA workshops resulted in greater awareness of hazards and a **Community Action Plan** being developed by the group, outlining steps to how the village can become more resilient. The community used the same PMPB structure to manage other projects from other NGOs that focus on livelihoods, child protection, education and later the government permanent housing program. After the project completion, **PMPB managed to grow its capacity** and mobilize resources to respond to flood disasters in other sub-districts.



One of the wider impacts of the project was related to livelihoods and economic recovery. Approximately 20% of households modified their shelters to support home based enterprises such as grocery stalls, sewing, and electronic repair businesses.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Local partnerships and sustainability.** The collaboration between the project team and PMPB was key to the success of the project. Good relations were built through intensive communication to create an atmosphere of trust. Through the project, PMPB was able to strengthen its capacity as an organization.
- √ **Participatory approach to community engagement.** The project applied the principle of “community empowerment through community-based intervention”. The organization collaborated with local village institutions, and took a transparent and accountable approach, involving the community in every stage of the process.
- √ **Personalization and adaptation of transitional shelters.** The project built in flexibility for the adaptation of the shelter design to meet the specific needs to household members, for example through enabling adaptations for home-based enterprises and considering the needs of Persons with Disabilities. The approach also enabled households to adapt the shelter so that it could best fit in with their intentions for recovery, for example in adapting the shape and where on their plot the shelter was sited.
- √ **Livelihoods support.** The project recruited local staff from the community and created livelihood opportunities in material production and shelter construction. The shelter handover was also an important moment for some families who could then re-start their home-based enterprises.
- √ **Strong focus on DRR.** Through the PASSA and CBDRR workshops, DRR was a strong focus of the project, supporting community members to identify hazards and to plan for how they can become more resilient to the hazards faced.

WEAKNESSES

- × **More could have been done to involve women.** Although the project took a community-focused approach, more could have been done to design project activities in a way that better supported women’s involvement. For example, the project encouraged more women to get involved in the PASSA workshops, but because the workshops were held in the evenings, not many women could join the workshops as they needed to take care of their children.
- × **Project planning didn’t consider harvest time.** The clove harvest took 14 weeks, during which time most of the community weren’t available to be involved in the project as they needed to prioritize clove harvesting and drying. The project failed to identify this in its assessments and so had not accounted for it in project planning.
- × **Delays caused by centralized payment system.** There was a construction delay of one month because the organization put in place a central payment system which required all construction workers to open bank accounts if they did not already have one. This took time due to the rural location.
- × **Lack of budgeting for construction tools.** Many masons who were engaged in the project owned a limited number of tools which created delays. The project had not included money in the budget to support with procuring additional tools for workers to support the scaling up of works.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The need to develop capacity building of existing local community organization like PMPB.** A strength of this project was the partnership with PMPB. Partnerships should look to maximize capacity building of existing local community organizations, as existing local organizations deserve the opportunity to grow and develop.
- **Anticipating delays and contingency planning.** This is partly about ensuring that factors such as seasonal calendars for harvests etc. are fully taken into consideration in project planning. Additionally, there is a need to ensure for contingency planning to reduce the impacts of delays or unforeseen circumstances.
- **Integration of proactive livelihood and market support.** Local market capacity to produce certain materials at scale can be supported through proactive support to small-scale material manufacturers. For example this could be through grants to increase capacity of production, and training and support on how to scale up a business to support sustainable livelihoods.

CASE STUDY

PHILIPPINES 2016–2020 / TYPHOON HAIYAN

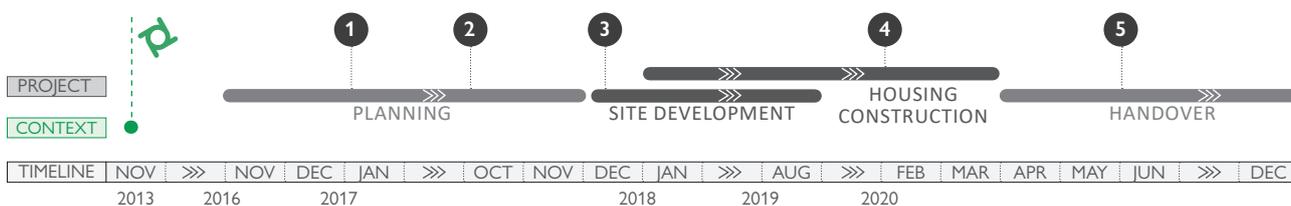
KEYWORDS: Community engagement, Permanent housing, Resettlement, Settlement Planning

CRISIS	Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), November 2013
PEOPLE AFFECTED	3,424,593 HHs (16,078,181 individuals) affected*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	518,878 homes partially damaged 493,912 homes totally destroyed**
PROJECT LOCATION	Tacloban, Philippines
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	883 HHs (4,640 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	883 permanent homes constructed (connected to water, drainage and sanitation systems, community facilities, and a road network) Land tenure support provided to 883 HHs
SHELTER SIZE	A: 28m² (524 HHs) B: 35m² (240HHs) C: 58m² (88HHs) D: 59m² (31HHs) (The shelter size was dependent on household size)
SHELTER DENSITY	Average 5.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	A: USD 5,840 B: USD 6,030 C: USD 8,780 D: USD 8,900
PROJECT COST	USD 15,000,000
* Source: National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), Update 17 April 2014	
** Source: Philippines Shelter Cluster, late 2014, Analysis of Shelter Recovery	



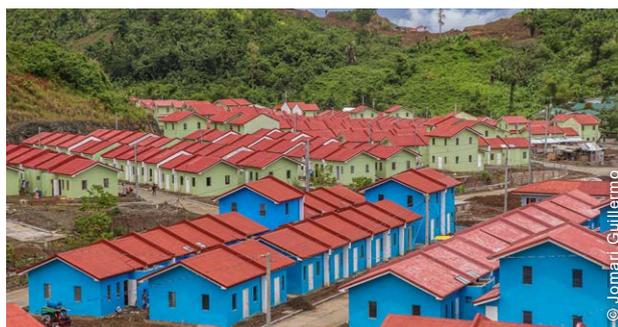
PROJECT SUMMARY

The Anibong Resettlement Project (ARP), based in Tacloban, Philippines, supported 883 of the most vulnerable families from the Anibong community to relocate from a 'no build zone' and restore their lives and livelihoods in a safe, sustainable, and dignified community. The new community provides permanent homes connected to essential infrastructure and services, and residents were supported to obtain land titles. ARP families were engaged in every phase of creating their new community, including in site selection, settlement planning, housing design and self-governance post handover.



8 Nov 2013 Super Typhoon Haiyan, wreaked devastation across the Philippine islands of Leyte and Samar.

- 1** Jan 2017: Land purchased.
- 2** Oct 2017: ARP plans approved by community.
- 3** Dec 2017: Construction began.
- 4** Feb 2020: First residents started moving in.
- 5** Jun 2020: Resettlement community handed over to Homeowner's Association and relevant government agencies.



The new development, which was built for families moving from Anibong, was named DREAMville by its new residents.

CONTEXT

Tacloban City, located on Leyte Island in the Philippines, is exposed to constant geological and climate-related hazards such as earthquakes, floods and typhoons. The economy is especially vulnerable to natural hazards due to its dependency on climate-reliant activities such as agriculture and marine resources.

SITUATION BEFORE THE TYPHOON

Before the storm, the district of Anibong, was where 2,561 households called home. Located on a strip of coastal land along the northern part of Tacloban, for generations, families informally settled along the coastline, which was mostly designated as unclassified public land (not available for private ownership or residential housing). The housing in Anibong was very dense and unsafe, and the area is subject to earthquakes, high winds, flooding, and outbreaks of fire. The majority of households living in Anibong District were dependent on their daily income to cover expenses and had very little formal savings or equity. More than 80% lived on below half of the national average income (USD 250 per month).

SITUATION AFTER THE TYPHOON

Super Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda, wreaked devastation across the Philippine islands of Leyte and Samar on November 8, 2013, claiming more than 6,300 lives and destroying the majority of homes as well as community infrastructure including piers, markets, water taps and septic tanks. Local shops, fishing boats, fish cages, tricycle taxis and other livelihoods equipment were also destroyed. In Tacloban, around 90% of the structures were destroyed or damaged. After Super Typhoon Haiyan, the national government enforced 'no build zone' and 'no dwell zone' policies for all housing in coastal areas. With this declaration, the Anibong community was facing forced eviction. More than a year after the storm, 14,000 households in Tacloban were still in need of permanent housing, including much of the population of Anibong whose makeshift shelters built after the typhoon were much weaker than their previous homes and were now located in a no build/dwell zone.

PROJECT GOAL AND APPROACH

The organization initiated community meetings in the Anibong district in 2014, beginning the community consultation on resettlement, which included key informant interviews, visioning exercises, focus group discussions and a household census. Residents noted concerns over the high occurrence and strong impact of disasters, their limited means to improve their living conditions, and frustration over a feeling of disenfranchisement and a lack of understanding their rights and options. The intended outcome of the Anibong Resettlement Project (ARP) was to build a safe, sustainable, resident-governed community as a model for other low-income urban areas in the Philippines affected by crises.

COORDINATION

Following the organization's decision to support 900 households in relocating to a safe site, a multi-stakeholder MoU between the organization, Tacloban City Office, Archdiocese of Palo and other National Agencies was signed in 2017. Throughout the design, construction and handover phases, the organization closely coordinated with the City Mayor's Office, City Housing, National Housing Authority, local water department, and local electrical company. The organization remained in close coordination with the Shelter Cluster due to the various permanent housing projects being implemented by the National Housing Authority (NHA) and other INGOs to avoid overlap of target areas, project participant lists and support services.

SITE IDENTIFICATION

The land for the resettlement community was purchased by the organization in 2017. The resettlement site is located in Tacloban City, in the barangay (neighborhood) of Bagacay, 4.5 miles from Anibong district. The site is located close to the city centre and has access to public transportation. As the land is further from the sea, the organization supported fishermen to have access to new trades such as vending, farming and transportation.

TARGETING

To ensure a transparent selection process, the project team assisted the barangay community bodies to form Barangay Selection Committees (BSC) that were responsible for overseeing the selection process. The BSC consisted of members from the Anibong district community body, the shelter committees of the original barangays, and representatives from various groups, including youth, senior citizens, Persons with Disabilities, women, and religious groups. Based on the agreed-upon criteria, the BSC publicly posted a list of project participants for feedback from the community and validated any feedback collected to finalize the list.



Families were engaged in meetings on settlement planning, so that they were able to help shape their new community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ARP families were involved in each aspect of the design phase including developing project participant selection criteria, resettlement site location, the community plan, housing designs, and electing their self-governed Homeowner's Association (HOA) leaders. Project participants selected who their new neighbors would be using social network analysis. The families emphasized that the housing designs should be strong enough to endure major disasters as well as accounting for the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities and the elderly.

HOUSING DESIGNS

Four main housing designs (2x single story typologies, 2x two story typologies) were developed and offered to families based on family size and their specific needs. The shelters for Persons with Disabilities and elderly people were located on larger plots of land that would allow families to build ramps if needed. Homes were designed and built as earthquake-resistant houses and in compliance with the latest National Structural Code of the Philippines, revised to cope with Haiyan gust windspeed of up to 268kmph.

COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

Consultation and participatory activities were undertaken to understand the spatial planning context, and the settlement plan was developed with consideration and integration of amenities, housing and infrastructure. The organization donated part of the land to the Department of Education for the construction of a permanent school and to the host barangay for the construction of a basketball court and public market – facilities that would benefit both the new community and neighboring communities.

The project aimed to take a holistic, integrated and sustainable approach, with dedicated teams supporting in relation to livelihoods, land tenure, HOA establishment and training, DRR and Social and Behavior Change Communication training, and the organization's Savings and Internal Lending mechanism.



Housing construction was carried out by local contractors, with oversight and quality control from the organization's construction team.

SECURITY OF TENURE

The project supported households to obtain their own land title through one of three different routes (grant, cash payment or loan program). The average cost per plot was USD 1,200.

- The organization assisted 750 households in securing loans through an affordable housing program with low interest rates and minimal monthly payments based on each family's monthly earning. The loans can be repaid over 10-30 years, with a monthly payment starting at USD 10 per month.
- 80 households were able to pay the amount in full to purchase their plot directly.
- 53 households were granted their plot by the organization.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Through a bidding procurement methodology, the organization hired 30 local construction contractors to complete the site development, house construction, drainage, water and sanitation systems, road network and community facilities. Hiring multiple small contractors for construction proved to be an effective and flexible modality for delivering construction. The organization's technical team of engineers, architects, and foreman closely monitored the quality and progress of the construction. Construction materials were sourced locally.

The project originally planned to use a community-driven construction approach, whereby the ARP families would be responsible for constructing their own homes. This approach was initially planned because of an assumption that involving families in the process of building their own homes would increase the sense of ownership and community. However, the organization conducted a risk analysis that showed this approach would be too costly in terms of time and budget requirements. Given the scale of the project, and the many logistical challenges of coordinating and organizing over 800 households to build their own homes on the same site to meet safety and quality standards, the community-driven construction approach was deemed unrealistic. The organization shifted to a contractor-led approach to ensure the quality, budget and timing of the construction could be maintained.

HANDOVER

Upon completion, handovers were carried out with residents, the HOA, Tacloban City Government, Electrical and water companies and the host barangay. The community elected HOA is comprised of leaders from each of the established community based organizations, which were intentionally formed to represent the needs of specific groups, including the community's women, elderly individuals, youth, construction workers, fisherfolks, and Persons with Disabilities. The purposeful inclusion of vulnerable groups ensures their voices, special interests and needs are heard and met. Over half of the leaders elected are women.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Land Tenure. The land tenure process was very complex and required significant time and human resources to complete. The documentation, timelines and fee requirements originally provided by each government unit were not consistently followed by the government bodies. As the timelines for the land tenure process extended beyond the project end date, a loan company was hired and pro-bono law firm identified, to provide land title support after the project ended.

Weather. Unexpected non-stop daily rainfall (during the dry season) hindered the site development works. Heavy equipment was idling and access road condition to the site became unpassable causing delays on the delivery of construction materials. Due to prolonging delays during this period, the organization decided to start the housing construction while the site development works were still on-going.

Labor and material shortages. Because of the Government's "build build build" project, many experienced contractors were working on government projects, resulting in shortages of construction manpower and supply of construction materials in the city and nearby provinces. Splitting contracts into smaller values proved to be more manageable in terms of materials and labour acquisition.

Quality Control. Most of the local contractors struggled with reaching the organization's Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QAQC) requirements. To ensure the quality control of the local contractors, the organization's construction team comprised of eight full time engineers/architects, five foremen and Shelter Technical Advisors providing oversight, who continuously mentored, monitored and supervised the compliance with QAQC requirements.

Contractor Management. Some contractors pulled out before completing their contractual obligation. The organization was able to manage the situation by amicable contract termination by communicating with the contractors about the contractual obligations, timelines and implications of breaking contract.

Procurement System. The bidding processes required more time than expected. Instead of redoing the bid process for every batches of contractors, the organization transitioned to offering smaller value contracts to existing contractors who had demonstrated quality performance by using the rates obtained during the competitive bidding process.

WIDER IMPACTS

The project **engaged over 1,650 skilled and non-skilled workers in employment** through construction contractors.

The prioritization of accessing the local market stimulated the local economy, created livelihood opportunity and built the capacity of local laborers by increasing their knowledge on build back safer construction techniques.

The establishment of the Homeowner's Association (HOA) enables the community to be resident-governed. The project provided **support on land tenure, enabling all households to obtain their own land title**. As a requirement of the land title process, the organization supported the families in navigating the government agencies to obtain national IDs, tax identification numbers, birth certificates, and marriage certificates. For many, this was the first time they held a **nationally recognized ID and official documents which allows them to qualify for government subsidy programs**.



Local workers were engaged through small construction contractors for the Site Development of DREAMville and were supervised by the organization's technical team.



There were four main typologies of house design, with size of each family determining the size of home that they would move into.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Durability of shelter solutions.** The project provided permanent housing in a safer location, as part of an integrated resettlement program.
- ✓ **Security of tenure.** Households were supported to obtain land title through three different routes (grant, cash payment or loan program).
- ✓ **Strong community engagement in settlement planning.** Community participation in the design of their new community and plot matching using social network analysis enabled the community to maintain existing social fabric.
- ✓ **Training and capacity building.** The organization trained, mentored and coached the HOA in community estate management.
- ✓ **Integrated approach.** The project took an integrated approach, with a strong focus on social cohesion and the longer-term sustainability and resilience of the community.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Implementing a large scale, multi-sector housing project without a pilot.** Having no experience of undertaking similar projects previously, the organization would have benefited from piloting housing construction to help to improve program design and plan for more realistic timelines and costs.
- × **Rainwater harvesting design.** The original design of overhead household tanks had a fault which caused the tanks to leak. The design was revised before the families moved in, but caused a time delay and budget increase due to the reconstruction.
- × **Lack of early coordination with the local water department** during the design phase led to the need for costly revisions to the water system to meet local regulations. This was necessary to ensure a water connection to the water company and handover of the water system.
- × **The time needed for the project implementation was underestimated.** The amount of time needed for implementation should have been analyzed better and should have included adequate contingency time for unforeseen circumstances.



Plot matching and social network analysis ensured that the existing social fabric was maintained.



The project supported households to obtain their land title through either grants, cash payment, or loan.

LESSONS LEARNED

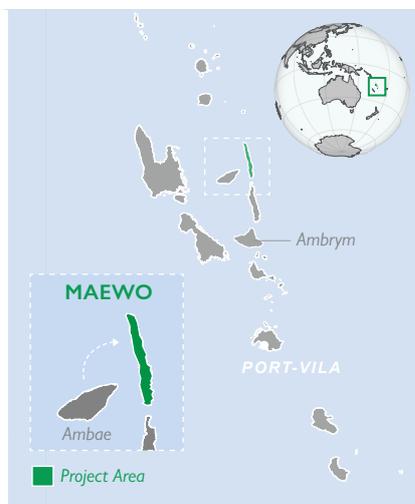
- **The need to pilot.** Construction of the 883 houses was happening so quickly, it did not allow for the project to revise housing designs when a problem was identified. Piloting housing designs would have remedied this challenge.
- **Importance of government buy-in.** Coordination with government from start to finish allowed for problems to be avoided or addressed and allowed for smooth handover of the resettlement community. However, the risk remains that a lack of government sense of ownership of the development could impact the community's future inclusion into government support services and could impact infrastructure repairs and maintenance of components such as the drainage system, slope protection and water system.
- **Securing land title is a very complex process** and requires a significant amount of time and staff resources to complete.
- **Transition support.** A fixed period of continued livelihood, community management, land tenure support, and repair of minor construction issues after families had moved in would have enabled smoother transition in handing the development over to residents.

CASE STUDY

VANUATU 2018–2019 / AMBAE VOLCANO

KEYWORDS: Capacity building, Community engagement, Disaster Risk Reduction, Evacuation, Gender mainstreaming

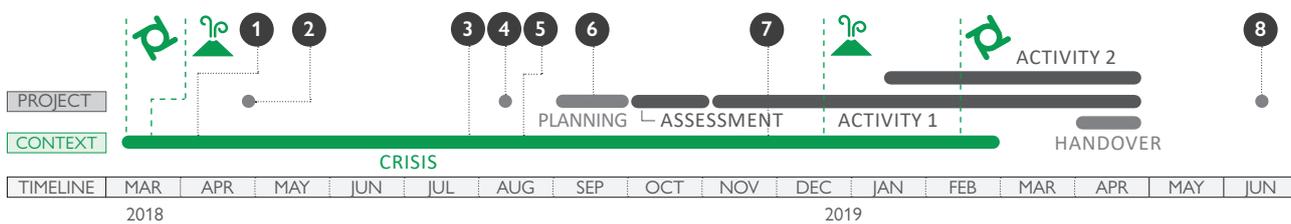
CRISIS	Ambae volcano, 2018
PEOPLE AFFECTED	11,670 individuals (the entire population of Ambae was affected and displaced to neighbouring islands)*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	7,250 individuals (3,000 people displaced on Maewo and 4,250 people displaced on Santo in August 2018)**
PROJECT LOCATION	Maewo Island, Penama Province, Vanuatu
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	Total of 1,474 HHs (5,818 individuals): - Displaced population from Ambae: 805 HHs (2,943 individuals) - Host population of Maewo: 669 HHs (2,875 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	Distribution with technical assistance: 2,000 HHs received emergency shelter assistance 222 HHs received resettlement kits 252 resettlement kits received by Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) 24 communities received community toolkits Awareness and training activities: 40 people received a three-day Shelter in Emergency ToT 66 people received Shelter Focal Point for CDCCC training 134 people received community-based safe shelter awareness and support for shelter reinforcement 20 women attended “Women in Shelter” safe shelter awareness workshop Evacuation centers (EVCs): 35 EVCs technically assessed 9 EVCs (24 buildings) rehabilitated
SHELTER SIZE	25-30m² fully enclosed (excluding open kitchen).
SHELTER DENSITY	7-8m² of living area per person on average
DIRECT COST	USD 77 per HH for shelter materials USD 103 per HH for shelter materials and tool kits
PROJECT COST	USD 215 per HH on average



PROJECT SUMMARY

When the Manaro Voui volcano covered Ambae with ash in July 2018, the government ordered the evacuation of the island, meaning that almost 3,000 people (800 households) were evacuated to neighboring Maewo Island, instantly doubling its population. The program provided emergency shelter for the evacuees, integrating them within the host community and developing an early-recovery response. The vulnerability of both evacuees and host communities to future cyclones was reduced through a program of cyclone shelter rehabilitation and strengthening.

* Source: Figure based on 2016 Vanuatu census data
 ** Source: National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) of Vanuatu



- Activity 1:** Community-based Shelter Activities.
- Activity 2:** Reinforcement of Evacuation Centers.
- 7 Mar 2018:** Tropical Cyclone Hola hit islands of Ambrym, Pentecost, Ambae, Malekula and Malo.
- 18 Mar 2018:** Manaro Voui volcano alert level 2 to 3 on Ambae island.
- 1** **12 Apr 2018:** State of Emergency (SoE) for Ambae declared.
- 2** **30 Apr 2018:** Shelter Cluster strategy first draft for the Ambae Volcano response.
- 3** **26 Jul 2018:** Extension of SoE. Announcement of mandatory evacuation from Ambae.

- 4** **3 Aug 2018:** Immediate 1-month Shelter Cluster plan for Maewo.
- 5** **15 Aug 2018:** End of mandatory evacuation from Ambae.
- 6** **14 Sep 2018:** Updated Shelter Cluster plan and budget following assessment on Maewo and Santo.
- 7** **27 Nov 2018:** End of SoE for Ambae. Handover from NDMO to National Recovery Committee.
- 16 Dec 2018:** Ambrym volcano alert level 2 to 3.
- 15 Feb 2019:** Tropical Cyclone Oma.
- 8** **14 Jun 2019:** Lessons Learned workshop.

CONTEXT

Vanuatu is a Y-shaped archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, with more than 80 islands and a population of approximately 300,000. Most people live along the coast of the eight largest islands. Vanuatu is among the countries with the highest risks of natural hazards including cyclones, earthquakes, flooding, landslides, volcanic events and the effects of climate change. The tropical cyclone season normally runs from November to April.

In Vanuatu, as elsewhere in the Pacific, traditional coping mechanisms help to significantly reduce disaster impacts. For example, the understanding of weather patterns over the islands, or the observations of sea birds indicate impending strong winds, helping to alert people to prepare. Such local response capacity has been reinforced through Provincial Disaster Committees based in remote islands, leading coordination and support at a sub-national level. Many inhabitants of Vanuatu (Ni-Vans) are skilled at building or repairing their own dwellings and therefore a large percentage of the population live in self-constructed houses made of locally available natural materials.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

The cluster coordination mechanism was adopted by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team in 2011. The Vanuatu Shelter Cluster was established in 2015 for the response to the category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam, and remains active for preparedness and coordination of future responses in the country. Under the leadership of the Public Works Department (PWD), the Shelter Cluster includes government and non-government member agencies.

Following an increase in volcanic activity of the Manaro Voui volcano on Ambae island to level 3 then 4 in September 2017, the entire population of the island was evacuated,

mainly to Espiritu Santo, Pentecost and Maewo Islands, while some people went independently to the capital city, Port Vila, on Efate Island. Most people had been repatriated to Ambae by late October 2017 and the volcanic activity decreased to level 2 by early December.

SITUATION AFTER THE CRISIS

Category 4 Tropical Cyclone Hola hit the islands of Ambrym, Pentecost, Ambae, Malekula and Malo in March 2018 causing significant damage to housing, crops and community infrastructure.

On 18 March 2018 the alert level for Manaro Voui volcano was raised from level 2 to 3, as Ambae and the surrounding islands felt the effects of continuous ash fall and acid rain which contaminated water sources, destroyed crops, and led to the collapse of traditional houses. On 12 April 2018 the Council of Ministers (CoM) declared a State of Emergency (SoE) for the three months up to the 13 July, with a multi-sectoral emergency response triggered when the affected populations began moving to 17 designated evacuation centers on Ambae, and to host communities on neighboring Maewo Island.

Following a CoM decision on the 26 July, all of Ambae's 11,670 inhabitants were mandatorily evacuated, some with government support to Maewo, while some decided to do so on their own, evacuating to Santo and Efate Islands. On Maewo, evacuees were resettled organically within host communities in unplanned sites for emergency shelters, while some potential sites were identified for the Second Home Program. Shelter Cluster agencies provided emergency shelter materials and technical assistance, while the government response focused mainly on Maewo through the Second Home Program, which aimed to resettle displaced people on new land with new permanent houses, creating an alternative safe home for Ambaeans in the event of future volcanic activity on their island.



© / Xavier Génot, Shelter Cluster Vanuatu

On Maewo, evacuees from Ambae settled within host communities in unplanned displacement sites. Organizations provided emergency shelter materials and technical assistance.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

The initial Response and Early Recovery Humanitarian Action Plan for Tropical Cyclone Hola and the Ambae Volcano Response was released by the NDMO on the 6 April 2018. In early May the NDMO requested the Shelter Cluster's plan and budget for the interim, medium, and long-term responses. Shelter Cluster Vanuatu responded to all updated requests. As no funding had been allocated to the shelter sector by the government and an international appeal was not launched, the capacity to respond to identified needs was inevitably limited to what Cluster members could mobilize internally.

The Shelter Cluster coordination team and partners conducted assessments and monitoring for TC Hola on Malekula, Ambrym, Pentecost and Ambae, and for the volcano response on Ambae, Maewo and Santo. These informed the iterative updates of the Shelter Cluster strategy, adapted to the limited resources available.

The strategic objectives were:

1. To provide life-saving shelter materials, essential household items and technical support to all the displaced population on Ambae;
2. Following the mandatory evacuation, to provide temporary family shelter improvements to more than 60% of evacuees on Maewo; and
3. To improve access to safe cyclone shelters for both displaced and host communities.

These objectives also applied to evacuees in Santo, but with very limited capacity for implementation there and limited support of the Government initially.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The program aimed to address the two most urgent shelter priorities identified to protect the displaced Ambae people sheltering on Maewo island, as well as their hosts, from adverse weather and the approaching cyclone season through urgent measures to:

- Strengthen the temporary family shelters through the distribution of reinforcement materials accompanied by safe shelter awareness training and support for shelter-strengthening techniques; and
- Improve access to safe cyclone shelters through mapping and reinforcement of existing facilities.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The program implementation required significant community mobilization for both activities. A team of ten staff was recruited locally from the displaced and host communities as well as a few experienced specialists; logistician, shelter trainer and site supervisor.

For the emergency settlements, land issues were discussed and addressed by the NDMO and traditional and community

leaders during the displacement and first emergency shelter response. For the construction of second homes on Maewo, the NDMO involved community leaders and traditional authorities with provincial authorities (Area Council Secretary). The Global Shelter Cluster Housing Land and Property (HLP) focal point was also deployed to develop recommendations on land tenure issues on Maewo.

TARGETING

The program originally targeted blanket coverage of all displaced households on Maewo. As the situation developed and the State of Emergency (SoE) was lifted, some displaced households decided to return to Ambae and did not receive their shelter kits before departing (though these kits were then given to CDCCCs). The Shelter Cluster partners were not involved in targeting and selection of households for the Second Home Program, which was brought in separately by the NDMO and the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning & Aid Coordination (DSPPAC).

Regarding the reinforcement of cyclone evacuation centers (EVCs), after discussions with the Shelter Cluster, local authorities and the NDMO, and based on the needs and technical assessment, ten EVCs, mostly schools, were identified for reinforcement from a total of 36 potential EVCs.



Shelter Focal points from displaced and host community were trained by Shelter Cluster partners, to lead shelter reinforcement and preparedness related activities.



Model house structures were built at the community level on Maewo, to demonstrate traditional safe construction principles for all shelter training and awareness activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COORDINATION

As the program of Safe Shelter Awareness and training components of the response aimed to help the affected population to reinforce their shelters and to support their preparedness for the upcoming cyclone season, the program supported both evacuees and host communities. Therefore, implementation and coordination of community-based shelter capacity building activities were carried out through continuous engagement with both displaced and host community leaders, all with respect to the organization's gender focus. For instance, this led to the identification of the Shelter Focal Points to be trained in equal numbers from both displaced and host communities, and the development of 'Women in Shelter' workshops. All of this was done in close coordination with the custom chiefs throughout, as these were deemed by them as important for the future Ambae and Maewo communities.

The community mobilization was coordinated with other components of the intervention such as gender protection and DRR capacity building. General information meetings were set up to present, discuss and report at key stages of the program with community leaders, traditional authorities, government agencies, local partners and local authorities. There was excellent coordination and cooperation between humanitarian shelter agencies, reinforced by their common understanding of the local context and constructive synergies in the benefit of affected communities, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and building up of shared teams for program implementation.

The implementation of the shelter activities was coordinated with other components of the response such as WASH and Health to optimize the resources of the

program (logistics, HR, budget etc.) and to improve communications with the communities in order to avoid unnecessary consultation.

GENDER AND PROTECTION

Both the organization team directly and the Gender and Protection team on the ground, with support from the organization, did various levels of gender assessment and data collection. This included a Gender and Protection rapid assessment led by the Cluster followed by a detailed referral and protection mapping and mapping of all women's groups on the island done by the organization, all of which involved consultation with local women. The organization then also ran 'Finding My Voice' workshops throughout the island which supported women representatives from all communities to develop their confidence, understand the humanitarian system and how to advocate for their needs.

There was also the specific identification of women to engage in shelter work and 'Women in Shelter' workshops for women participants to build specific shelter capacities and to develop micro-project management skills. The gender team followed up on gender and protection vulnerabilities and information was shared to allow the shelter team to adapt to the needs. The gender team also identified women to be Shelter Focal Points (SFP) (successfully) and members of the shelter team (unsuccessfully). The roles and responsibilities of women for shelter-related issues as informed by the Gender and Diversity Analysis, were incorporated in the SFP training package so that the male participants realized the key role of women in the construction process and maintenance of housing.



Gender and Diversity Analysis informed the incorporation of content on the roles and responsibilities of women in the construction process and maintenance of homes into the training package for Shelter Focal Points.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

On Maewo, the strengthening of cyclone shelters responded to the threat of repeat cyclones, while the Second Home Program addressed the possibility of future evacuations caused by further volcanic activity on Ambae.

At a national level, this close coordination between Shelter Cluster partners during this response reinforced the shelter preparedness framework in Vanuatu. This was done through the development of systems and tools, as for the development of new Building Back Safer (BBS) Information Education Communication (IEC) materials, setting up a Facebook social media platform for safe shelter message dissemination, or mainstreaming of the community-based Shelter Focal Point positions within the CDCCC system.

It was also a good opportunity to enhance the continuity of collaboration between key local actors and sharing of good-practice resources, which is key to DRR and preparedness. This indeed paid off for the response to TC Harold in 2020, when the response to the category 5 cyclone had to be led entirely by local partners due to COVID-19 restrictions.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY

The response was designed to suit various scenarios based on eventual choices of those affected and Government policy, on whether to stay in host communities, resettle on Maewo, or return home to Ambae. The strategy changed from the upgrading of shelter kits to the strengthening of existing emergency shelters (tarpaulin-covered timber or bamboo frames). The content of the kits was adapted to be used as a resettlement shelter kit to support households who wanted to build a second home on Maewo.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

All shelter kits and toolkits were supplied from Port Vila with no negative impact on the local market, which could not have provided the quantity and type of items in the kits due to lack of markets on the island of Maewo. Only the sand, aggregate and timber for the reinforcement of the EVCs were supplied locally.

MAIN CHALLENGES

The main challenge was the uncertainty of the situation at different levels:

Governance decisions: lifting of the SoE and return of displaced households to Ambae, given the unpredictability of the activity of the Ambae volcano. This led to the needed adaptation of the resettlement kit content and distribution strategy. This was made possible by (1) the organization's knowledge and understanding of local and traditional coping mechanisms, and (2) trust and good relationships with donors, local authorities and the affected population.

Household level: household decision making about returning to Ambae, and the importance of good community engagement. The main safe shelter awareness activities had already been conducted on Maewo, through trained Community Shelter Focal points or 'Women in Shelter' workshops, therefore the organization was able to adapt the program quickly in close coordination with the evacuees who had chosen to return to Ambae.

Partners: lack of confidence in the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data led the organization to re-assess their lists of selected households to allow flexible programming adaptation and versatility to suit various potential displacement scenarios.

WIDER IMPACTS

The Shelter Cluster used the opportunity to **strengthen institutional capacity of the Cluster** and to inform standard operating procedures through workshops and training. The Ambae volcano response led to 15 recommendations for improving the Shelter Cluster's workplan in order to strengthen future responses. The Shelter Cluster also developed new IEC materials that were disseminated via a new Facebook page as well as other means. Shelter Cluster technical guidelines were updated to consolidate input from the Ambae volcano response.

An MoU was signed between two humanitarian shelter agencies for the implementation of this program. This **partnership approach** led to the formation of a similar partnership on Pentecost Island during TC Harold in 2020.

The Shelter Cluster response in Maewo provided a powerful example of how a community-led self-recovery approach to rebuilding shelters, which leverages traditional knowledge, traditional governance structures, architecture and resources, can **provide a viable and scalable model for shelter response after a disaster in the Pacific that is affordable and appropriate**. This is something that had otherwise been absent in Vanuatu in comparison to the very high cost and challenging delivery of an externally led housing construction program. This is critically important in the context of Vanuatu and the broader Pacific where disasters and damage to shelters are frequent and resources are limited. Already the approaches used in Maewo have been able to be replicated and taken to greater scale in neighboring Pentecost and Ambrym Islands after TC Harold (2020), where Maewo-trained Shelter Focal Points and Shelter Cluster partners have helped to rebuild housing for 1,800 households, and where the custom links opened with Maewo are being leveraged to access and mobilize powerful island-to-island support. In addition, during TC Harold it was possible to see the benefits of the Maewo shelter project, where all of the Maewo communities were safely sheltered in the EVCs that were delivered during the Maewo project, which held up and protected people who were in the outer zones of the path of the category 5 TC Harold.

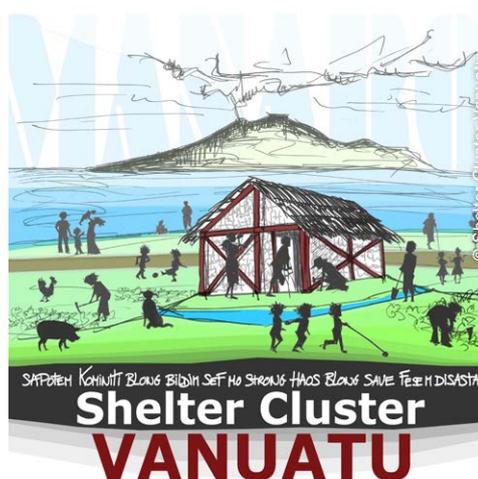
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Scale of needs addressed.** The compulsory evacuation of Ambae meant that the population of Maewo doubled overnight and it is a notable achievement that the response addressed all of the needs on Maewo through good collaboration between shelter actors.
- √ **Supporting both host and displaced populations through a strong community-based approach,** building a common interest in the shelter activities, and mobilizing communities' leaders and the traditional authorities to drive the implementation.
- √ **Strong partnership between Shelter agencies, Shelter Cluster, national, traditional and local authorities,** and strong collaboration between Shelter Cluster members with available resource mobilization, coming from experience and capacities built from previous disaster responses in the region.
- √ **Enhancement of safe shelter preparedness and awareness framework,** with (1) development of new IEC materials, (2) update of technical guidelines, (3) setup of social media platform, (4) Shelter Focal Points for host and displaced communities on Maewo, and (5) Emergency Shelter Training of Trainers.
- √ **Strengthened local institutional capacity** recognizing that Vanuatu is exposed to regular natural hazards.
- √ **Good integration of gender, protection and shelter response** at host and displaced community levels. On Maewo there was also good coordination between the Shelter and Gender/Protection Clusters.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Limited resources and capacity available to expand the response to all evacuees,** including those in Santo, and to maintain organization presence over a longer term to provide continued support to affected communities on Maewo Island.
- × **Timeline: planning was too optimistic,** and it was difficult to establish a sound plan given the logistics constraints and the fluid nature of the displacement scenario. The context changed more rapidly than the responders were able to adapt and some Ambaeans started to return to Ambae before they had received kits as they were only given the kits after the associated training.
- × **No resources available to support displaced people in their returning process to Ambae.**
- × **No resources available to consider reinforcement of all cyclone shelters** in Maewo and by extension in Santo and Ambae.



Community Building Back Safer (BBS) awareness used this drawing of a safe shelter on Maewo Island. This collaborative drawing involved community and Shelter Cluster partners feedback to highlight shelter reinforcement. The drawing and BBS principles were disseminated through posters, t-shirts and through Facebook.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Fast funding mechanisms** that allow adequate time required for procurement are critical to respond to evolving displacement scenarios.
- **Building trust and predictable collaboration** between Shelter Cluster lead and partners are key for a successful response.
- **Targeting and including host and displaced communities in the implementation of the program is critical** to maintain social cohesion and deliver successful program outcomes.
- **Taking the opportunity of a disaster response to enhance disaster risk reduction** through safe shelter awareness and cyclone shelter reinforcement should be institutionalised at national level.
- **Partnerships with Chiefs and traditional governance structures in Vanuatu is powerful and promotes community resilience.**

CASE STUDY

UKRAINE 2016–2021 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Cluster transition, Coordination and partnership, Exit/Handover, Local government engagement

CRISIS	Conflict in eastern Ukraine, 2014 ongoing
PEOPLE AFFECTED	5.2 million people affected*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	1.5 million people displaced*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	Over 50,000 homes damaged since the start of the conflict*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	300,000 people with shelter needs (winterization, NFIs etc.) 2,000 - 2,500 homes need repair*
RESPONSE LOCATION	National (coordination)
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE RESPONSE	72,490 people supported with NFIs 25,716 people supported with shelter assistance**
RESPONSE OUTPUTS	Cluster transition and closure

* Source: [Humanitarian Needs Overview Ukraine \(2019\)](#)
** Source: [Global Shelter Cluster \(2020\)](#)



SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

The Shelter/NFI Cluster in Ukraine developed a transitional plan in 2016 for handover of the humanitarian shelter coordination responsibilities to national and local authorities. The Cluster Lead Agency progressively nationalised its coordination team and facilitated leadership handover to Ukraine's national authorities through capacity building and technical support. The handover process faced significant delays due to government restructuring, but the focus remained on responsible disengagement by the Cluster team. This case study highlights the importance of planning for disengagement from the beginning of a response. The multi-year strategy timeline helped the Cluster team to navigate the complex political landscape, ensure that required technical support was provided, and manage unexpected changes in national leadership in a complex humanitarian situation.



- 2014:** Armed conflict in eastern Ukraine
- 1 July 2014:** Shelter/NFI Cluster activation.
- 2 June 2015:** Decentralized sub-national Cluster coordination structure.
- 3 Mar 2016:** Humanitarian Coordination Architectural Review.
- 4 May 2016:** Cluster Transition plan.
- 5 Jul 2017:** Information Management capacity building of national/ local authorities.
- 6 Jan 2019:** Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ukraine Government.
- 7 Sep 2019:** Changes within the structure of the Ukraine Government.
- 8 Oct 2020:** All Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) members endorsed the initiation of the deactivation process.



Donetsk Regional State Administration discusses with humanitarian stakeholders the process for restoration of damaged and destroyed houses.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in Ukraine, see [Shelter Projects 2015-2016 \(A.43\)](#)

In 2014, the Ukraine Shelter/NFI Cluster was activated in response to the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Despite numerous ceasefire agreements, millions of people were exposed to active hostilities, particularly along the 427-km ‘contact line’ that divides the affected areas. The conflict resulted in the damage or destruction of over 50,000 homes, as well as hospitals, schools, roads, water supply systems and other civilian infrastructure.

From 2014 to 2015, the Shelter Cluster strategy focused primarily on emergency response, prioritizing home repairs and winterization support. In 2016, based on the context and considering the temporary and timebound nature of humanitarian clusters, Shelter Cluster activities shifted towards transitional shelter solutions. While some repair and reconstruction activities were initiated, they were moderate in scope due to the limited number of development actors.

The protracted nature of the crisis diminished the livelihood options for conflict-affected Ukrainians and displaced families - who struggle to pay rent, utilities, and heating – and is forcing an increasing number of IDPs to involuntarily return to Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCAs).

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

Ukraine endured six years of economic hardship prior to the start of hostilities in 2014, which weakened the government’s capacity to respond to humanitarian needs when the conflict erupted. The economic crisis devastated Ukraine’s construction industry, intensifying a need for new housing stock, and repairs of aging buildings.

Ukraine uses a housing code inherited from the Soviet period which requires separate processes for land and home ownership. In early 2013, changes were initiated to Ukraine’s housing policies and institutional framework in order to address the challenges of poor housing conditions,



The conflict resulted in the damage or destruction of over 50,000 homes.

the need for major repairs and maintenance, and a long queue of people seeking more adequate housing. These changes to municipal standards and building codes were not successfully resolved prior to the start of the crisis.

When the government approved new housing policies, there was not adequate funding to implement them. Major political protests and civil unrest in November 2013 sparked the beginning of the current crisis, and in March of 2014, armed conflict in the east of the country erupted.

SITUATION AFTER THE CRISIS

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, over 3,000 civilians have been killed and approximately 9,000 injured. The established ‘contact line’ dividing Ukrainian Government Controlled Areas (GCA) and Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA) has only five checkpoints, creating enormous wait times and restrictions for the over one million people attempting to cross from one side to the other each month. According to the Shelter Cluster, throughout the conflict over 20,000 homes were damaged in GCA areas of Eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast, with NFI needs exacerbated by Ukraine’s harsh winters and the poor socio-economic conditions.

In urban areas, the influx of displaced people has strained state social support mechanisms and the acceptance of the host communities.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The National Shelter Cluster strategy evolved from a primary focus on emergency response in 2014 to increasingly more reconstruction and support for durable solutions. While the Cluster maintains a capacity to respond to emergency needs and to support winterization needs of the most vulnerable, efforts have shifted to facilitating access to permanent shelter due to the absence of development donors to mobilise a response in the 20km radius of the conflict line.

Considering recommendations made by the Humanitarian Coordination Architectural Review in 2016, the Cluster established objectives to decentralize coordination and progressively hand over responsibility for national coordination of humanitarian shelter activities to Ukrainian authorities. The first transition plan was developed in 2016 which was then revised in terms of timeline in the first quarter of 2017. The Shelter/NFI Cluster transition strategy activities focused on two key objectives:

- To further reinforce coordination capacity of local leadership at the sub-national level; and
- To develop the shelter coordination and technical capacity of national authorities so that they could eventually take over coordination of the humanitarian shelter and NFI response.

The Ukraine Shelter Cluster planned for the transition of coordination responsibilities to begin at the sub-national level due to the sub-national Shelter Cluster teams' good working relationships with municipal and oblast (regional) authorities. Focal points from local authorities regularly participated in sub-national Cluster activities and many local mayors were involved in the coordination of shelter interventions. Despite their good will and commitment however, it still took time for local officials to develop adequate coordination teams for the shelter response and to provide adequate resourcing to some villages.

In 2017, the sub-national Shelter Cluster started to work with the State of Emergency Services in Donetsk Oblast in addition to the Donetsk Regional Administration. This cooperation enabled shelter materials to be deployed by Shelter Cluster partners, so that government brigades could conduct much needed light and medium repairs.

Trainings on the damage database and winterization coordination also started; however, government focal points for shelter transition were limited. Two staff covered Donetsk Oblast while Luhansk Oblast struggled to participate in humanitarian coordination. Beyond attendance to Cluster meetings of various clusters at sub-national level, there were not enough staff in local government to do the shelter monitoring that the sub-national Shelter Cluster was conducting.

In late 2018, national authorities identified staff for coordinating shelter activities and the Cluster focused on supporting the transition of coordination responsibilities at the national level. In January of 2019, after a lengthy process, the transition was formalized between the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) and the Ukraine Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories (MTOT) through a Memorandum of Understanding that outlined the activities and expectations of both parties. In general terms, the CLA would support the transfer of experience in the coordination of humanitarian shelter assistance to the MTOT. In return the MTOT agreed to the establishment of a shelter/NFI coordination group within the ministry. The MoU was valid for the period of one year, with automatic renewal.

In 2018, various housing and social policy ministries were merged, and the government allocated more funding. The sub-national Shelter Cluster began holding additional coordination meetings in locations such as Mariinka and Zolote. Local authorities were able to chair these meetings and their increased ownership led to better participation by local NGOs.

In addition to the co-chairing of sub-national Cluster meetings, the Cluster built the capacity of Ukrainian authorities to “coordinate and meet residual humanitarian needs in line with humanitarian principles” through training and advocacy. Local authority focal points were trained in the Cluster's Information Management systems (winterization referrals, damage database inputs, etc.) and in humanitarian shelter and NFI response standards. At the national level, dedicated information management staff were provided to MTOT counterparts for technical support while they

began to take on responsibility of coordination tools and national databases (5W and Residential Damage Database).

In 2019, the CLA signed a Protocol of Intentions with MTOT which outlined the modalities of cooperation, putting the Government of Ukraine as the lead in coordination in GCA areas of Ukraine, with the CLA serving as a backup technical and information-providing role. The Cluster engaged in building MTOT's capacity: two Cluster team members worked for two days per week from the Ministry premises.

Due to the election process in mid-2019 and the further merging of MTOT with the Ministry of Veteran Affairs in September 2019, the process of handover was then put on hold until the moment the newly merged Ministry defined its structure and tasks. In 2020, the Cluster restarted the handover process, assuring the continuity of the process. In parallel, the Cluster continued its regular sub-national coordination in cooperation with local authorities, extending the co-chairing role of the authorities where possible and eventually transferring the role of chairing.



Cluster Lead Agency observes repair needs in Luhansk Oblast Government Controlled Area.

MAIN CHALLENGES

One of the greatest challenges of managing the handover to Ukrainian authorities was navigating the complex political landscape. Differences between regions, between ministries, and between individuals in power could turn a seemingly straightforward plan into a challenging and complex series of personal opinions with unclear lines of authority. It was also difficult to try to compete for the attention and time of national and local authorities who already had full time jobs and didn't necessarily appreciate or understand the work being done by humanitarian shelter actors. The Cluster also encountered reluctance from some regional authorities who were skeptical about their capacity to take on the shelter information management (IM) and coordination duties.

During the implementation of the transition strategy, national and regional elections delayed decision-making and resulted in changed focal points over time.

The Cluster has attempted to mitigate these challenges as much as possible through the signed Protocol of Intentions with the Ukraine MTOT and by adopting a realistic, long term timeline that allows them to adapt the strategy to unexpected changes and delays as required.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY

In order to progress long-term sustainability, and durable shelter solutions for Ukraine's displaced population, the Cluster has also been attempting to mobilize development actors and government counterparts to revive the housing and construction industry and address issues with national housing policy respectively. The Cluster has focused on supporting the mainstreaming of housing policy principles into longer-term planning while maintaining the importance of international humanitarian law as more demands for compensation accumulate.

The Cluster also supported the Government of Ukraine's implementation of a nation-wide compensation program for destroyed houses. After a few revisions and provision of comments by partners and the Cluster's HLP Working Group, the program became operational in 2020, with the plan to provide compensation of up to USD 10,500 per household, to support sustainable shelter solutions.

EXIT/HANDOVER

On the 26th of October 2020, the Shelter Cluster's Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) met in Kyiv to plan the next steps of the Cluster's strategy and transition. At the time of the meeting, the Shelter Cluster estimated that there was a residual caseload of 1,000 households in need of shelter repairs. Since 2017, the significant gap that had existed in Donetsk Oblast was addressed by the State of Emergency Services, who proved to be a capable state actor at sub-national level – even reaching areas where humanitarian actors were not able to access.

The number of humanitarian partners and available funds have continued to diminish as residual needs decrease, while the Government of Ukraine assumes greater responsibility to respond to the longer-term consequences of the conflict for government-controlled areas of Ukraine. In addition to mobilization of the State of Emergency Services, the Government of Ukraine also introduced the state mechanism on compensation. In 2020, UAH 20 million (approx. USD 735,000) was allocated for the compensation as a pilot process. In Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA), the cooperation with the Ukrainian government authorities does not exist, and the number of partners continues to be limited to cover the humanitarian needs. After discussing challenges and their implications, all SAG members approved the initiation of the deactivation process of the Shelter Cluster in Ukraine.

NEXT STEPS

The next phase of work towards the handover of coordination responsibilities is to ensure that Shelter/NFI coordination responsibilities are written into ministerial job descriptions, processes, and reporting lines. The formalization of sector coordination into the Ministry's formal architecture will ensure the leadership role and reinforce institutional memory. The goal is that capacity building investments made by the Cluster are not entirely dependent on individuals, but built into the Ministry's day to day operations.

WIDER IMPACTS

While the process and criteria of Cluster transition or deactivation are well documented in the IASC's Reference Module for Cluster Coordination, few good examples of a transition process have been properly studied and documented. While still ongoing, the example from the Ukraine Shelter Cluster provides a realistic perspective of the timeline, challenges, and level of engagement required to successfully transition from a Cluster response to a national authority led sector response.

The inter-agency context of Ukraine was also difficult for the Shelter Cluster, because not all Clusters were willing to deactivate according to the timeline originally agreed in 2016. After the Logistics Cluster and Early Recovery Cluster deactivated in country, the Shelter Cluster team took on the negotiating of handover terms and became responsible for handing over data to the Government of Ukraine's platform for coordination and building the capacity of the government to do informational updates. This resulted in the Government of Ukraine using the Shelter Cluster Factsheet template to do updates on the wider humanitarian response.



Shelter/NFI Cluster Lead Agency representative meets with the Government of Ukraine to discuss transition of the Shelter Cluster and protection and rights of IDPs in Ukraine.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Realistic Timeline.** After the first annual review of the strategy in 2017, the Cluster wisely chose to adopt a more long-term approach that took into consideration the pace of local authorities and allotted adequate time for coordination capacity building and IM support.
- √ **Formal agreement with National Authorities.** Developing a detailed Protocol of Intentions with the Ukraine MTOT served as an excellent tool to ensure that both parties agreed on their specific responsibilities and required actions. Furthermore, it served to document the commitment by national authorities in the case of a change in leadership due to election or change of personnel. It must be followed and supported however, by the inclusion of sector coordination responsibilities into ministerial job descriptions, processes, and reporting lines to formalize these responsibilities internally.
- √ **Support to handover of Cluster coordination and IM tools and data systems.** Handing over a complex collection of tools and systems to a new coordinating authority will almost guarantee that they are not used and are quickly forgotten. By assigning dedicated IM support, and bringing local authorities in to co-chair sub-national Clusters at an early stage, the Shelter Cluster built their capacity in these systems, ensuring their long-term success.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Under appreciation for the pace of decision making and action by local authorities.** While the initial timeline was revised, the process is still ongoing. More support from development experts particularly those working on the issues of decentralization and economic reform could have proved beneficial in support to humanitarian actors.
- × **Lack of Inter-Cluster buy in to transition.** The planned transition of the Clusters was not adequately communicated to the government nor was it consistent across all Clusters. The Humanitarian Response Plan continued to be implemented in the normal way, despite the adoption of transition plans, which sent mixed messages about the humanitarian needs and government capacities.
- × **Donors funded some aspects of the transition,** but the slow mobilization of development donors meant that it was difficult to solve some of the systemic issues in Ukrainian housing policy. With humanitarians ending their support of humanitarian programming for internally displaced people outside of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast in 2017, development actors should have begun to support on IDP housing issues in these areas earlier, which would have prepared them to roll out such projects in Donetsk and Luhansk by 2019-2020.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The speed and agility of dedicated humanitarian organizations is different to that of national and local government counterparts** (sometimes faster, sometimes slower). This is a major consideration when agreeing to work in partnership.
- **It is important to maintain a professional, positive, and proactive relationship with national and local authorities as partnerships are often long-term.** Successful transition requires a high level of transparency and trust.
- **Understanding of dynamics between different regional authorities is required** to tailor coordination and response architecture appropriately and for looking ahead to identify potential problem situations.

OVERVIEW

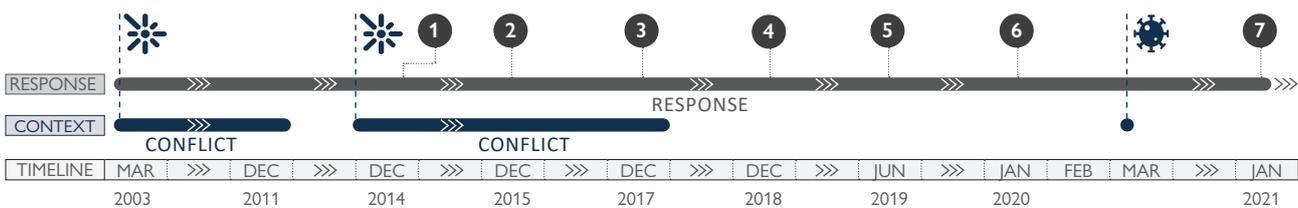
IRAQ 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

CRISIS	Iraq conflict, 2014 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	5.62 million people affected* 4.1 million people in need*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	2.6 million individuals**
LOCATION	National
PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN THE RESPONSE	294,426 people reached with NFI support 186,564 people reached with Shelter support***
RESPONSE OUTPUTS	294,426 people supported with NFI kits 94,893 people supported with shelter upgrades in camps 46,123 people living out of camps supported with emergency shelter interventions 33,541 returnees assisted with emergency repairs to war-damaged houses or provided with Sealing-off Kits***
<p>* Source: Humanitarian Response Plan Iraq 2020 ** Source: Humanitarian Response Plan Iraq 2021 *** Source: Iraq Shelter Cluster Factsheet (Jan-Dec 2020)</p>	



SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

In post-emergency Iraq, there are both humanitarian and longer-term needs, often rooted in problems that existed before the 2014 conflict. The adoption of the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT) for targeting purposes has allowed partners to identify and prioritize people at highest risk of engaging in emergency coping mechanisms. The close collaboration between the Cluster and stabilization actors is assisting the transition toward a more durable, longer term shelter response where construction standards, needs analysis and advocacy messages toward Government involvement have been jointly developed and put in practice.



- 2003-2011:** Iraq war.
- 2014-2017:** Iraq conflict.
- 1** **2014:** Activation of Shelter/NFI Cluster in Iraq.
- 2** **2015:** Stabilization actors began to work in liberated areas.
- 3** **Dec 2017:** Retaking of last ISIL stronghold (Mosul). Iraqi Government declared the end of the conflict.
- 4** **Late 2018:** Shelter Cluster adapted strategy development and the use of SEVAT.
- 5** **Mid 2019:** Camp closures and forced returns.
- 6** **2020:** Shelter/NFI Cluster handover strategy documents and agreements.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 7** **2021:** Shelter Cluster collaboration on Durable Solutions Framework.



The response continues to support displaced populations in camps and other settings, while also supporting people to be able to return to their homes.

CONTEXT

In 2021, seven years after the start of the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and four years after it ended, social, ethnic, and sectarian tensions persist on multiple fronts. Due to weak central governance and limited progress towards recovery and development, the situation has become protracted and millions of people across Iraq remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Political uncertainty and recurring seasonal floods and droughts, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, mean that humanitarian needs persisted or even intensified in some areas.

The most vulnerable people in Iraq and those in acute need of humanitarian assistance remain families directly affected by the 2014-2017 conflict against ISIL, particularly those who were displaced and whose lives and livelihoods were uprooted and destroyed. Since August 2019, the Iraqi government has proceeded to close, with little notice to humanitarian actors, 54 out of the established 83 IDP camps, reducing the in-camp population from 442,000 to 186,000 individuals. The move has led to premature returns to areas with access issues, destroyed infrastructure, livelihoods and property, secondary displacement to informal sites which offer precarious living conditions, eviction risks and substandard dwellings.

The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) identified critical issues related to resilience and recovery but the humanitarian community has noted that they should be addressed by the state, as primarily responsible for the protection of its citizens, with the support of development and stabilization actors.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

Still recovering from the 2003-2011 Iraq War, prior to the eruption of the conflict with ISIL in 2014, Iraq had been in a state of 'transition' for a decade; politically, from dictatorship to democracy, and economically, from an oil-based economy to a more diversified one. Iraq is also hosting a significant number of Syrian refugees who had fled the armed conflict that began there in 2011. Thousands of people displaced during previous conflicts within Iraq lived in informal settlements without access to basic services such as clean water, electricity, and sanitation. Humanitarian presence and capacity to address displacement was minimal, with many actors having left at the end of 2010 during a period of relative stability.

SITUATION DURING/AFTER THE CRISIS

The humanitarian situation in Iraq deteriorated rapidly after June 2014; the conflict with ISIL displaced over 6 million people and exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities throughout the country. On 12th August, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) issued a system-wide L3 emergency declaration, noting the linkages to the Syrian crisis, with an emphasis on "a whole of Iraq" approach.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) identified the Protection of Civilians, support for IDPs, Food Security, Essential Services, and Conflict-Sensitive Programming as the highest priorities for the humanitarian response. In 2018 the World Bank estimated the overall reconstruction and recovery needs at USD 88.2 billion, with USD 22.9 billion needed for the short term, and USD 65.4 billion needed for the medium term. The housing sector, which experienced the highest damage level, would require USD 17.4 billion and decades of reconstruction programs – clearly beyond the capacity, resources and mandate of both humanitarian and development partners.



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Significant damage was done to homes and infrastructure during the conflict. It is estimated that to recover the housing sector would require USD 17.4 billion and decades of construction programs.



Since the end of the conflict, damage and destruction of housing is one of the key barriers to displaced people being able to return.

NATIONAL SHELTER (NFI) STRATEGY

In 2020, the Iraq Shelter and NFI Cluster targeted nearly 525,000 individuals in 33 districts most affected by the conflict through provision of shelter support and NFIs. The Cluster's interventions aim to address inadequate shelter conditions through a mix of in-kind distribution and cash programming, helping families overcome the additional vulnerability caused by substandard dwellings and incorporating COVID-19 risk reduction measures.

The Cluster's priorities for supporting the nearly 275,000 displaced people living in formal camps are to; attain or maintain minimum shelter standards, to mitigate flood risks, and to replenish missing or worn-out tents and non-food items. The Cluster targeted nearly 333,000 people living in out-of-camp situations who are socio-economically vulnerable after years of displacement and have critical shelter needs.

The Cluster provided Sealing-Off Kits, Critical Shelter Upgrades, and rental subsidies. The Cluster targeted approximately 21,000 people returning to their homes



Cluster priorities include supporting nearly 275,000 displaced people who are living in formal camps.

with repair support for damaged residences or low-cost transitional shelter solutions. Recovery support would need to be provided by government entities and development actors.

While the Shelter Cluster target population figures and budget have decreased from the previous year, shelter needs remain one of the primary barriers to return reported by IDPs. The Cluster consistently advocates with relevant Iraqi authorities and development actors to be involved in Cluster activities. The goal being for them to support and build capacity for the authorities to assume the primary coordination and implementation role for shelter response in the future.

NATIONAL SHELTER (NFI) RESPONSE

The lack of affordable housing was an issue even before 2014, with a deficit in the sector estimated at around 760,000 units. Since the end of the conflict, IDPs are quoting the damages/destruction of their houses among the top three barriers to return (along with the lack of livelihood opportunities/financial resources, and a very challenging protection and security environment due to ethnic/tribal tensions).

Rather than a 'one size fits all' approach, existing Shelter Cluster technical guidance on Non-Food Items, Critical Shelter Upgrades, Sealing-Off Kits and war damaged housing rehabilitation provides options for shelter support which are customizable to the specific needs of families. The Cluster's tailored approach to addressing individual housing needs ensures that solutions are appropriate to the context and align with of other sectors' efforts towards durable solutions.

These efforts are also combined with advocacy towards relevant authorities and development actors to encourage more wide-scale housing reconstruction and rehabilitation programs, in conjunction with stronger governmental financial support through compensation schemes.



Shelter Cluster technical guidance provides options for shelter support that can be customized to the specific needs of families.

ADAPTING THE RESPONSE IN FORMAL CAMPS

In order to adapt to decreasing funding and changing needs of the population, the Cluster is focusing on the repair or replacement of shelters as required and moving away from blanket NFI distributions in camps. Since most camps in Iraq are not suited to long-term habitation or for transition to durable solutions (e.g. transition from temporary camps to formal settlements), families living there will need to find more sustainable alternatives.

The government has proposed return grants to support returns, but these have not yet materialized. As a result, displaced people face major financial barriers for their return. Fearing that the camp closure policy by the end of 2021 will generate further forced return, partners have organized “Go and See visits” to help those most in need check the status of their home and support them with shelter repairs. Yet, the pace of these programs is insufficient to ensure everyone will be able to return.

The Shelter Cluster has also proposed to the Government to upgrade some camps with locally constructed temporary shelter using traditional construction techniques (earth blocks). Negotiations are ongoing to resolve potential Housing Land and Property issues on land ownership and host community acceptance to such settlement integration. Advocacy on this approach will be channeled through the Durable Solutions Framework, with support from the Shelter Cluster.



In formal camps targeted repair and replacement of tents is carried out.

AVOIDING OVERLAP WITH DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

In close coordination with stabilization and development actors, the Cluster has focused its efforts on supporting returns to rural and peri-urban areas while development agencies are focused primarily in urban centers, like Mosul city in Ninawa, Falluja in Anbar. As the recovery and stabilization response continues to scale up and state actors are increasingly present in the main 5 governorates of return (Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din), shelter partners will be able to gradually decrease their footprint in these locations.

The Shelter Cluster successfully advocated with development actors to continue utilizing the reporting tool and

interactive dashboard for war damaged housing rehabilitation and the adoption of common minimum shelter standards. The shared use of these tools not only ensures good coordination between the humanitarian and development shelter actors, but also facilitates reporting and gradual handover of responsibilities.

So far, the Shelter Cluster has collected a record of more than 71,000 houses collectively being repaired, of which 52% are the ones rehabilitated by the Fast Funding for Stabilization program. To ensure continuity of technical standards and building upon existing experience and capacity, in 2021 the Shelter Cluster is co-chairing a Shelter /HLP sub-group under the newly established Durable Solutions Framework in Iraq, to collect and update guidance through a durable solutions lenses, bringing together humanitarian and development actors.



The Shelter Cluster is coordinating with stabilization and development actors on housing rehabilitation/reconstruction, with development actors focusing primarily on urban centers.

STANDARDIZED VULNERABILITY CRITERIA

Due to decreasing budget figures, the Shelter Cluster has targeted only the ‘most vulnerable’ for support in out-of-camp and return contexts. To do so the Cluster adopted the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT), developed by the Iraq Cash Working Group (CWG). The SEVAT supports the transition from a status-based to a needs-based approach and better aligns humanitarian response with the World Bank’s tool for estimating household welfare and the Government of Iraq’s social safety net programs.

Using a range of household characteristics and behavioral indicators that are related to household expenditures, the SEVAT estimates a value for per capita consumption as a proxy for household welfare. Living in an inadequate shelter is a strong proxy indicator for vulnerability, as proven by the regression analysis run to develop the SEVAT model.

The tool has been widely used by shelter actors over the last two years to assess needs and target customized shelter and NFI assistance to over 10,000 households. As the tool identifies an array of multi-cluster needs, it also provides an opportunity for shelter partners to engage with and refer cases to other sectors, mainly Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance, WASH and Protection actors, based on a common understanding of vulnerability, and the evidence base.

Using a commonly agreed and understood vulnerability scoring model allows partners to design interventions covering all vulnerable individuals within an assessed location, and support resource mobilization and sectoral trend analysis with solid data.

Community engagement has proven key to achieving successful shelter programs. The methodology for household selection (and exclusion) must be communicated to avoid generating tensions and resentment among those excluded. Additionally, explaining the scope of shelter repairs to households helps manage their expectations, as only a minimum space (5.5m²/person or 33m²/family of six, including kitchen and toilet spaces) would be rehabilitated with interventions that are considered to be “cosmetic” (e.g. no plastering, no painting) not included.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Political division or paralysis among government counterparts means that there are no viable government counterparts available for shelter actors to engage with. Discussions and advocacy are conducted at multiple levels with varying degree of success. For example, governorate level authorities like the Joint Crisis Coordination (JCC) participate actively in Cluster coordination, information sharing and have a good understanding of Cluster functions, while other ministries and authorities remain detached from humanitarian coordination.

The current COVID-19 pandemic hit Iraq in February 2020 and led to the imposition of movement restrictions and

lockdowns which have in turn worsened existing humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable (loss of livelihoods, premature returns, etc.).

Sudden camp closures in 2019 and 2020, involving little coordination with the humanitarian community has caused a wave of movements across Iraq and has exposed the lack of a comprehensive government plan for ending displacement.

WIDER IMPACTS

The Shelter Cluster started early on to adopt and adapt tools from and to coordinate with other sectors, in view of aligning with wider strategic approaches. Using a definition for vulnerability that deviates from the narrowly-defined one of most humanitarian actors – namely one that is developed by the World Bank with the government of Iraq and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) – allows for continuation when responding organizations move from purely emergency assistance to durable solutions and longer term recovery interventions.

Working closely with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group members (particularly the HLP sub-cluster on security of tenure, and CCCM, Health and WASH Clusters on COVID-19 risk mitigation in camps) led to improved multi-sectoral results, while highlighting some of the challenges of inter-cluster coordination.

Lastly, the Shelter Cluster took the initiative to work with large development actors to present and hand-over an overview of the housing sector and response, to support the setting up of Durable Solutions strategic direction. Following engagement with The Durable Solutions Strategic Framework and building on data on needs accumulated by shelter actors, the Durable Solutions Strategic Framework in 2020 set out two main criteria for identifying people in need of durable solutions – those living in critical shelter and/or conflict affected persons who have no livelihoods opportunities to return to normalcy.



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Political division and paralysis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and sudden camp closures in 2019 and 2020 are some of the main challenges currently facing the shelter response in Iraq.

CASE STUDY

IRAQ 2018–2021 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Housing reconstruction, Housing rehabilitation, Integrated programming, Returns

CRISIS	Iraq war, 2003-2011, Iraq conflict, 2014-2017
PEOPLE AFFECTED/ DISPLACED	1.2 million IDPs 4.8 million returnees*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	Approx. 240,000 damaged and destroyed homes**
PROJECT LOCATION	Kirkuk and Salah Al Din Governorates
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	Full program 948 HHs Shelter support 457 HHs
PROJECT OUTPUTS	457 war damaged homes rehabilitated, retrofitted or rebuilt 900 HHs received unconditional multipurpose cash 406 livelihoods grants distributed 6 settlement level community projects
SHELTER SIZE	33m ² , 55m ² or 72m ² (dependent on household size)
SHELTER DENSITY	Minimum of 5.5m ² of covered space per person
DIRECT COST	USD 3,500 – USD 8,500 per HH (dependent on household size and level of damage)
PROJECT COST	USD 4,900 – USD 11,900 per HH (dependent on household size and level of damage)

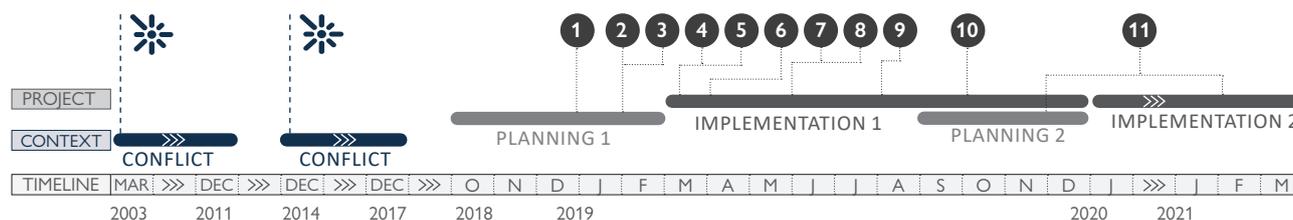


PROJECT SUMMARY

The objective of the Durable Returns Program was for families who had returned following displacement to be able to rebuild their lives in safe conditions, with access to essential services, and livelihood opportunities in a revitalized local market. To do so, the program addressed underlying protection concerns, repaired key public infrastructure and disbursed cash grants for shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction.

* Source: IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (Dec 2020)

** Source: The status of housing rehabilitation programs in Iraq in the post-ISIL conflict: an abstract by the Shelter Cluster and UN-Habitat in Iraq, Oct 2020.



✱ 2003-2011: Iraq war.

✱ 2014-2017: Iraq conflict.

- 1 Jan 2019: Selection of locations.
- 2 Feb 2019: Formation of Community Working Groups.
- 3 Feb 2019: Socio-economic vulnerability assessments.
- 4 Mar 2019: Identification and feasibility analysis of community projects.
- 5 Mar 2019: Shelter Validation assessment (technical).

- 6 Apr 2019: Selected households signing of construction related documents and agreements.
- 7 Jun 2019: Distribution of the shelter grant first installment.
- 8 Jun 2019: Implementation of community projects.
- 9 Aug 2019: Distribution of the shelter grant second installment.
- 10 Oct 2019: Distribution of the shelter grant third installment.
- 11 Dec 2019 - Jan 2021: Points 1 to 10 repeat in Implementation phase 2.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in Iraq see [A.17](#).

Some of the main obstacles preventing displaced people from returning to their homes include: a lack of adequate shelter because of conflict-related damage or destruction, lack of services (water, electricity, health and education), insufficient livelihood opportunities, and insecurity and protection issues. Many of those who remained displaced following the end of the conflict had no homes to return to and were not able to carry out their previous livelihood activities, much less raise the financial means to begin reconstruction. The same applies for those who have returned and are forced to live with relatives, in part of their damaged house or in rented accommodation.

PROJECT APPROACH

The organization developed a Durable Returns Program – of which shelter support was one component – to enable households who had returned to their areas of origin to be able to rebuild their lives in safe conditions, with access to essential services and livelihood opportunities in a revitalized local market. This required buy-in and committed engagement from the local authorities and security forces.

The program took a holistic approach, focusing on six main pillars to facilitate durable returns: shelter, livelihoods, relief (through Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance), essential services and infrastructure, mine action and weapons decontamination, and Protection. The use of cash transfers were prioritized to stimulate market recovery. Through an interlinked series of interventions, the program's aim was to help communities to come back to life.

Cash-based Interventions were prioritized in order to create a multiplier effect of cash injected into the communities recirculating, and thereby stimulate local market recovery. Before cash grants were distributed to families to rebuild their homes, the organization invested in local construction-related craftspeople and businesses (electricians, welders, carpenters, masons, hardware shop-keepers

and ironmongers) to ensure that they had the necessary tools, equipment and materials to restart their work. Once the cash grants were distributed to families to repair their homes, they hired these skilled laborers and purchased items from their shops, creating a virtuous cycle of supply and demand, reviving the local economy.

Part of the organization's rationale for using a Cash-for-Shelter approach was that they believed it would increase the value-for-money of each grant due to the money going directly to households who could then engage contractors. Households also saved on labor costs by soliciting support from relatives and neighbors. Additionally, providing cash resulted in households having much greater choice and flexibility to address their priority shelter needs. The downsides were risks around the quality of construction or the misuse of cash, which needed to be carefully counter balanced thorough monitoring and the provision of continuous technical support.

TARGETING

Four main locations of operation were selected based on multidisciplinary criteria. All targeted locations were areas classified as rural or peri-urban, had a significant number of returnees, were safely accessible, and had sustained a very high level of damage to housing, infrastructure and main utilities and facilities. Furthermore, the locations were selected in areas where the organization had an ongoing dialogue with the local authorities and security forces, enabling the team to respond to protection concerns.

Families with a certain degree of socioeconomic vulnerability were confirmed to participate in shelter technical assessments that validated the level of damage of their home. Through household visits, team members classified the level of damage of the house based on the Iraq National Shelter Cluster Criteria, and verified the ownership of the house and land, either by checking the land deeds (common in urban and peri-urban areas), or by triangulating the information via trusted community members or the Community Working Groups whenever ownership documentation was unavailable (common in rural areas).



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Homes and businesses sustained significant damage during the conflict.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key theme that ran through the program was its community-based approach, with a focus on investing in people’s capacities, supporting empowerment to capitalize on opportunities. The guiding question for the organization was: ‘How can we enable people to be active participants in their own and their communities’ recovery?’ To do so, once a community was selected, analysis of market chains and availability of skilled labor was carried out, participatory decision-making processes were put in place and Community Working Groups (CWGs) were established. These CWGs were involved throughout the program design and implementation, including in consultation on targeting criteria, identifying program priorities, assisting in community mobilization and day-to-day follow-up. The approach aimed to enhance community engagement, communication with communities and feedback channels, to minimize tensions, identify issues early and mitigate them, and maximize ownership and acceptance of the program within the community. Where the inclusion of women proved challenging in more conservative locations, the program considered the establishment of women only working groups which had a similar role to the standard CWGs, particularly in program design and consultation.

CASH-FOR-SHELTER

Once these preparatory stages had been completed, the vulnerability and capacities of each household in the community was assessed. The organization developed a model similar to one used by the Cash Working Group. On the basis of the results, several types of cash-based support were available to households, depending on their degree of vulnerability and their specific priorities.

With Cash-for-Shelter grants for the reconstruction of damaged or destroyed houses, priority was given to households currently residing in sub-standard living conditions and with the lowest capacity to independently change their situation. To be eligible, households needed to have a certain vulnerability score, and their housing



Community Working Groups (CWGs) were formed and were engaged in all staged of the project.

damage needed to be classified either Category 2 (major), Category 3 (severe) or Category 4 (destroyed), based on the classification developed by the Iraq Shelter Cluster. The Cash-for-Shelter grant amount depended on the degree of destruction and size of family, and was paid in several installments as a conditional cash grant.

CASH FOR SHELTER GRANT PER HOUSEHOLD			
FAMILY SIZE / LEVEL OF DAMAGE	33m ² Family size 1 to 6	55m ² Family size 7 to 10	72m ² Family size 11+
CATEGORY 2 AND 3 (Rehab or retrofit)	USD 3,000 (+ 500)	USD 3,500 (+ 500)	USD 4,500 (+ 500)
CATEGORY 4 (Rebuild)	USD 5,000 (+ 500)	USD 6,500 (+ 500)	USD 8,000 (+ 500)

Cash-for-Shelter grant per household: Based on the classification developed in ‘Shelter Cluster Iraq – Emergency repair of war-damaged shelter guidelines’, Version 2.3 – 11.03.2019.

Following the identification of eligible households for a Cash-for-Shelter grant, a fully customized package of construction documents for each household was developed. This package served as a reference and a guiding document set for both the household and the project team. A typical construction documents package included:

- Agreement: stipulating the terms and conditions, responsibilities of both the organization and the household, grant value and tranches;
- Bill of Quantities: made simplified and comprehensible for households;
- Layout plan: to show which areas of the house were within scope of works and which were not;
- Ownership declaration form: used for data triangulation, usually signed by the household, Community Working Group members, and two community members; and
- A simplified scope of work.

With each household, once the agreement was explained and signed, the first tranche of the grant was distributed. For logistical and pragmatic reasons, the cash transfer modality was done via traditional hawala transfer networks.

The rehabilitation, retrofitting or construction was accompanied by technical assistance to the households. This was via weekly or biweekly field visits by the organization’s engineers to each household to provide guidance and supervision on the quality of works, and in parallel, the team monitored and documented the progress for reporting and archiving.

Once a household substantially completed each construction phase, the subsequent installment of the grant was disbursed, and once substantial completion of the scope of works was reached the household received a very small amount that was retained from the overall grant (around 5% usually) and signed a final completion certificate.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The program also included community projects which aimed to enhance access to communal spaces, essential services and utilities through the rehabilitation of community spaces, preferably delivered through Cash-for-Work. Depending on the priorities in each specific location, this involved for example the rehabilitation of a pumping station to supply water for either domestic consumption or for irrigation; the repair of schools or primary health care centers; or the restoration of power supply.

SECURITY AND PROTECTION CONCERNS

To support the continued return process, the organization monitored and addressed a wide range of Protection issues facing IDPs and returnees. Potential security and Protection concerns (restrictions of movement, discrimination and violence, presence of unexploded ordnance or human remains, etc.) faced by individuals or communities who had returned to their area of origin and who were part of the program, were identified through a Protection dialogue with the authorities, mine action partners, armed groups, security forces and community leaders before, during and after the implementation phase.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Perceptions of adequate living space. Traditionally, Iraqi communities have been accustomed to living in spacious houses. For financial feasibility reasons the program pursued the minimum covered living space standard recommended by the Iraq Shelter Cluster, 5.5m² per person, which is often perceived as cramped. Good communication helped in mitigating misunderstandings, yet dissatisfaction was sometimes expressed.

Going beyond the agreed upon scope of works. Linked with the previous point, households sometimes decided to expand the reconstruction or rehabilitation beyond the agreed scope of works at their own expense (usually by going into debt). This risked jeopardizing households' abilities to meet subsequent tranche thresholds or even finish the works due to inflating the construction budget. Several mitigation measures were put in place to avoid this, such as assisting households in designing the expansion and estimating its costs. However, in future programs the organization plans to limit the allowance of expansion that is supported i.e. by 30%.

Availability of construction workers. One of the preliminary activities of the program was conducting a rapid market assessment and a price monitoring exercise. Although the outputs indicated that the workforce (skilled and unskilled labor) were available and abundant, it was observed that sometimes the local workforce became overwhelmed during implementation, mainly because some households reached the same construction milestones simultaneously (i.e. concrete mixing and casting all needed to be done at the same time).

WIDER IMPACTS

In addition to the outcomes for households directly supported by the program, there were also indirect positive outcomes, with many people in the wider community reporting for example an **increase in work linked to the shelter and small business components**.

More broadly, the program presented an opportunity to engage with these communities and authorities in the longer term and delve into and jointly address some deeply entrenched protection concerns. While difficult to measure, **community-based projects and the sense that the village or neighborhood as a whole benefited** from the program appear to have **strengthened ties between neighbors**, even though the picture here remains mixed.



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The scope of the project included the reconstruction for homes that were too severely damaged to be rehabilitated.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Multi sectoral integrated approach.** The shelter support was part of a broader integrated program, which included community projects, protection programming, and market-based approaches. Prioritizing support to construction-related small businesses and skilled laborers prior to shelter interventions supported the recovery effort.
- √ **Owner-driven reconstruction and Cash-for-Shelter approach.** This proved to be cost-efficient, safe and popular amongst affected communities. While close monitoring and technical follow-up was crucial, the owner-driven Cash-for-Shelter approach had multiple advantages in comparison to a traditional contractor-led approach, enabling households to drive the reconstruction process.
- √ **The development of community representation structures,** through Community Working Groups enhanced communication with communities significantly and facilitated community engagement and consultation, as communities were mobilized from the onset of the program and throughout.
- √ **Scope of project included all levels of damage and destruction.** The scope of the project included all levels of housing damage, including reconstruction for homes that had been totally destroyed, as well as repair and rehabilitation of damaged homes.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Inclusion of households who have not yet returned in the program.** The program only included households who had already physically returned to their area of origin. However, a considerable proportion of such communities face challenges in returning prior to receiving support and remain displaced, yet within the program design, they were not mapped out as being possible target households. This was mainly due to complexity in understanding households' intent to return and the program's ability to determine their level of vulnerability in the location of displacement. However, this is being mitigated for future iterations of the program by registering returnees and possible target households on different cycles (or phases), enabling people to express their willingness to return, and enabling people to enter the program at later stages. Other methods are also being tested to resolve this challenge.
- × **Gaps within the numerical quantification of socio-economic vulnerability of returnees remains a challenge.** The program came a long way in identifying vulnerable families within a community and adopted a very structured and comprehensive tool. However, the methodology is not perfect and some results had to be reconsidered later on in the project.



Shelter interventions were part of a broader integrated program of support.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Investing in early planning activities of the program is pivotal** for the alignment and smooth integration of the different project components and the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation. For example, a proper understanding of the community's context and environmental conditions sets a base of how to roll out the required assessments and data gathering exercises in an efficient manner that mitigates assessment fatigue.
- **Proactive and early involvement of community members in project design, methodology and execution** will enhance the general communication with communities, their overall understanding of the project, acceptance and buy-in while ensuring that the activities remain relevant to their needs and priorities.
- Being **part of a multi sectoral integrated program**, the shelter component has proven to be more relevant and impactful when interlinked and complemented by other household and settlement level interventions that also address the needs and priorities of returnees, comprehensively facilitating a durable return for families.
- In considering **timelines of construction activities** across multiple households in the same location, pinch-points where multiple households may be undertaking the same construction activities (i.e. concrete mixing) at the same time need to be considered and spaced out if possible, so as to not overwhelm the local construction workforce capacity.

CASE STUDY

IRAQ 2019–2021 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Coordination and partnerships, Housing rehabilitation, Infrastructure upgrading, Local government engagement

CRISIS	Syrian crisis (2011 onwards) and Iraq conflict (2014-2017)
PEOPLE DISPLACED	1.2 million Iraqis remain internally displaced* 242,704 registered Syrian refugees in Iraq**
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	Approx. 240,000 damaged and destroyed homes***
PROJECT LOCATION	Mosul and Sinjar (Ninewa Governorate), Dohuk, Sumel and Erbil (Kurdistan Region of Iraq).
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	976 HHs (5,683 individuals) benefited from improved shelter, including: 2,658 IDPs, 198 Syrian refugees and 2,826 host community members.
PROJECT OUTPUTS	5 agreements signed with municipalities 976 houses rehabilitated 1,765 HHs provided with clean and regular water supply through rehabilitation of communal water networks. 25 municipal technical staff trained on the effective maintenance of water networks
SHELTER SIZE	Average of approx. 120m²
SHELTER DENSITY	Approx. 15m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 3,000 per HH on average
PROJECT COST	USD 3,630 per HH on average



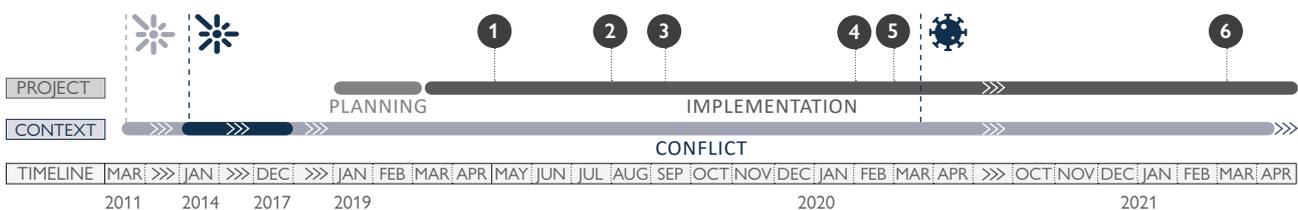
PROJECT SUMMARY

To strengthen the long term resilience of subnational authorities and their host, IDP, and refugee populations affected by the Syrian and Iraq conflicts, the project focused on institutional capacity building and supported urban recovery needs in five cities in northern Iraq through housing rehabilitation and implementing small-scale, community water and sanitation infrastructure.

* Source: IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (Dec 2020)

** Source: UNHCR (30 Sep 2020) *Syria Regional Refugee Response, Operational Portal*

*** Source: Shelter Cluster and UN-Habitat in Iraq (Oct 2020) Abstract: *The status of housing rehabilitation programs in Iraq in the post-ISIL conflict*



- Mar 2011:** Syrian crisis began.
- 2014-2017:** Iraq conflict.
- 1** **Apr - May 2019:** Inception meetings held with subnational authorities and with technical counterparts.
- 2** **Jul - Aug 2019:** Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT) surveys started.
- 3** **Aug - Oct 2019:** Agreements signed with subnational authorities.
- 4** **Feb 2020:** Rehabilitation of housing started.
- 5** **Aug 2020:** Rehabilitation of communal water networks started.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 6** **Mar 2021:** Capacity building for municipal technical staff.



Housing rehabilitation took pace in five cities in northern Iraq.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in Iraq see [A.17](#).

Many families in Mosul and Sinjar (in Ninewa Governorate of Iraq) lost their homes in acts of destruction by ISIL or during the military operations to liberate the occupied areas. Unlawful seizures, secondary occupation, and systematic looting of property were common in these regions. As a result, many people were forced to flee and became internally displaced or continue to live in war-damaged houses.

Cities in the Kurdistan region, namely Duhok, Sumel, and Erbil, received many of these IDPs, as well as Syrian refugees fleeing neighboring regions. Many vulnerable IDPs and refugees came to live in unfinished houses or in over-crowded rented houses lacking basic safety, structural integrity, or sanitation, all of which compromised their dignity, privacy, and tenure security. While some of the IDPs were able to stay temporarily with their relatives or rent apartments, large numbers still required shelter rehabilitation and basic services.

The Kurdistan Region has hosted large displaced and refugee populations since the start of the respective crises. Accommodating high numbers of IDPs and refugees has posed challenges for these groups as well as for host communities.

In recent years, due to improved security, an increasing numbers of IDPs have returned to Ninewa Governorate, yet housing and basic infrastructure remained damaged and destroyed. In Sinjar, aside from widespread physical destruction, lack of proper documentation on housing, land and property rights prevented many displaced families from settling back in their former properties, some of which had been seized and occupied in their absence.

PROJECT APPROACH

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the long-term resilience of targeted host, displaced and refugee populations and relevant subnational authorities affected by the Syrian and Iraqi crises. The project included two core activities in 5 locations (Erbil, Dohuk, Sumel, Mosul and Sinjar): 1) Rehabilitation of 976 housing units, selected based on the vulnerability of their occupants; and 2) Rehabilitation of five water networks in partnership with relevant service providers in each municipality. The project also included training of 25 technical staff on the effective maintenance of water community networks.

The project followed the methodology set forth by the Shelter/NFI Cluster, including: the use of the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SEVAT) developed by the Cash Working Group in Iraq to identify target households; the categorization of war-damaged structures and structural assessments by qualified engineers; the preparation of Bills of Quantity confirming scope of repairs; and the signing of agreements with local authorities, owners, and tenants.

To create employment opportunities and support livelihoods, rehabilitation of houses and water infrastructure projects were carried out through local contractors with oversight and monitoring by field engineers. A competitive process was launched inviting local contractors to submit bids. The lowest technically compliant bidder was selected to ensure best value for money for the shelter rehabilitations across the five locations. Field engineers, contractors, and laborers were hired from benefiting municipalities to enhance local capacities and support local economies. The project created almost 26,000 working days in total for skilled and unskilled workers.

TARGETING

The cities of Mosul and Sinjar were selected for the project due to the extensive damage to the housing and municipal infrastructure during ISIL occupation. Erbil, Dohuk and Sumel in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were also selected, as they accommodated a very high number of refugees and IDPs following the crisis, many of whom remain in inadequate shelter. The project targeted houses within the boundaries of the municipal master plans, where owners hosting IDPs and refugees had deeds of ownerships. Alternative solutions were sought for those unable to prove property ownership.

In each of the 5 municipalities, mapping specialists reviewed satellite imagery of identified neighborhoods. Concurrently, field engineers collaborated with subnational counterparts and neighborhood Mukhtar teams to conduct preliminary structural assessments of up to 400 households per municipality and categorized each house based on the Shelter Cluster's five War Damage Categories: category 0 (no damage), category 1 (minimal damage), category 2 (major damage), category 3 (severe damage), and category 4 (destroyed). Based on this technical assessment, 1,835 households were prioritized for further analysis using SEVAT.

SEVAT is a standardized vulnerability assessment tool developed by the Cash Working Group of Iraq and adopted by the Shelter/NFI Cluster to ensure a uniform and systematic



Engaging women helped to ensure their voices were heard throughout the project implementation.

approach to identifying highly vulnerable households across all communities in Iraq. SEVAT was administered by a local NGO with mixed teams of three (one woman and two men) in each municipality, who conducted surveys of the identified households either in person or over the phone if the families had not yet returned to their homes. Maps with the location of houses were provided to the survey teams for assessment and the questionnaires administered using Kobo Toolbox on tablets. The scoring tool automatically calculated per capita consumption, a reliable metric of household vulnerability, and assigned vulnerability rankings based on the standard formula developed by the Cash Working Group for Iraq. Use of SEVAT ensured transparency and standardized assessment of target households.

Of the assessed households, 82% fell under the poverty line and 200 households were prioritized in each municipality. The selected households were distributed as follows: 50% host community members, 40% IDPs and 10% Syrian refugees. Approximately 23% of selected households were renters.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Neighborhood committees and community leaders were actively involved in the vulnerability assessment and planning phases of the project. Field engineers collaborated with subnational counterparts and neighborhood Mukhtar teams to conduct preliminary structural assessments of houses. For SEVAT administration, survey teams coordinated closely with local authorities and community leaders, which helped avoid tension between host communities and the targeted IDPs and refugees.

Once households were selected, different groups (host communities, IDPs, and refugees) and partner subnational authorities were engaged through focus groups. A local consultant conducted 16 focus groups (four focus groups in each target municipality), engaging a total of 276 people. Separate meetings were organized with municipal counterparts, adult men, adult women, and youth, to encourage different gender and age groups to participate in the discussions and to provide input related to their specific needs and challenges, which helped to inform the development of criteria against which the project could be evaluated.

TENURE SECURITY

In cases where IDPs and refugees were renting properties, to enhance security of tenure, formal agreements were signed with owners of rehabilitated houses stipulating no rent increase for the tenants (either Syrian refugees or IDPs) for a minimum period of 12 months following rehabilitation. Upon completion of housing rehabilitation, all property owners and tenants signed agreements detailing rights and responsibilities of each party, including the obligation of property owners not to increase rent during the first 12 months following the rehabilitation of their properties. Mukhtars, representatives of local communities, were also required to witness the signing of these agreements.

REHABILITATION OF COMMUNAL WATER NETWORKS

In addition to the rehabilitation of housing in targeted areas, the project also addressed recovery needs of local populations through the upgrading of communal water infrastructure to ensure regular supply of clean water to the wider community. As an example, in Eastern Al-Shuhada neighborhood in Sinjar City, Governorate of Ninewa, 323 houses were connected to the municipal water network, providing access to clean and regular water to 1,938 people. The water project in Sinjar included the extension of existing water infrastructure network with 3,000m of additional water pipes.

To facilitate the handover and longevity of water infrastructure surrounding the rehabilitated houses, the project offered training sessions on effective maintenance of water networks. In March 2021, two intensive training sessions were held in Erbil and Duhok for 25 technical staff and engineers from water directorates and municipalities on the effective maintenance and operation of water networks.

This capacity building component equipped the participants with up-to-date knowledge and advanced understanding on the most effective maintenance procedures for water networks and water pumping stations.



Upgrading of WASH infrastructure benefited the wider communities beyond only households receiving shelter support.

COORDINATION

The project team worked in close partnership and consultation with Governorates as well as municipal planning and technical counterparts to ensure that all activities adhered to and complemented subnational masterplans and planning processes. At the outset, Governors were briefed on the project's strategic objectives to gain political support. Municipalities were also engaged during the inception phase, which allowed for alignment of activities based on local development plans and minimized risk of duplication.

Local authorities were subsequently engaged in the assessment, prioritization, and selection of houses and in the identification of water infrastructure for rehabilitation. Formal letters were sent to each Governor updating them on the project's progress and indicating the precise location of houses for rehabilitation within their respective municipality. Governors provided written approvals to formally endorse the rehabilitation projects. Based on the letters of endorsement received from each Governor, subsequent meetings were held with each subnational authority in Erbil, Dohuk, Sumel, Mosul and Sinjar to agree on the project implementation plan of the activities in each local authority. Minutes of meetings capturing the agreements with each target municipality were signed detailing responsibilities of partners and the collaboration modalities for the implementation of all project activities.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Reluctance to return. The slow rate of return and the reluctance of some IDPs to return to their communities of origin after the Iraq conflict, specifically in areas with security risks such as Sinjar, inhibited uptake of project support. Of the houses initially identified in each municipality based on mapping and structural assessments, some were found to be unoccupied during the vulnerability assessment phase. Additional households therefore needed to be identified in some cities to meet project targets.

Fear of eviction. In the case of renters, some households did not wish to participate in the assessments for fear of being evicted if their house was rehabilitated. For future iterations of the project, more information sharing will be done with potential target households who are renters to better understand their fear of eviction as a result of the rehabilitation.

Project scope and severity of damage. The severity of damage and destruction to houses in areas such as Mosul was greater than what could be included within the scope of the project. In line with the project budget, only houses with category 2 (major damage) were selected for rehabilitation, meaning that houses that were category 3 (severe damage), and category 4 (destroyed), were not included in the project.

The COVID-19 pandemic. Government-imposed lockdowns, and movement restrictions severely impacted the progress of housing rehabilitation due to high risks of infection among targeted households and the staff of local contractors carrying out rehabilitation works, especially within inhabited premises.

WIDER IMPACTS

In addition to the direct rehabilitation of housing and communal water networks, the project had a strong focus on **institutional capacity building**. Agreements were signed with relevant municipalities outlining a collaboration framework and support to ensure effective implementation. Activities contributed to priorities identified by targeted municipalities. The ultimate outcomes of the project included the enhancement of relevant subnational authorities' capacities to engage in holistic, area-based planning and improved service delivery that responds to the needs of the host, refugee, and IDP populations.



Local authority engagement involved regular meetings with target municipalities and directorates of water.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Engagement with local authorities.** The project fully engaged the governorates, subnational authorities, joint crisis centers, municipalities and water directorates. Obtaining written approvals from Governors and senior level officials for targeting houses in their respective jurisdictions allowed for smooth implementation of the project.
- √ **Use of the SEVAT methodology,** developed by the Cash Working Group and officially endorsed for use by national Shelter/NFI Cluster, for assessing household vulnerability levels ensured an effective and transparent means of selecting target households.
- √ **Inclusion of host communities.** Host communities were severely impacted during the crises and including them among the target households, through the rehabilitation of their unfinished houses used for hosting some IDPs and Syrian refugees, helped in building peaceful coexistence among various groups.
- √ **Active participation of Mukhtars and local populations.** Close coordination with local authorities and Mukhtars/community leaders helped in avoiding tension between host communities and the targeted IDPs and refugees.
- √ **Rehabilitating dysfunctional communal water networks** in areas around rehabilitated housing allowed a more comprehensive response to support the wider community in each target location.

WEAKNESSES

- × **The project scope did not target houses with higher severity of damage.** This meant that in areas such as Mosul, where entire neighborhoods of the city were completely destroyed during ISIL occupation, a significant gap remained as few organizations were supporting reconstruction of homes that were severely damaged or totally destroyed.
- × **Gender mainstreaming.** Although the project undertook focus group discussions with women, the approach taken in shelter rehabilitation to adequately address specific constraints of female-headed households could have been improved.
- × **Phasing of technical and vulnerability assessments.** Conducting the technical assessment prior to the vulnerability assessment led to the assessment of some unoccupied houses to which families were reluctant to return, resulting in the need to re-identify further houses in some cities.
- × **Slow procurement process** due to the long period required to prepare detailed Bills of Quantities for the housing rehabilitation and delayed response from bidders.



The project supported a combination of host, refugee and IDP households.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **More focus needed on gender specific engagement.** This could have been approached through the differentiation of needs of both women and men in terms of housing rehabilitation, addressing constraints of female-headed households to ensure gender equality during implementation, and the inclusion of an appropriate capacity building component in the project, supporting livelihood opportunities for women.
- **Engaging the subnational technical and departmental authorities,** including municipalities, in the inception and implementation phases allowed for alignment of activities with the respective institutional and neighborhood development plans, thereby ensuring coherence and preventing duplication.
- **Briefing Governors during the inception phase** on the strategic objectives guaranteed the political support needed throughout implementation and facilitated the endorsements for the damaged houses to be rehabilitated by the respective governorates.
- **Trade-off in geographical scope of the project.** As a key outcome of the project was institutional capacity building, being spread across five cities in three governorates enabled broad engagement with local authorities. However, an alternative approach of focusing on a tighter geography could have helped in tailoring the project activities to the specific demographic needs of each target group in specific locations.

CASE STUDY

JORDAN 2018–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Housing rehabilitation, Rental assistance, Security of Tenure, Urban response

CRISIS	Syrian crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Since 2011, Jordan alone has provided refuge to more than 1.3 million Syrians including 671,148 registered refugees*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	1.99 million Jordanians and Syrian refugees without access to affordable housing in the host communities and 1.36 million living in substandard housing conditions**
PROJECT LOCATION	Irbid and Mafraq Governorates, Jordan
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	7,779 HHs (34,578 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	582 HHs emergency Cash-for-Rent assistance 1,264 shelters (1,600 HHs): Flexible Shelter Rehabilitation (FLEX) 565 shelters (736 HHs): Renewable Energy Package 158 shelters (200 HHs): energy efficiency upgrades 882 shelters (996 HHs) connected to municipal water networks. 2,924 shelters (3,865 HHs): WASH upgrades 400 individuals : inclusion kits
SHELTER SIZE	approx. 100m²
SHELTER DENSITY	approx. 18m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 1,270 – 2,255 per HH: Flexible Shelter Rehabilitation (FLEX) USD 845 – 1,185 per HH: Emergency Cash-for-Rent USD 565 on average per HH: WASH rehabilitation Up to USD 1,690 per shelter: Renewable Energy Package USD 590 on average per HH: Water connection to the municipal network USD 280 on average per HH: Inclusion kits
PROJECT COST	USD 2,400 on average per shelter

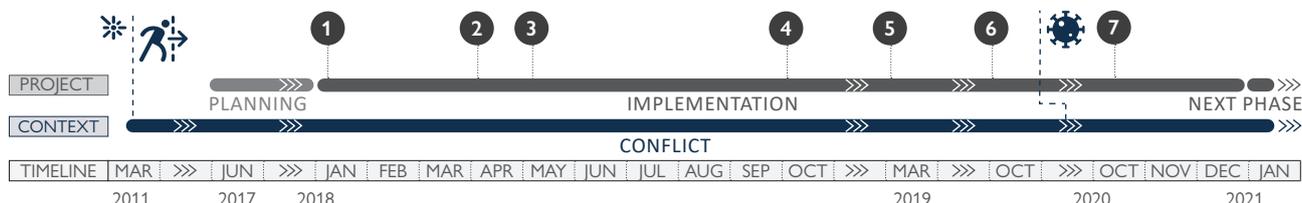


PROJECT SUMMARY

The Urban Shelter Program in Jordan started in 2013 evolving as the context changed in the host communities. This case study refers to the implementation of the program from January 2018 to December 2020. The program implemented a range of shelter support to address shelter needs comprehensively according to the differing needs of households. This included Flexible Shelter Rehabilitation (FLEX), Cash-for-Rent, renewable energy packages, WASH rehabilitation, water connections and inclusion kits. This approach was gradually altered to adapt to the changing context and be able to successfully provide better physical shelter conditions to households residing in the serviced geographies, and to support their coping mechanisms with periods of rent free coverage.

* Source: OCHA (2021)

** Source: Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC), The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020-2022



Mar 2011: Eruption of conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria).

- 1 Jan 2018:** Water connection to the municipal network and WASH rehabilitation modalities initiated.
- 2 Apr - Oct 2018:** Renewable Energy package initiated, and FLEX shelter rehabilitation pilot started.
- 3 May 2018:** Inclusion Kits modality initiated.
- 4 Oct 2018:** Emergency Cash-for-Rent and FLEX shelter rehabilitation modalities initiated.

- 5 Mar 2019:** Integrated Assessment tool rolled out.
- 6 Oct 2019:** Revision of water connection to the municipal network and WASH rehabilitation modalities to better adapt to challenges faced during implementation.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 7 Oct 2020:** BoQ revision of FLEX to incorporate renewable energy upgrades.

CONTEXT

Jordan is a middle-income country with a long history of hosting refugees fleeing conflict. While Jordan enjoys good standing geopolitically, domestically the situation is more precarious. Jordan's small and open economy makes it vulnerable to shocks, and is heavily reliant upon foreign aid and remittances. High unemployment is also a persistent factor. In 2013, Jordan's housing market was overwhelmed by the influx of Syrian refugees looking to reside in urban communities predominantly in the northern governorates. This not only drastically pushed up rental prices but also strained municipal services in areas that were historically under-invested in by the central government.

SYRIAN DISPLACEMENT IN JORDAN

In 2013, Jordan experienced a massive arrival of refugees fleeing Syria, with more than 250,000 Syrian refugees arriving to Jordan between January and October, at an average of 26,000 people per month. The Government of Jordan maintained an open border policy until 2015, when the borders were closed until 2018. March 2021 marked the 10th year of the Syrian Crisis. The most recent intentions survey found the percentage of refugees not planning to return to Syria in the next year increased from 78% in November 2018 to 94% in March 2021. Shelter is reported amongst Syrian refugees as the most pressing yet costly need: rent and utilities costs account for up to 78% of the total calculated monthly expenditure of a household and is pointed out as being the main cause of debt.

NATIONAL SHELTER RESPONSE

The Jordan Shelter Sector strategy is aligned with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. The activities for the Shelter Sector include interventions in camps and in host communities. In host communities, shelter rehabilitation and Cash-for-Rent are the most common interventions, alongside support at neighborhood and municipal levels. Refugees of any nationality and vulnerable Jordanians are eligible for assistance. In host communities, humanitarian actors are required to ensure 30% of their caseload is vulnerable Jordanians. Due to COVID-19, Cash-for-Rent assistance was identified as an essential intervention as the economic impact of the pandemic increased the debt of vulnerable families.

PROJECT APPROACH

The objective of the organization's Urban Shelter Program was to increase dignity and wellbeing for vulnerable families by improving the living environment. This is achieved through the provision of adequate shelter that ensures security of tenure, reduces debt levels, gives the ability to meet some basic needs, and provides access to services, considering accessibility, affordability, and safety and protection.

The program provided a set of complementary interventions to address the specific shelter and settlements needs of vulnerable refugees and Jordanians. This allowed the program to select the appropriate response according to the households identified, their social vulnerability, family size and shelter conditions. In a mix of in-kind and cash-based interventions, the Urban Shelter Program pushed for cash-based interventions but kept as in-kind all interventions where technical expertise was required.

The Urban Shelter Program evolved over 9 years of the organization's response to the Syria refugee crisis in Jordan, and took into consideration the familiarity and experience that Syrian families now have with the local rental market and the continued challenges of meeting rental costs which persist in a climate of limited employment and economic opportunities exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. The program consisted of the following interventions:

- Flexible Shelter Rehabilitation (FLEX);
- Emergency Cash-for-Rent;
- WASH Rehabilitation;
- Renewable Energy Package;
- Water connection to the municipal network; and
- Inclusion Kits.

The program was complemented by programming delivered through the organization's Information Counseling and Legal Assistance program focused upon security of tenure through the provision of legal awareness, counseling, mediation and court representation where required.



WASH rehabilitation conducted as part of the program, included the installation of water tanks.



Eligibility for shelter interventions was based on an Integrated Assessment score, which took multiple factors into account and determined the potential needs of the family.

TARGETING

The target group in host areas of operation were mainly vulnerable refugees residing in inadequate housing, who were at risk of being priced out of the market, and/or those at threat of eviction as a result of their inability to cover rental costs. Eligibility for shelter interventions was based on an Integrated Assessment score, which considered:

- a. Social vulnerability analysis of the household;
- b. An indication of interventions to be considered for a household depending on their profile; and
- c. A cross-program referral and registration system which included information from Information, Counseling and Legal Advice colleagues and the country-wide online and phone lines maintained by the organization.

The project also targeted host communities by providing services for the most vulnerable Jordanians as referred by the Ministry of Social Development.

FLEXIBLE SHELTER REHABILITATION (FLEX)

This project targeted households that met a combination of vulnerability indicators and were living in a sub-standard rental property with significant defects, such as a lack of adequate kitchen and sanitation facilities, insufficient privacy between multiple families, mold and water infiltration, and insecure or improperly sealed doors and windows. In exchange for providing cash to rehabilitate the property, the organization negotiated with property owners a rent-free period, calculated based on the monthly rental cost compared to the amount of cash for rehabilitation the family was entitled to receive based on their household size. The average period of rent-free accommodation was a minimum of 3 months, but was usually in excess of nine months and in some cases up to two years. The families also received extra rent support, which was calculated based on their vulnerability and household size. The breakdown of the assistance can be found in the table below.

No. of people in the HH	Total FLEX+ Package	Minimum Rehabilitation Support	Maximum Rent Support	
			Vulnerability Score (Integrated Assessment)	
			1 - 2	3 - 4
1-5	USD 1,270 - 1,550	USD 565	USD 705	USD 985
>5	USD 1,970 - 2,255	USD 985	USD 985	USD 1,270

Benefits of this approach for renters were that it left the selection of the property up to the tenants, allowing them to prioritize the most appropriate property. Additionally, the development of the BoQ was a joint process between the tenants and the property owner, where the

organization acted as a mediator. This approach empowered tenants while also benefiting the Jordanian property owner, promoting social cohesion and mutual respect, under the signature of a tripartite contract signed between the organization, property owner and tenant that fixed the rental cost for two years regardless of the period of rent-free or rent support.

For vulnerable Jordanians who were owner-occupiers, the organization provided only rehabilitation or new installation where minimum standards were not met, providing a permanent improvement to their homes.

EMERGENCY CASH-FOR-RENT

This short-term intervention aimed to address the urgent needs of extremely vulnerable Syrians and Jordanians who were at immediate threat of eviction. Households were identified through the regular assessment process, as well as referrals from the organization’s legal assistance team, other humanitarian partners, and the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development. Families were provided with a minimum of six months of rental support paid directly to the property owners on their behalf. The rental amounts were pegged to family size and vulnerability level in line with national guidance from the Shelter Sector. Due to close collaboration between the Urban Shelter and Legal Assistance teams, this assistance package could be linked with other legal assistance such as mediation and dispute resolution to either enable families to remain in their property or leave with dignity and find a new rental property.

WASH REHABILITATION

This focused on improving sanitation and cooking facilities, as well as increasing the water storage capacity where relevant. Many properties occupied by refugees and vulnerable Jordanians had non-existent or sub-standard WASH facilities, which presented challenges such as preventing families from preparing food safely or being able to wash or go to the toilet in a private space occupied only by their own family. Additionally, many properties faced issues with leakage, blockages, or water infiltration. Where possible, families were also referred for connection to the municipal network.



One priority for renovations was to ensure separation of kitchen and bathroom spaces. Here a new wall has been installed to separate the two rooms.

© Oriane van der Broeck/NRC

WATER CONNECTION TO THE MUNICIPAL NETWORK

In coordination with the local water company, this intervention identified properties that were not connected to the municipal water network and provided them with a meter, construction of individual pipelines to the main network and the payment of the registration fee for the water company. The goal of this intervention was to provide safe access to water and to reduce household expenditure on water, as water delivery is considerably more expensive than the network fees.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PACKAGE

Designed to reduce the cost of electricity bills and improve the thermal comfort for families, this pilot intervention provided households with solar water heaters and energy efficiency upgrades by rehabilitating at least one room to improve the thermal envelope. For tenants benefiting from these upgrades, a decrease in the monthly rent for a period of at least one year was negotiated. After the pilot Renewable Energy Package demonstrated a considerable reduction of electricity expenditure and carbon emissions, topped with good community acceptance of the modality, the energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades were integrated with FLEX, becoming FLEX+, considering sustainability and the environment as core to the program.

INCLUSION KITS

Designed to support households with Persons with Disabilities and/or elderly people with reduced mobility the inclusion kits (shower bars, ramps, toilet rails, walkers, etc.) were tailored according to the needs of the household. The adaptations aimed to facilitate movement in and around the house and enhance independence in daily activities.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Tenants and property owners' desire for cosmetic upgrades often differed from the functional rehabilitation works proposed by the project to achieve the minimum standards required, which in some cases created tensions. The implementation team advised property owners and tenants that as long as all items of work included in the BoQ were completed to the required standard, if any savings were made then these could be used for extra works including cosmetic upgrades if they desired.

Monitoring of rehabilitation works. Cash-based interventions required a high number of skilled staff to follow up on works and technically guide the rehabilitation. The effectiveness and quality of the rehabilitation works required close monitoring from staff along with the tenant family.

Considerable time taken in paperwork and ownership document verification, which could prevent or delay household selection and prolong the period needed to carry out interventions.

Security of tenure. While negotiating a long-term contract with property owners helped to increase the security of tenure of tenants during the contract period, it did not guarantee the rent cost wouldn't increase after the contract period ended, which could cause a second move. There was also occasionally pressure from property owners on the tenant households to move out when the property had significant upgrades, as the property owner planned to move into the property following the departure of the tenant. While the organization worked to mitigate this by following up closely with households and guaranteeing a two-year lease with fixed rental costs, in some cases property owners found ways to apply pressure to tenants, which could make them feel uncomfortable despite their lease.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The program resulted in households reporting an increased sense of safety and wellbeing. 96% of households continued living in the same property for at least three months after the end of the assistance period.

When looking at the long-term impact on security of tenure, 70% of the households supported by the program (mainly Emergency Cash-for-Rent, FLEX and renewable energy interventions) continued living in the same property after their lease agreements with the organization ended.

The Urban Shelter Program supported households to reduce their debt levels, mainly due to reducing the burden of paying rent. Overall, households receiving Emergency Cash-for-Rent reported an average of 13% reduction in debts while they were still receiving the assistance and an average reduction of 8% after the assistance had ended. Households receiving FLEX support reported an even higher reduction in debts, an average of 23% reduction at least three months after receiving the assistance. 47% of households supported with FLEX and Emergency Cash-for-Rent reported having increased expenditure on priorities such as health, education, children's needs, household items and debt repayment.

As the program continues to tailor its interventions to meet the evolving needs of target households, further opportunities to partner with the hosting municipalities emerge as a mechanism to provide more durable interventions that serve the overall communities.



The program involved negotiating a rent-free period following the completion of renovation works. Here, a Syrian family is living in their rental property after the negotiation for a year without paying rent.

© Oriane van der Broeck/NRC

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Different combinations of assistance to suit different needs.** Packages of assistance were tailored to the specific needs of target households, rather than the program trying to identify households who fitted the assistance profile.
- √ **Mutual benefit to both tenants and property owners.** Guaranteed rental payments, and rehabilitation support enabled property owners to see hosting tenants as positive, especially as many were dependent on rental income to meet their own basic needs.
- √ **Integration with Information Counseling and Legal Assistance** helped to ensure security of tenure and the legal protections renters are entitled to.
- √ **Prioritization by vulnerability.** Both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians referred by the Ministry of Social Development were assessed against targeted and well-researched vulnerability criteria.
- √ **Choice created by cash-based modalities,** which enabled tenants and property owners more flexibility on the choice of material, quality and design. In some cases property owners used their own money to exceed the agreed-upon works paid for by the organization.
- √ **Inclusion Kits provided specific adaptations tailored to the needs of household members.** Persons with Disabilities are largely underserved and are more likely to experience higher levels of poverty and vulnerability, making adaptations a critical need for both refugee and Jordanian families.
- √ **Rent negotiation support.** When the organization mediated negotiations on the rent-free period, the tenants were usually granted a longer period in comparison to when tenants negotiating themselves or through a third-party. However, the choice of who negotiated was always up to the tenants.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Better integration with other sectors would have increased the positive impacts of the program,** such as linkages with livelihoods or protection programs, particularly for households receiving Emergency Cash-for-Rent support. Currently, the organization is exploring ways that these linkages could be improved.
- × **Cash-for-Rent is only a stop-gap measure.** Emergency Cash-for-Rent was only provided as a one-off assistance package and without linkages to other types of assistance to address the root causes of vulnerability.
- × **The water network connection project lacked incentives for property owners' participation and was stymied by the lack of water company capacity to support the project.** The installation of water connections to the municipal network faced considerable challenges as there was little incentive for Jordanian property owners to participate in the project as they had to first clear any pending taxes of their property. Despite the water connection fee being covered by the organization some property owners were not willing to go through the process to regularize their property. Coordinated works to connect houses to the municipal network presented a considerable challenge as the process required shared responsibility between the organization and the water company, which lacked the capacity to support the increased caseload of connections, which was approximately three times their usual annual water connection caseload. The project would have benefited from being rolled out in concentrated geographic areas, including incentives for property owners to participate or an agreement from the water company to waive debts or streamline the process, and financial and logistical support to the water company to build their capacity.

LESSONS LEARNED

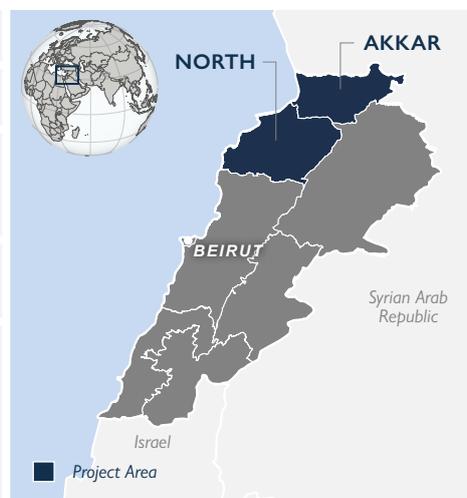
- **Sustainability of interventions would increase if linked to more holistic support.** Hybrid approaches (such as FLEX) contribute to decreased levels of debt amongst target households, however the sustainability and financial impact of the program could be improved if connected to livelihoods and economic resilience programs, matched with the household interests.
- **Opportunities to improve the quality of works and provide livelihood opportunities for Jordanian and refugee workers.** The organization is considering developing a services guide with contact information of contractors whose work quality has been verified. As construction is one of the few sectors in which refugees are allowed to work in Jordan, this could help refugees to access livelihood opportunities and vulnerable Jordanians to increase their customer base.
- **Social networks and social cohesion.** Providing shelter assistance that supports households to stay in their current accommodation, helping to mediate challenging relationships between property owners and tenants, and not interrupting constructed social networks, has proved a successful strategy.

CASE STUDY

LEBANON 2018–2021 / SYRIAN CRISIS

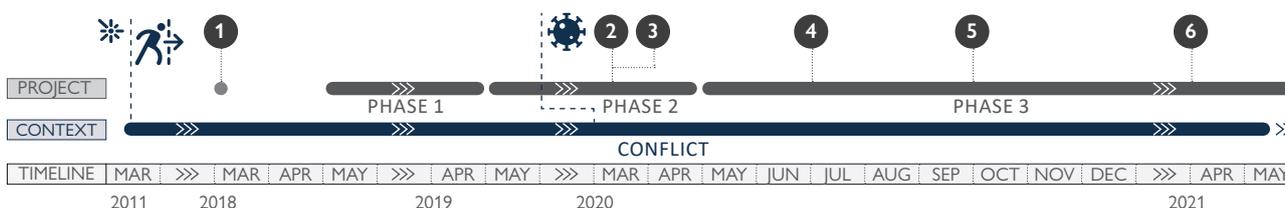
KEYWORDS: Disability Inclusion, Health, Protection, Shelter rehabilitation, Security of Tenure

CRISIS	Syrian Crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Approx. 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	870,000 (58%) of Syrian refugee HHs in Lebanon live in overcrowded, substandard or dangerous conditions**
PROJECT LOCATION	North Lebanon – T5 (Tripoli, Zgharta, Koura, Batroun, Bcharre, Minieh-Dennieh) and Akkar
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	Phase 1: 194 HHs (865 individuals) Phase 2: 385 HHs (1,810 Individuals) Phase 3: 320 HHs (1,600 Individuals) <hr/> Total: 899 HHs (4,275 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	538 HHs supported by rehabilitation of Sub-Standard buildings 111 HHs supported by rehabilitation of Collective Shelters 93 HHs supported by accessibility interventions in Informal Tented Settlements 79 HHs received Shelter Kits
SHELTER DENSITY	Minimum of 3.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 250 per shelter kit USD 740 on average per accessibility intervention USD 1,500 per HH on average per rehabilitation
PROJECT COST	Average of approx. USD 2,250 per HH
* Source: UNHCR Operations Reports Lebanon Dashboard (July 2021) ** Source: Vulnerability Assessments of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) 2020	



PROJECT SUMMARY

The “Shelter and WASH for Protection” project was designed around protection-related risks as identified and analyzed in collaboration with Protection actors. The project responded to specific needs identified among highly vulnerable refugees living in sub-standard shelter in North Lebanon. The organization aimed to reduce protection risks for specific target groups (women-headed households, single women, children and elderly at risk, Persons with Disabilities, and GBV survivors) through a two-pronged shelter intervention: tailor-made shelter rehabilitation to reduce protection and health-related vulnerabilities, accompanied by rent negotiation aimed at increasing tenure security. This case study refers to three phases of the project undertaken between 2018-2021.



- * **Mar 2011:** Eruption of conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria).
- 1** **Mar - May 2018:** Development of the “Shelter and WASH for Protection” approach and connecting with Protection actors.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 2** **Mar 2020:** Introduction of COVID-19 related activities.
- 3** **Mar 2020:** MoU signed with Protection partners to improve the referrals between the organizations.
- 4** **Jul - Aug 2020:** Internal evaluation.
- 5** **Oct - Dec 2020:** External evaluation.
- 6** **Apr - May 2021:** Pilot of the rehabilitation of safe shelters for GBV survivors, in coordination with Protection partners.



The project approached housing rehabilitations in an integrated way, considering how interventions would positively impact protection and health.

CONTEXT

Ten years into the Syrian crisis, Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. Lebanon's economy was crippled in 2020 by economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 Beirut blast. Prior to the economic crisis, a functional economy and the availability of Syrian workforce for agricultural and industrial work facilitated a palliation of social tensions. Communal and political tensions are on the rise, with Syrian refugees often being blamed for contributing to the economic collapse of the country and seen as competitors for jobs and resources.

LIVING CONDITIONS

The majority of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in rented accommodations, whether it's in Informal Tented Settlements, Collective Shelters or Sub-Standard Building units. Collective Shelters are residential or non-residential structures where more than six households reside, sharing common areas and facilities. These can be, for example, residential buildings, unfinished buildings, farms, warehouses, factories, or schools. Sub-Standard Building units refer to individual shelters, residential or non-residential, located inside existing structures, that are below humanitarian standards. These set-ups expose refugees, especially those in at-risk groups, to significant protection and health risks.

Collective evictions of multiple refugee families living in Informal Tented Settlements or Collective Shelters are on the rise. At the same time, risks of individual evictions have been on the rise due to the socio-economic situation: 48% of refugees report rent as the main reason for borrowing money. Negative coping strategies appear on the rise: 15.2% of families moved accommodations in the past year, mainly looking for cheaper shelter options. In addition, 2% moved from residential to non-residential and non-permanent housing, thus reducing living standards and potentially increasing health and protection-related vulnerabilities.

Inability to pay rent has especially affected refugees living in Collective Shelters and Sub-Standard Buildings (81% and 76% respectively), which represent more than 70% of the Syrian refugees in the country. In the North and in Akkar, 90% of refugee households living in residential buildings below standards are living below the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), meaning that they are unable to meet their essential needs.



Many houses had previous makeshift repairs carried out, such as this improvised roof.

NATIONAL SHELTER RESPONSE

In the first years of the crisis, the Government of Lebanon and its international partners strongly focused on shelter support in Informal Tented Settlements. Following a stabilization of the overall refugee population, the focus shifted more to the shelter situation of refugees residing in Collective Shelters and Sub-Standard Buildings. This appeared in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 and acquired progressively more prominence, together with the notion of protection risks for vulnerable groups as entry points for shelter rehabilitations in residential and non-residential buildings such as unfinished buildings, farms and factories. Despite the progressive integration of this component in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, funding of rehabilitations in Collective Shelters and Sub-Standard Buildings has been poor, with funding gaps in 2020 above 90% compared to the needs.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project was initially designed in 2017 to fill the gap in shelter support within Collective Shelters and Sub-Standard Buildings from a protection angle. Assessments from that time, combined with the secondary analysis provided by Protection actors, pointed clearly at high risks and vulnerabilities for specific groups (women-headed households, single women, children and elderly at risk, Persons with Disabilities, and GBV survivors) being either caused by or exacerbated by shelter-related weaknesses.

Protection actors emphasized how a number of vulnerabilities could be sensitively reduced by introducing minor shelter rehabilitations to enhance the protection from violence (including GBV) and hazards as well as improving accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

The analysis from the protection angle also indicated vulnerability in relation to tenure security, whereby poor access to livelihoods and resources increased the risk of vulnerable households being unable to pay rent, exposing households to negative or harmful coping strategies including heavy borrowing, downgrading of living situations, or child labor, as well as vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse by landlords.

In light of this analysis, the organization developed a "Shelter and WASH for Protection" strategy aimed at:



Accessibility interventions in Informal Tented Settlements included improving wheelchair access.

- Reducing critical protection risks and vulnerabilities for at-risk groups through minor shelter rehabilitations conducted through local contractors from the areas where the organization was intervening.
- Enhancing tenure security by using shelter upgrades as a negotiation “tool” with landowners in order to achieve rent-free agreements, rent reduction or – at least – rent freeze.

Analysis was undertaken to determine the best modalities for assistance. The choice of implementing rehabilitations through contractors under the organization’s supervision was determined by two factors: 1) ensuring the highest possible quality of works and integrity, and 2) ensuring the maximum effectiveness of the disbursement in terms of timeliness and completion of rehabilitations.

Lessons learned workshops took place on a yearly basis when designing a new phase of the project. These workshops tackled the challenges faced during the year and mitigation measures to avoid further obstacles were put in place as the approach evolved.

SHELTER REHABILITATION

Shelter rehabilitation aimed to improve the living conditions of households through:

- Improving privacy (e.g. by installing doors and partitions, separating the bathroom from the kitchen);
- Improving safety (e.g. by installing lockable doors and windows, lights outside the shelter, fixing the electrical wires, and installing handrails on balconies);
- Improving accessibility (e.g. by installing ramps and handrails for people with reduced mobility); and
- Reducing health risks (e.g. through the provision of water tanks, water connections and safe and functional bathrooms).

Depending on the type of shelter, the type of risk, the feasibility, and the profile of the household, tailored shelter interventions were implemented. These included:

- Rehabilitation or upgrading of Sub-Standard Buildings;
- Rehabilitation or upgrading of Collective Shelters and common spaces;
- Accessibility interventions in Informal Tented Settlements; and
- Distribution of shelter kits.

Detailed assessments of the needs and priorities of each household were carried out by integrated teams that included Field Officers and Construction Supervisors. Households were consulted on the type of interventions to be included. These consultations fed into an MoU signed with the landlord that listed the intervention details.

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

Based on the organization’s experience and consultations with targeted communities and protection agencies, the profiles of the most vulnerable and most at-risk people for whom protection risks are aggravated by the inadequate living conditions were defined: women-headed households, single women, children and elderly at risk, Persons with Disabilities, and GBV survivors.

To ensure integrated interventions and to target the most vulnerable households, the approach envisaged receiving referrals of protection cases needing shelter rehabilitation from Protection actors. The collaboration was not formalized in the form of a contractual agreement in the first two rounds of the project. The initial lack of contractual agreements with Protection partners proved an obstacle for receiving significant numbers of referrals for shelter rehabilitations, despite the organization’s efforts in disseminating its approach and capacity. Starting from 2020, MoUs were signed with Protection actors in order to formalize the relationship and referral/counter-referral agreements. The change positively impacted the number of households referred for shelter assistance.

Protection mainstreaming was further enhanced by integrating staff with protection expertise within the organization setup and in reinforcing the protection know-how of the shelter team, particularly with regard to safe identification, selection and referrals, and appropriate technical design. The organization also developed a “Shelter and WASH for Protection” Standard Operating Procedure, as well as guidance outlining best practices and an interventions catalogue to support field staff. This allowed the organization to implement the project with a protection lens and progressively develop a more integrated Protection+Shelter approach.



Accessibility of latrines in informal tented settlement was improved.

MAIN CHALLENGES

A low number of households were identified initially, due to the full reliance on referrals from protection actors. This was addressed by formalizing the relationship with protection actors in the form of MoUs, providing for minimum numbers of referrals and counter-referrals to be provided from both organizations and detailing the relationship and responsibilities of both actors.

Increased economic vulnerability due to the financial crisis may need a more “muscular” approach to guarantee tenure security. Piloting of conditional cash-for-rent schemes is envisaged in order to address this, along with continued efforts to encourage contracted service providers to hire people from within the target communities.

Increasing social tensions were perceived on the ground between refugees and host communities and the Lebanese municipal authorities due to the explicit targeting of refugees with assistance. If not addressed appropriately, the increasing tensions between both communities could lead to community and individual level evictions exacerbating further pre-existing protection risks. For the 4th phase of the project, to be launched mid-2021, it is foreseen that at least 20% of the target households will be vulnerable Lebanese households.

COVID-19 pandemic. After the surge of COVID-19 and its spread in Lebanon, COVID-19 awareness and prevention sessions were introduced alongside the normal activities of the project.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Satisfaction rates appeared to be high, with 87% of households reporting an improvement in living conditions in a 2020 evaluation exercise. Reported outcomes included:

- **70% of households reported that the risk of falling ill was reduced** after the intervention, mainly due to an improvement in the access to clean water, living in hygienic space and better protection from the weather.
- Improvements in terms of safety and protection, especially for women and Persons with Disabilities, were reported, with **65% of households reporting that their privacy had improved and 20% stated that their protection from sexual abuse had improved.**
- Around **87% of the interviewed households declared that this intervention improved their life, minimizing the risks associated with worrying about daily life needs** and most respondents reported that there was a **noticeable positive psychological effect** on the members of the household, who felt more at ease since their shelter needs were addressed by the project.
- **Half of the households reported feeling safer in their shelters and believed that their relationship with their neighbors improved.** However, some incidents were reported with Syrian or Lebanese neighbors who were not part of the project, especially since the

economic situation in the country is worsening and families are becoming more vulnerable.

- Relative success was registered also with regards to tenure security, with **more than 80% of landlords having respected the agreements entailed in the pre-rehabilitation MoUs.** However, the incumbent economic crisis has enhanced the risk for households of being unable to pay for rent.

Communication on the approach taken in this project at the Shelter Sector level contributed to strengthening the attention of the Sector on Protection issues outside of Informal Tented Settlements, an area of action that has now become an integral part of the Sector strategy.



Video phones were installed for people with limited or no mobility, allowing them to monitor their visitors and control the entrance door remotely.



Partitions were installed to separate the kitchen from the living/sleeping space. This improved hygiene and allowed more privacy.

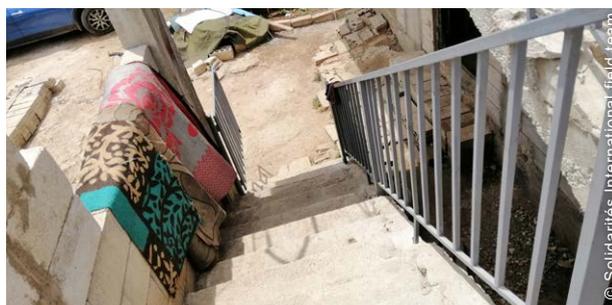
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **The tailor-made “Shelter and WASH for Protection” approach** – focusing on privacy, safety, accessibility and health – improved living conditions by addressing shelter inadequacies and the risks they generate, reaching protection outcomes for the most at-risk individuals with pre-existing protection issues.
- √ **Strong links with Protection actors supported targeting and enabled rehabilitation interventions to be tailored to households’ specific vulnerabilities**, thanks to the referral channel from Protection actors and to the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) guiding the implementation.
- √ **Satisfaction with the quality of rehabilitations has been high.** Complete technical assessments and the continuous follow up on rehabilitation works implemented by the contractors have been a strong contributing factor.
- √ **The wider impacts of rehabilitation interventions were measured and emphasized.** For example, positive psychological effects were reported by more than 50% of the respondents in a 2020 survey. Rehabilitations at a relatively modest cost (an average of USD 1,200 per household) had positive direct and indirect effects on reducing protection and health risks, reinforcing the economic environment in the area of intervention, and contributed to the reduction of negative coping mechanisms.
- √ **The project had a strong focus on tenure security**, and largely positive outcomes were measured, with 80% of the landlords sticking to the MoUs.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Vulnerable host communities have so far been targeted only indirectly**, as the focus of the intervention has been systematically on refugees. This targeting could contribute to the rising tensions between refugee and host communities over aid services in light of the economic crisis. For the 4th phase of the project, to be launched mid-2021, it is foreseen that at least 20% of the target households of the intervention will be vulnerable Lebanese households.
- × **Rent negotiation as a standalone tenure security measure has limitations in an environment characterized by a severe financial crisis and loss of purchasing power.** Rent agreements do not exceed a term of 12 months and are highly depend of the ability of the tenant to pay rent.
- × **Further outreach and relationship building with Protection actors needed.** Despite improvements in the relationship with Protection actors, a lot of Protection actors in the area are still only marginally aware of the project and of the possibility of referrals for shelter-related vulnerabilities.



Handrails were installed along staircases and gates put in place for additional child safety.

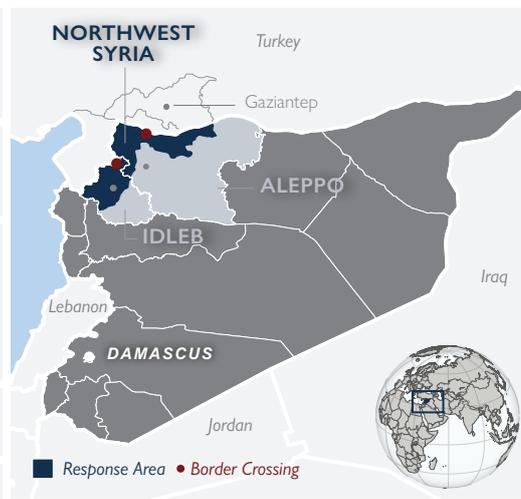
LESSONS LEARNED

- **Creating and institutionalizing a relationship with Protection actors** is key in order to guarantee the success of a shelter-for-protection approach. Relationships should be formalized, in the form of MoUs with clear agreements for referrals and counter-referrals.
- **Further action needed to improve tenure security.** In the context of increased economic vulnerability due to the financial crisis, additional interventions are needed beyond only negotiation of rent reduction. An external evaluation of the project has highlighted the need to intervene with more direct support for rent payment, notably in the form of conditional cash-for-rent schemes.
- **Reinforcing protection awareness within the Shelter teams is fundamental** in order to guarantee protection-sensitiveness within implementation. Within future phases of the project it is intended that trainings and briefings for shelter teams will be reinforced, possibly by integrating Protection actors in the professional training of shelter staff.
- **Rehabilitation works and repairs at community level contribute to the reinforcement of social cohesion between refugees and the host community.** The targeting of refugees solely with individual shelters rehabilitation could generate tensions between both communities, particularly for Lebanese nationals whose vulnerability was significantly impacted by the financial crisis.
- The approach has a direct impact on the increase of resilience, yet a **longer-term funding strategy is paramount to increase sustainability.**

OVERVIEW

NW SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2014–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

CRISIS	Syrian Crisis - Northwest Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) - Cross-border Operations based in Gaziantep, Turkey
PEOPLE DISPLACED	5.6 million people within Syria 2.7 million people within Northwest Syria*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	15% damage to the shelters in which people are living 11% of returnees report damage to their shelters 1.5% of residents report damages to their property (Lack of access prevents accurate estimation)*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	5.6 million people within Syria*
LOCATION	Northwest Syria – Aleppo, Idlib and Hama governorates, sub-districts not under Government Control of Syria (Coordination based in Gaziantep, Turkey)
PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN THE RESPONSE	1.8 million people assisted with NFIs 1.1 million people reached with Shelter assistance**
RESPONSE OUTPUTS	123,394 tents installed. 320,124 people supported with infrastructure improvements 163,117 people supported with shelter rehabilitation 292,264 NFI kits distributed Training: Warehouse Management Training, Shelter rehabilitation training, Shelter Solutions Workshop, Site Planning Training and Tutorials, Shelter Modalities, Good Distribution. 2 rounds of assessments on conditions in Collective Shelters Technical Working Group on concrete block shelters COVID-19 and Shelter Response in NW Syria: 2 guidelines updated**



SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

In 2015, the Whole of Syria approach was established to ensure that areas not under government control in Syria were receiving assistance. In the Northwest (NW) part of Syria, actors are largely based in South-eastern Turkey, while the Shelter/NFI Cluster is based in Gaziantep, Turkey. Humanitarian partners deliver Shelter and NFI assistance across the border with teams based in Syria and in NW Syria. The entire response is managed remotely, with no access to field locations by international teams. The Cluster, and operational organizations have had to develop tools to work in such an environment.

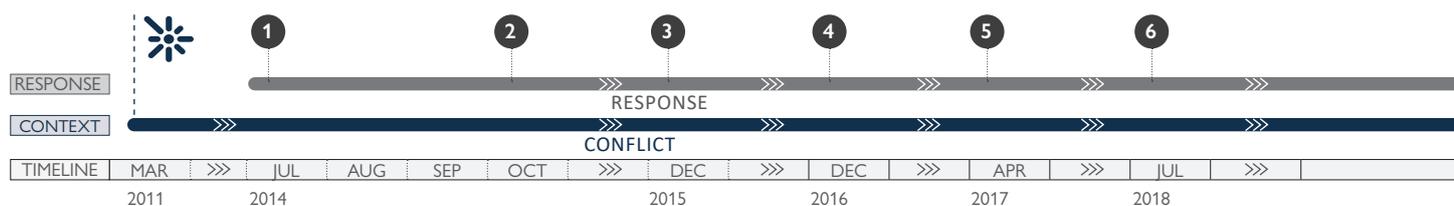
This Response Overview focuses specifically on the NW Syria - Cross-Border Operations response.

* Source: HNAP (Sep 2020) Population Assessment

** Source: Shelter Cluster factsheet (Oct 2020). These figures refer to the period of Jan - Oct 2020



By October 2020, approximately 1.5 million displaced people were living in 1,214 sites in Northwest Syria.



 **Mar 2011:** Syrian Crisis began.

- 1 14 Jul 2014:** Activation of the Shelter/NFI Cluster for Cross Border Operations.
- 2 Oct 2014 :** Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund Pool established.
- 3 Dec 2015 :** Shelter/NFI Cluster has 27 agencies.
- 4 Dec 2016 :** Shelter/NFI Cluster has 45 agencies.
- 5 Apr 2017:** Loss of access to coverage east of Euphrates River in North Syria due to change of control and the military actions in Northeast Syria.
- 6 Jul 2017:** HLP Cross Border Due Diligence Guidelines published.
- 7 Oct 2018:** Shelter Repair and Rehabilitation Guidelines published.
- 8 Dec 2018:** Shelter/NFI Cluster has 71 partners reporting activities despite decreasing areas of intervention.
- 9 Sep 2019:** Shelter/NFI Cluster and (HNAP) Situational Overview of Shelter Conditions in NW Syria.

 **Dec 2019-Feb 2020 :** December 2019 Escalation of Hostilities

BACKGROUND

Following conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), the Whole of Syria approach was approved by the UN Security Council in 2014. It was established to ensure that much needed humanitarian assistance would reach the areas of Syria not under the control of the government.

Partners working in shelter established teams based in several cities around Gaziantep in southeastern Turkey and within Syria. In order to improve coordination, a Shelter/NFI Cluster team was established in Gaziantep, Turkey. The Shelter/NFI Cluster's activities are conducted remotely making coordination a complex task.

Geographically, Northwest Syria is known for its agriculture and for being the principal wheat production zone of the country. Many informally settled IDP sites are now on lands which were previously agricultural. Consistent with the surrounding regions of Turkey and Syria, the geography includes desert-like conditions and rolling hills. The highest point in the area stands at over 1,200m. Temperatures fall below zero in winter.

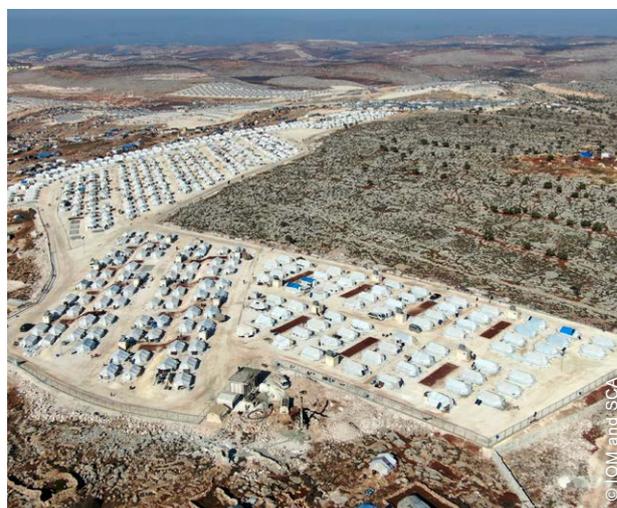
TEN YEARS LATER

After ten years of conflict and forced displacement, as of summer 2021, there were more than 2.7 million people internally displaced in Northwest Syria, including more than one million people newly displaced between January and February 2020. Due to the ever-decreasing geographical area lived in by displaced people, it is difficult to find sustainable shelter solutions for displaced people. When the Shelter/NFI Cluster was first activated, Shelter/NFI Cluster partners operated in 12 governorates inside Syria.

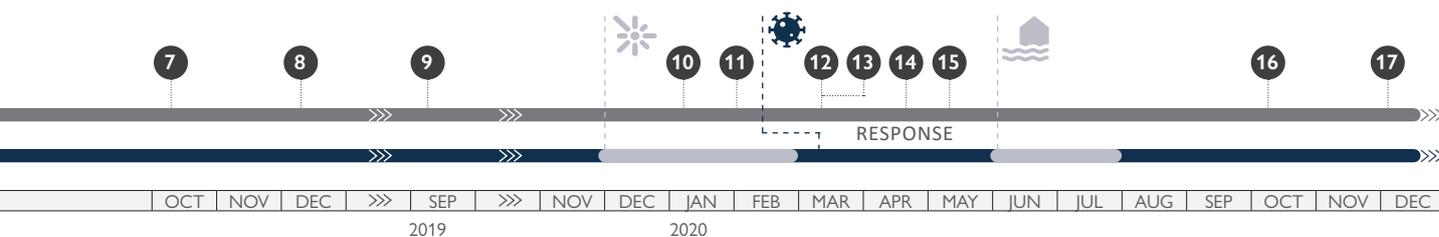
By 2020, this coverage has shrunk to portions of Hama, Latakia, Aleppo and Idlib governorates.

At the beginning of 2020, much of the aid distributed would pass through two critical border crossings from Turkey into Northwest Syria: Bab el Hawa and Bab al Salaam. In July of 2020, the UN Security Council approved the extension of the resolution of Cross Border Humanitarian Assistance only at the Bab el Hawa crossing point.

This has added additional logistic complications to the delivery of humanitarian assistance into Syria and further reduced the geographical coverage of Shelter/NFI Cluster partners. The complexity of the shelter needs has also increased as displacement has become protracted.



A minority of sites have been formally planned, with the majority of IDP sites having been self-settled.



- 10 Jan 2020:** Shelter/NFI Cluster Team works with HNAP to ensure that data on shelter typologies are collected alongside data on population.
- 11 Feb 2020:** Shelter/NFI Cluster starts actively engaging in site planning.
-  **11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 12 Mar 2020:** First publication of COVID-19 Guidelines for Shelter Interventions in NW Syria.
- 13 Mar-Apr 2020:** Gap analysis tool for tent allocation is developed and tested.
- 14 15 Apr 2020:** Syrian Common Humanitarian Fund meeting with partners implementing CCCM, Shelter, and WASH programs in informal settlements.
- 15 May 2020:** Technical Working Group looking at durable shelter solutions particularly on concrete block shelters is established.
-  **Jun-Jul 2020:** Flooding accelerates the needs of IDPs settled in informal settlements.
- 16 Oct 2020:** Shelter Household Assessment conducted.
- 17 Dec 2020:** Fire Prevention and Response Guidance Note.

By October 2020, in Northwest Syria approximately 1.5 million displaced people were living in 1,214 sites, and 28% of displaced people were living in tents. 12% of the shelters (excluding tents and makeshift shelters) are considered to have some sort of damage and 31% of people in Northwest Syria reported being unable to afford repairs to their shelters. Nearly half of the people (44%) stated that lack of space in shelter was as an issue.¹

Most of the newly displaced people do not manage to take their belongings and necessary items such as mattresses, kitchen equipment and blankets when they move. Many of them have lost their personal documents and IDs and they have no access to the government offices to issue new ones.

DIGNIFIED SHELTER

After years of living in tents and being exposed to flooding, winter cold, and now the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian partners and some IDPs themselves have started to construct alternative shelters that are better suited to situations of protracted displacement. The Shelter/NFI Cluster reports that while not officially endorsing this construction, approximately 80% of the largest site, Atmeh Camp (population 33,000 people) is now built up with concrete block houses while about 20% of people are still living in emergency shelter (tents) and makeshift shelters. 6,000 Refugee Housing Units (including wider infrastructure and settlement planning) have also been implemented.

The findings from Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) reports also indicate that IDPs found these longer-lasting alternatives to be appropriate options. The PDM reports

¹ [Shelter Conditions in Syria \(Oct 2020\)](#)

suggest that this solution allows for flexibility of use, efficiency of design, and could better withstand hazards. Moreover, having two separate rooms and private toilets/showers help to mitigate the risk of GBV. It is considered as a very cost-effective solution considering the lifespan and the flexibility of the design that could be adapted to meet family needs. Materials used in these shelters could be incorporated into longer term recovery shelter options, or easily removed.

WINTER

In winter stoves, fuel, blankets, winter clothing, and basic insulation are among the primary needs of the displaced. During the escalation of displacement during December 2019 - March 2020, news media reported deaths due to winter-related incidents including fires in tents and hypothermia. In the absence of access to and affordability of fuel, partners have reported that households resort to burning old clothes and trash in order to keep themselves warm during the winter. These coping mechanisms create additional risks to IDPs such as fires in informal settlements and respiratory harm.

LIMITATIONS ON SPACE

With the ever-shrinking geography where the Shelter/NFI Cluster is coordinating, there is not enough land available to accommodate IDPs. Many IDPs shelter in public buildings and with friends or relatives due to the limited shelter solutions and resources available to cover the significant multi-sectoral needs. Overcrowding and lack of basic infrastructure services such as essential water and sanitation are commonly reported as challenges.

NATIONAL SHELTER(-NFI) STRATEGY

Currently, the Shelter/NFI Cluster strategy in Northwest Syria focuses on several main objectives:

For newly displaced people: Provision of timely, targeted and appropriate shelter assistance and relief items. This includes the provision, distribution or installation of tents and emergency shelter kits or materials to displaced people in temporary sites such as managed camps, and spontaneous sites.

For newly displaced people and host communities: Rehabilitation, repair or upgrade of existing shelters that are below minimum standards in collective shelters, unfinished buildings, damaged building or any other type of emergency shelter space to ensure that shelters meet minimum sphere standards.

For protracted IDPs in camps: Depending on the conditions, Shelter/NFI Cluster partners distribute shelter kits to make shelters weatherproof, replace damaged tents when necessary or upgrade the shelters especially for those staying in tents for extended periods.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Core to the approach of working remotely is the need to build the ability of implementing organizations to deliver. The Shelter/NFI Cluster has delivered several trainings and capacity building events for implementing partner organizations to ensure that the appropriate modalities and standards are used when implementing shelter projects. Settlement planning is such an important issue that at one stage two dedicated planners were seconded to the Shelter/NFI Cluster. A series of trainings were conducted and also are now available for all on the Global Shelter Cluster Youtube channel.² Regular coaching is provided to partners, and a service is offered to remotely review the site plans developed by Shelter/NFI Cluster partner agencies working in the field.

² Dimensioning of drainage SWMM (Youtube video)



Cast iron heating stoves are among other items distributed to support winterization.

CASH

The Shelter/NFI Cluster also worked closely with the Cash Working Group to ensure efficiency of modalities. In April 2020, the results of a Cash Feasibility Assessment for NW Syria were published. In its technical guidance, the Shelter/NFI Cluster published a 'go, no-go' matrix on choices of modalities, and training was organized for partners on shelter modalities in December 2020. Cash has also been used for winterization.

FLOODS AND FIRES IN SITES.

In 2020 the Shelter/NFI Cluster SAG worked on two publications to address floods and fires. The first one was a note on Flood Classification levels and their impact on IDP sites and which actions shelter actors could take to alleviate their conditions.³ The second publication was created jointly with the CCCM Cluster on how to mitigate the risk of fires within IDP settlements. Fires increased in 2020 due to the overcrowded conditions within settlements and lack of awareness about how to respond when cook stove fires became out of control.⁴

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Government counterparts or authorities in Northwest Syria do not exist. There are multiple so-called local authorities within the locations where shelter partners implement. While coordinating with them, partners frequently seek the guidance of the Shelter/NFI Cluster Team and have to liaise with other Clusters such as Protection, CCCM, WASH, Education, and others depending on the theme to ensure that implementation is in line with humanitarian principles and that it will do no further harm in the recovery of the displaced or returnees.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Remote context: Due to the remote nature of the response and the fact that the Shelter/NFI Cluster is coordinating from Gaziantep, Turkey, there are no opportunities to observe shelter programs in the field. This requires the Cluster to be very dependent on several sources of information shared by Shelter/NFI Cluster partners including photos, post distribution monitoring, third-party monitoring reports, activity reporting, Camp Management and Camp Coordination alerts, and Shelter specific assessments.

Human Resources and Capacity: Given the enormity of the needs, the number of Shelter/NFI Cluster partners, unpredictable nature of emergencies, and the need to be able to quickly identify gaps and ensure non duplication of Shelter coverage, a significant dedicated Cluster coordination team is required.

Overcrowding and lack of land: Due to the ever-shrinking territory in NW Syria, IDPs are faced with very limited options both in urban areas and informal settlements. This

³ Flood Classifications and Effects on IDP Sites in NWS (Aug 2020)

⁴ Fire Prevention and Response Guidance Note (Dec 2020)

has contributed to lack of adequate conditions which has been heightened due to COVID-19. Shelter and CCCM Clusters have worked to put in place due diligence standards to validate land ownership before, during and after an intervention, and organizations are required to ensure as much legal certainty about tenure as possible for IDPs in these sites (the “secure enough” approach).

Uncertainty about future of operations: The Shelter/NFI Cluster was first activated in 2014 when the UN Security Council approved the Whole of Syria approach. This original mandate has been put to annual votes for extensions. The ability to deliver humanitarian aid through the Border Crossings is a critical element for coordination, but there is some uncertainty about the crossings, which require Security Council Resolutions to remain open. As a result many agencies work on 6 months or 1-year planning, assuming that the humanitarian access will be short-lived, this has also translated into difficulties in ensuring predictability in the response.

Need for durable shelter solutions in this unpredictable environment: Given the protracted nature of the conflict and the long period of the crisis, the Shelter/NFI Cluster has recognized that durable shelter solutions are a need for many of these IDPs who have been exposed to the elements. Many shelter solutions that IDPs prefer are beyond the scope of funding of humanitarian donors, while the permanent shelter solutions that IDPs are implementing themselves fall outside of the Shelter/NFI Cluster’s solutions.

Limitation of the funding and capacity requirements create additional burdens on the humanitarian agencies to address the needs completely.

Settlement planning: Many of the sites have been established by the IDPs themselves, so it may be difficult to improve infrastructure situation and develop access to services given the limited resources and available land.

WIDER IMPACTS

Beyond Syria, there are a number of tools that the Cross-Border Shelter/NFI Cluster has created to make the shelter response more efficient in other contexts:

- Tools for assessing the conditions of shelters particularly by non-technical enumerators.
- A gap analysis tool to better coordinate with other partners providing the same type of assistance.
- All sectors were provided with third-party monitoring which provided some feedback on the outcome of programs. This was a useful way to get data on the outcome of Shelter and NFI programming and inform guidance and capacity building of partners.



Infrastructure upgrading (for example to reduce flood risk) in IDP sites improves living conditions for site residents and also reduces the likelihood that access for humanitarian assistance will be disrupted.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Remote coordination requires data and the ability to analyse that data into a coherent response in order to cover the needs.
- Human Resources are a key aspect of ensuring quality shelter coordination.
- In protracted situations, there is a need to ensure up-to-date technical guidance to ensure it matches information and feedback received from affected populations.
- Due to the remote setting, constant capacity building not only about technical shelter aspects, but also for information management tools for reporting is required.
- The long period of crisis in Northwest Syria and the changing context requires more resources to meet the shelter needs.
- A multi-sectoral and integrated approach has to be considered when delivering aid in IDP sites.

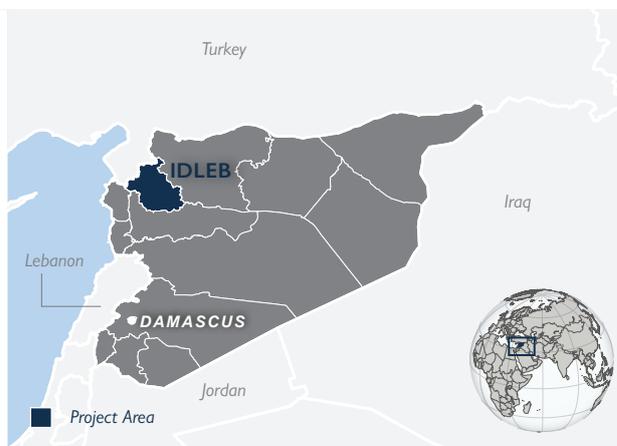


CASE STUDY

SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2019–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

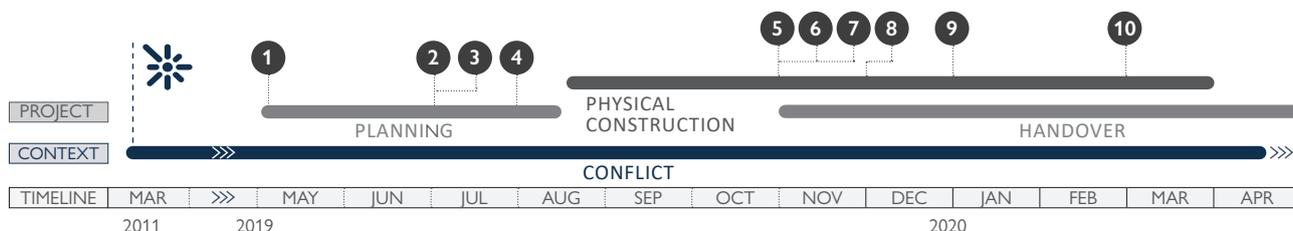
KEYWORDS: Disaster Risk Reduction, Infrastructure upgrading, Site improvements

CRISIS	Syrian crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	4.3 million people affected by conflict in Northwest Syria of whom 2.8 million are IDPs*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	2.7 million IDPs living in Northwest Syria*
PROJECT LOCATION	Idleb Governorate, Northwest Syria
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	24,026 HHs (119,740 individuals, comprised of: 24,226 men, 26,109 women, 35,541 boys, and 34,833 girls)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	58km of road gravelled 37.4km of drainage works 19 culverts installed Ground insulation for 6,377 tents
DIRECT COST	USD 81 per HH
PROJECT COST	USD 99 per HH
* Source: North-West Syria: Shelter & NFI Emergency Overview (Dec 2020)	



PROJECT SUMMARY

Approximately 1.2 million IDPs in the Northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) live in informal and unplanned IDP camps which are prone to flooding in the winter, which has serious implications for humanitarian access, as well as to the health and living conditions of IDPs. Working fully remotely from Gaziantep (Turkey), with no direct access to the camps, the organization implemented a large-scale site improvements and flood mitigation project through two local NGO Implementing Partners (IPs) in 42 IDP sites across Idleb Governorate, using innovative monitoring approaches to ensure quality of the works.



- Mar 2011:** Syrian Crisis began.
- 1** **May-Jul 2019:** Site Identification.
- 2** **Jul-Aug 2019:** Technical assessment and BoQ Development.
- 3** **Jul-Aug 2019:** HLP Due Diligence.
- 4** **Aug-Sep 2019:** Contractor Identification and start of works.
- 5** **Nov-Dec 2019:** Project Monitoring (TPM) – First phase.
- 6** **Nov 2019:** Handover of first completed projects.
- 7** **Nov-Dec 2019:** Fuel crisis.
- 8** **Dec 2019-Mar 2020:** Large scale offensive, resulting in increased displacement.
- 9** **Jan-Mar 2020:** Additional assessments due to increased population in camps.
- 10** **Mar-Apr 2020:** Final monitoring and handover.



There are over 1,000 IDP sites in Northwest Syria, with most of them clustered close to the Turkish border.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in Northwest Syria (NWS) see [A.22](#).

PROJECT APPROACH

In Northwest Syria (NWS) there are over 1,000 IDP sites, with most of them clustered close to the Turkish border. Many of these sites have been established in low-lying areas which were previously used for agriculture, thus posing significant seasonal flooding risks. Following continuous reports from both the CCCM and S/NFI Clusters on the high number of camps which were being flooded between 2018 and 2019, the CCCM Cluster provided a comprehensive needs assessment of flooded sites. In February 2019, the CCCM Cluster reported that at least 28 IDP sites in Aleppo Governorate and 171 sites in Idlib Governorate experienced flooding in the winter of 2018–2019. The main goal of the project was therefore to target a number of these camps with infrastructure upgrades or rehabilitation of roads, drainage channels and culverts, to mitigate flooding for the following winters.

As part of this larger goal, the intended outcomes of the project were to improve access for residents within the camps (particularly for the elderly and those who face physical mobility challenges), and also to improve access within the camps more generally (for humanitarian actors, livelihood opportunities, medical emergencies, etc.). Another aim of the project was also to improve overall health conditions for residents of these camps, as following on from flooding, stagnant water may remain present and can pose a hazard as it may become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, bacteria, and parasites. Another intended goal of the project was to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian response. With each flood, tents and NFI kits are flooded and must be replaced prior to the fulfillment of their lifespan. With such large-scale needs in NWS, this is an inefficient use of resources.

Due to access constraints, the project was managed remotely by the organization from Gaziantep, Turkey.



Many self-settled IDP sites have been built in low-lying areas that are at risk from seasonal flooding.

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Following the needs assessment conducted by the CCCM Cluster, the organization proceeded with site identification. Once the project was already underway, as a result of almost one million newly displaced people arriving in NWS, the needs for camp infrastructure upgrades increased further. The project was therefore adapted from its original scope to expand and target a larger number of camps. A total of 42 camps were targeted.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Working with Implementing Partners (IPs), who had staff both in Gaziantep (Turkey) and in the field locations in NWS, technical assessments and topography studies were carried out to develop BoQs specific to each site. The IPs selected eight contractors to carry out the infrastructure works. The tender process for these contractors was observed by the organization's programs and compliance teams.

The project was in essence a Shelter, WASH and DRR project. A variety of interventions were carried out based on the needs and technical assessments of each camp. These included constructing open and closed drainage systems, sewage systems, culverts, roads, and raising tents 20cm off the ground through graveling. In camps where there was existing infrastructure, the project focused on infrastructure rehabilitation and providing supportive structures. Additionally, to complement the camp infrastructure upgrades, the organization also installed emergency latrines in several of the camps where needed. Coordination also took place with the Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ER/L) Cluster to construct roads leading to several of the camps from the nearest towns and cities.

In the design phase there was some consideration of how infrastructure could be removed once the IDPs leave the sites. Plastic sheeting was placed under the drainage canals for example, to ensure that they are removable and to not harm agricultural land and soil.



Nearly 200 IDP sites in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates reported having experienced flooding in the winter of 2018–19.

HLP DUE DILIGENCE

Through community verification, triangulation of documentation, and coordination with local authorities, HLP Due Diligence took place in all 42 camps. In cases where land rights could not be comprehensively verified, technical designs were amended to ensure land was not altered where verification could not be secured.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There were multiple rounds of discussions with residents and local leaders within the camp to identify the priority infrastructure issues within each camp. Prior to and throughout the project, both IPs mobilized community engagement teams (composed of an equal number of male and female mobilizers) to sensitize the communities living in the camps. This included distributing flyers which explained the scope, duration, and purpose of the project. Additionally, both IPs provided multiple feedback and complaints mechanisms – including in-person interviews, feedback boxes, and a dedicated phone number and e-mail address for feedback. Feedback received directed IPs to more specific needs of IDPs in the camps, such as tents requiring ground insulation. In other cases where the IPs received requests for assistance such as NFI items, they were able to coordinate with other partners distributing these items. Throughout the project, the IPs coordinated with residents of the camps to ensure they were not disturbed by the infrastructure works taking place. Moreover, all infrastructure works took place around the existing tents/makeshift shelters, to ensure the residents did not need to move.

REMOTE MONITORING

As the project was implemented remotely, a variety of monitoring modalities were used. Firstly, the IPs monitored the contractors directly in the field, while the organization also arranged for weekly visits by engineers through Third-Party Monitoring (TPM). Additionally, the organization's M&E team used TPM to conduct visits to ensure quality of works. Lastly, the organization's donor used TPM to conduct an additional layer of verification. As a result, the project was monitored by four separate actors, and at different stages of implementation. Additionally, throughout the project, the organization relied on photographs and videos sent by the Implementing Partners, to monitor progress in the sites.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In its design, the project is a Disaster Risk Reduction project. Due to the topography and slopes of the informal camps targeted, as well as experience of previous winters, the threat of flooding was almost certain. IDPs living in these sites living either in tents or self-built concrete units, are highly exposed to the impacts of flooding. Floods result in the destruction of tent, NFIs, and severe damage to

concrete units. Therefore, rather than continue the cycle of disaster > response > dependency > repeat, the project mitigated the threat of flooding and the subsequent disaster response required.

LINKS WITH SITE MANAGEMENT

Following the camp infrastructure upgrades, through coordination with the CCCM Cluster, Site Management Support (SMS) teams worked to build up the capacity of local camp management and provided support through developing committees in the sites. The SMS teams also supported through the installation of fire extinguishers and filling other CCCM gaps where identified.

Following the interventions, the organization handed over to the local camp management structures, providing information on the required care and maintenance. Additionally, other humanitarian actors who have since been providing other services in the camps, have also been supporting the local camp management structures in the cleaning, care and maintenance of the infrastructure, considering the costs are very low.



Implementing Partners coordinated with site residents to try to minimize disturbance during site works.



As the project was managed remotely from Gaziantep (Turkey) a range of approaches were used for remote monitoring of site works.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Remote management and remote monitoring. Due to access constraints, the organization managed and monitored activities from Gazientep, Turkey, working with IPs and Third Party Monitoring.

Large-scale displacement during the project. During the project, nearly 1 million people were newly displaced in NWS. This resulted in safety concerns for the staff of the IPs, as well as a high pressure to provide a timely response to newly displaced IDPs. The organization was able to utilize savings from various budget lines and other projects to cover the additional needs and target a higher number of sites than originally intended, expanding the scope of the project to adapt to the increased needs. Additionally, the organization conducted daily security analyses for the accessibility and safety of all IP staff in the field.

Risk of overlaps in target locations. As a result of new displacements, self-settled informal IDP sites were established which did not yet have unique coding. This created a risk of overlap between the interventions of humanitarian actors. The organization worked in close coordination with the Shelter/NFI and CCCM Clusters to ensure that there were no overlaps in targeted locations.

Rising fuel prices. In November 2019, fuel prices in NWS had almost doubled since the previous month. Consequently, contractors identified by the IPs requested higher prices than originally agreed and stopped the provisions of several services.

In response, the organization and the IPs monitored the market fuel prices weekly to adapt to the changes. New tenders were announced, and IPs identified new contractors with agreed prices. As a result, there were several delays in the project, however the organization was able to complete all the works in the targeted sites.

Large-scale loss of HLP documentation. One result of the conflict in Syria has been a large-scale loss or destruction of HLP documentation. A study by another organization found that two thirds of respondents with previous housing documentation reported that it had been left behind or had been destroyed or lost. This posed a challenge to carrying out HLP Due Diligence.

The organization triangulated documentation through community assessment checks and coordination with local authorities. In cases where HLP could not be established, technical designs were also adapted to ensure that no infrastructure was constructed on land where HLP could not be verified.



Storm drainage channels were a key site improvement intervention to mitigate the risk of flooding.



A variety of interventions were carried out based on the needs and technical assessments of each camp. These included constructing open and closed drainage systems, sewage systems, culverts, roads, and raising tents 20cm off the ground through graveling.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Mitigation of flood risk in 42 camps. This prevented over 20,000 tents and self-built concrete units from being flooded and improved the living conditions in these camps. This was observed in the 2020–2021 winter season, where the IPs visited the sites which had received upgrades and observed that the infrastructure was still working, and roads and tents had not been flooded. Without flooding and an improved drainage and sewage systems, the health and sanitation conditions of residents in the camps was significantly improved.

Improved mobility for camp residents. In the event of flooding many residents would face access issues to nearby markets, towns, health centers, and livelihood opportunities. Moreover, elderly camp residents and people with physical disabilities would face additional challenges in being able to leave their tent or makeshift shelter. The impact of mitigating flooding and improving access therefore had a wide impact.

Improved access for humanitarian actors to and inside the camps. Prior to the intervention, flooding had resulted in humanitarian actors not being able to reach or move around the sites, often leading to the suspension of activities and distribution of aid. Following the interventions, actors providing protection services for example (psycho-social support, GBV awareness raising etc.) were able to continue with outreach services, rather than having to suspend activities due to flooding and blocked access.

Impacts on local markets and livelihoods. All materials were procured locally inside Syria as they were all available. This had a positive impact on the local economy of NWS as it provided a boost to local markets and created employment opportunities for daily workers.



Interventions improved access and mobility for site residents within sites and also improved humanitarian actors' ability to access sites, many of which had not been able to reach during previous floods.

Supporting IDPs where they are. Experience has shown that despite camps being flooded on an annual basis, many residents continue to live there and do not want to be relocated due to numerous reasons (disrupting livelihood opportunities, losing access to services, being separated from family/friends etc.). This intervention was able to therefore directly positively impact people's lives without relocating IDPs out of their existing locations.

Setting a precedent. As the project was successful and resulted in a high level of resident satisfaction, it has provided a model for the S/NFI Cluster, who made site infrastructure upgrades a key priority for mid-term interventions in NWS.



The project provided a model for how large scale infrastructure upgrades could take place across other sites in the future.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Large-scale impact of project.** By addressing flood risk and undertaking site improvements, the project was strategic in selecting interventions that would have large-scale impacts in improving the living environments of IDPs across 42 camps.
- √ **Strong remote monitoring mechanisms.** Despite the challenges posed by access constraints and remote management, strong remote monitoring mechanisms were put in place through IPs and through Third Party Monitoring.
- √ **Strong technical capacity.** Both the organization and the IPs have strong in-house technical expertise which includes site planners, architects, and engineers, enabling the project to be designed and implemented on a large scale.
- √ **Flexibility in adjusting the project in a changing context.** The project successfully adapted to address challenges created by the changing context – for example through expanding the reach of the project following new mass-displacements, and adjusting to the step rise in fuel costs.



Before: An informal camp pre-flood mitigation intervention.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Uncertainty about care and maintenance of infrastructure upgrades.** As the camps are self-settled, there is an absence of ‘formal’ camp management. Without ‘formal’ camp management, the risk of leaving the infrastructure without formal/funded facility management remains high. Consequently, care and maintenance of the infrastructure remains somewhat reliant on other humanitarian actors that are providing services in the camps.
- × **Drawbacks of remote management.** Despite having multiple layers of monitoring and verification, the project was still implemented through a remote management modality. As a result, it was difficult for the organization to know what was happening on the ground all the time, as well as ensuring the works were being conducted to a high quality.
- × **Wider site planning needs remain.** The project was able to support in supplementary infrastructure works to reduce the chance of flooding in sites, however the project was not able to carry out more holistic site planning improvements to the extent desired.



After: An informal camp, post-flood mitigation intervention.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Consider also using resources for planning and establishing new sites.** Existing sites in NWS are heavily overcrowded due to lack of available land, often face flood risk and face HLP issues. In addition to supporting upgrading of existing sites and site extensions (where feasible), consideration could be given to establishing new sites for newly displaced populations and for IDPs wanting to relocate from existing sites.
- **Inclusion of sewage networks.** It was noticed that residents connected their sewage to the drainage channels due to a lack of sanitation infrastructure. The organization has therefore integrated the construction of sewage networks into a subsequent project.
- **Piloting of rainwater catchment.** Future site improvement projects could benefit from piloting rainwater catchment approaches to reduce reliance on unsustainable water trucking and link to nearby agricultural projects.
- **Seasonal challenges.** As possible it is best to ensure that project implementation does not take place during winter, as it is challenging to implement the project with heavy rains, mud, and poor weather conditions.

CASE STUDY

SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2019–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

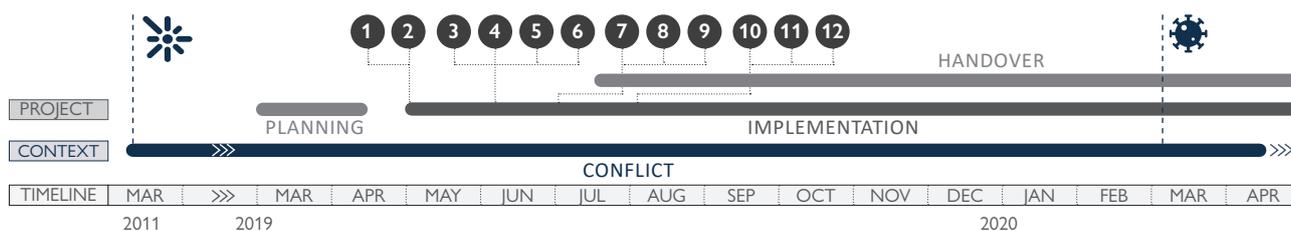
KEYWORDS: Community engagement, Conditional Cash Transfer, Housing rehabilitation

CRISIS	Syrian crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	4.3 million people affected by conflict in Northwest Syria of whom 2.8 million are IDPs*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	2.7 million IDPs living in Northwest Syria*
PROJECT LOCATION	Idleb and Aleppo Governorates, Northwest Syria
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	609 local/returnee HHs 298 hosted IDP HHs 907 HHs (living in 609 houses)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	609 houses repaired/rehabilitated
SHELTER SIZE	40m² on average
SHELTER DENSITY	4-5m² per person (excluding WASH facilities, kitchen & circulation).
DIRECT COST	Average of USD 500 for minor repairs Maximum of USD 2,000 for major repairs
PROJECT COST	Average of USD 1,200 per HH
* Source: North-West Syria: Shelter & NFI Emergency Overview (Dec 2020)	



PROJECT SUMMARY

The project supported vulnerable local communities, returnee households and IDP populations who were living in damaged homes to improve their resilience through housing repair and rehabilitation assistance. Shelter rehabilitation works were implemented through providing cash grants and technical assistance to households, targeting houses which were inhabited by homeowners with priority given to the most vulnerable families and families hosting IDPs in their homes. Shelter assistance was part of a wider package of support provided by the organization, which involved WASH integration, community infrastructure repair, and food and NFI assistance.



Mar 2011: Syrian Crisis began.

- 1 May 2019:** Community selection and prioritization.
- 2 May - Jun 2019:** Community mobilization.
- 3 Jun 2019:** ERW (Explosive Remnants of War) Awareness Campaigns.
- 4 Jun 2019:** Damage and Vulnerability Assessments (DVA).
- 5 Jun - Nov 2019:** Housing, Land and Property (HLP) due diligence.
- 6 Jun - Dec 2019:** Bill of Quantities (BoQs) developed.

- 7 Jul - Dec 2019:** Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with homeowners signed.
- 8 Jul - Dec 2019:** Delivery of first cash installment.
- 9 Jul 2019 - Apr 2020:** Site works implementation and monitoring.
- 10 Aug 2019 - Apr 2020:** Delivery of second cash installment.
- 11 Aug 2019 - Apr 2020:** Completion certificates issued.
- 12 Aug 2019 - Apr 2020:** Post-Implementation Monitoring.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in the Northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) [see A.22](#).

Many villages were either bombed or had been in the middle of front line conflict, leading to significant damage to housing and infrastructure. The lack of financial resources and inability to pay for housing rehabilitation or rent compelled many households to either remain displaced living in damaged housing or to return to their own damaged house. Yet, technical assessments conducted by the organization across six target locations concluded that the large majority (80%) of houses damaged were easily repairable. An assessment carried out by the organization also showed that house-sharing was common, with 30% of assessed host and returnee households accommodating displaced persons. Out of the 30% of IDP families being hosted, 18% reported paying rent.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project assisted both highly vulnerable families who were returning to their place of origin following a period of displacement, and households who had not been displaced but who had been equally affected by the crisis. Both groups were supported with sustainable repair/rehabilitation of their damaged homes. The goal was to target 600 houses (600 families) but the project ultimately supported the repair of 609 houses, which due to the hosting of IDPs, resulted in 907 families being assisted.

The project took a people-centered approach, focused on enabling and assisting household self-recovery and strengthening systems to increase the resilience of affected communities by delivering dignified and longer-term shelter solutions. The project approach also aimed to strengthen intercommunal relations and social cohesion, looking to reduce any risk of conflict among the different groups in the targeted communities and mitigate rising social tensions between IDPs and host communities.

The project provided target households with tailored financial support and technical assistance to repair their homes, which also resulted in injecting resources into the local economy and had a positive impact on the community as a whole. The housing rehabilitation assistance was



Many IDP, returnee and vulnerable local households were living in significantly damaged homes.

part of wider holistic support offered by the organization. Rehabilitation activities were combined with water and sanitation interventions, and with community-level infrastructure repairs such as water and sewage system repairs. Additionally, all households receiving housing rehabilitation support were also assessed using the organization's Multi-Sectoral Needs assessments. Based on confirmed needs, most vulnerable families received integrated Food and NFI assistance.

Specifically, the organization contributed to the achievement of the Shelter Cluster strategic objectives by: 1) Providing life-saving and life-sustaining shelter by addressing inadequate shelter conditions of people living in substandard shelters, and 2) Contributing towards the resilience and cohesion of communities and households by improving housing and related community/public infrastructure by rehabilitating houses of local residents living in their damaged houses.

TARGETING

The organization prioritized communities for the interventions based on the severity of needs and safety and security concerns. Eligibility for household inclusion in the project included that the home was being inhabited by the property owner or their family, that housing damage was repairable, and that the damage caused to the house was as a result of the conflict. Priority was given to vulnerable people who did not have the capacity or resources to repair their houses themselves, in particular, female-headed households, elderly, Persons with Disabilities, war injured, families with no resources, and families who had lost their livelihood as a result of the war. Priority was also given to families who were hosting other families.

Reasons for exclusion from selection included if a house was totally destroyed and would need full reconstruction (which was beyond the scope of the project), if households were less vulnerable or had land and/or other resources, and if areas were unsafe, for example if there was presence of armed groups, military, or where there was evidence or suspicion of dangerous environments due to the presence of mines or remnants of war. Additionally households were not targeted where other organizations were already assisting with the reconstruction or repair of houses.



The project targeting prioritized households that were hosting IDPs, among other criteria.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The organization was committed to support the development of self-protection capacities and to assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, water and sanitation. As such local communities were actively involved throughout the project life-cycle. In the planning phase, the organization actively involved community members in the project design and in identifying needs for house repairs. The prioritization and selection of community infrastructure projects was made by the communities themselves. Through its Community Outreach team and in coordination with local authorities, the organization conducted community mobilization campaigns which included communicating the overall objective of the project, the project criteria, and holding Q&A sessions.

DAMAGE AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Each house was assessed through a Damage and Vulnerability Assessment (DVA) to determine the level of damage as well as the social vulnerability of the family. The organization's engineers were responsible for conducting the DVA for each damaged house and preparing the BoQ for each house accordingly. BoQs were developed in close consultation with households, taking into consideration the specific needs of the household including gender and protection sensitive measures (such as the provision of inclusive and gender separated WASH facilities), and taking into consideration the specific requirements on Persons with Disabilities (for example by including adaptations).

HLP DUE DILIGENCE

Prior to the conflict many household did not have documentation of their homeownership. For those who did have documentation of their homeownership prior to the conflict, destruction and displacement meant that many of these papers had been lost, damaged or destroyed.

HLP statuses therefore needed to be verified and documented, so that housing rehabilitation could take place. The organization worked with local authorities and local community representatives in the HLP verification process. Certificates were signed to document the verified homeownership. Once the validation of HLP documents was complete, an MoU was signed with each homeowner outlining the rehabilitation works to be completed and the process for cash installments.

It was found that in cases where IDPs were being hosted in the homes of selected households, these IDPs were in most cases friends or family members of the host family. Due to the nature of these relationships, the organization did not consider it necessary to introduce clauses into the MoU with the homeowners that specifically protected the tenure security of the IDP households.

CASH DISPERSAL AND MONITORING

The project was implemented through restricted cash grants paid directly to homeowners. The first installment, for 50% of the total amount, was disbursed at the time of the MoU signature. The second cash installment of 50% was disbursed upon completion of all works as outlined in the BoQ.

The construction process was closely monitored by the organization's site inspectors (technical and social staff).

Female staff were recruited within the technical, social assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Complaint and Response Mechanism teams. Social staff were present during the site works (especially for female-headed households). Families headed by Persons with Disabilities and/or elderly persons received additional technical support such as facilitating the contractor/craftsman relationship and advanced cash grants (based on the family's economic vulnerability).

Upon completion of the site works, a completion certificate was issued by the organization, only for houses who had completed implementation as per the signed MoU. Upon signing of the completion certificate the second cash installment was disbursed. Upon completion of site work, Post-Implementation Monitoring was conducted by the organization's M&E team to capitalize on lessons learned and best practices.



Before and after photos showing house rehabilitation.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Insecure conditions resulted in accessibility problems and exposure to risks to staff and target communities. To prevent these risks, safety precautions were taken such as ensuring with the families and stakeholders the safety of the selected sites (distance from frontlines, HLP disputes, and mine action).

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). The project took place only in locations that had been cleared by the local civil defense. All organization staff were trained on ERW awareness. In addition, and prior to any house rehabilitation, community members and selected households participated in ERW awareness sessions conducted by well-trained organization staff.

Tensions in the community due to selection criteria for rehabilitation of houses. The organization mitigated this by ensuring dialogue and explanation of criteria through community group discussions and involvement and consultation of all communities throughout the whole process. In addition, a complaint/feedback mechanism was implemented.

Implementation during winter caused delays. The implementation of site work during the harsh winter season (December – February) resulted in delays in completions.

Requirement for completion of works prior to receiving second cash installment. As the second installment of cash was not disbursed until after the completion of the rehabilitation works, this created some challenges for households who needed to have the cash up-front. It was found that many households (approx. 80%) addressed this challenge by making verbal agreements with contractors and suppliers who agreed to be paid once the household had received their second cash installment. Going forward the organization is planning to split the cash installments into three installments, with the final installment being reduced to 20-25%.

COVID-19 pandemic. Standard operation procedures were developed and implemented. The procedures included establishing a COVID-19 task forces within the organization, the organization's staff members completing training in crisis management in the context of COVID-19, and mitigating the risk of COVID-19 by distributing cash grants through door-to-door visits to all households.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Households who received rehabilitation support confirmed (through visits and focus group discussions) that **the project had a positive impact on the community in general. Markets were positively impacted and daily laborers had an opportunity to secure some income** through the project implementation. Craftspeople, carpenters, iron-smith and other skilled and non-skilled workers were able to secure temporary income within the rehabilitation and construction works implemented in the selected communities. Another impact that was observed was of households adapting their homes to also support their home-based enterprises. For instance, one family modified a part of their living room into a hairdressers.

The organization's approach aimed at **long-term community cohesion** by providing assistance for both local/host and IDPs communities. The IDP communities were always a part of the community meetings and mobilization, and community infrastructure projects targeted both the local/host and IDPs communities.

The organization gained a lot of expertise in the shelter sector through this project and was selected by the Shelter Cluster to undertake the training of all the NW Syria shelter partners on shelter emergency rehabilitation methodology.



Before and after photos showing house rehabilitation.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Social cohesion and community engagement.** The project provided assistance for local, returnee and IDPs communities and aimed to support social cohesion between different groups. It was reported that the transparency showed by the organization in community engagement had a positive impact on the community in general, and enhanced the trust between the local communities, IDPs, and local councils.
- √ **Integrated assistance.** Shelter assistance was linked to other interventions by the organization within the same communities, including WASH, community infrastructure, and food and NFI assistance.
- √ **Positive impact on market recovery and support to local employment.** The cash-based approach supported local markets and supported the return of local craftspeople and construction workers back to the villages.
- √ **Assistance provided was specific to each household.** BoQs were developed in close consultation with the households, taking into consideration the specific needs of the households including gender and protection sensitive measures and the specific requirements of Persons with Disabilities.
- √ **Engagement with local authorities.** The organization engaged with local authorities in conducting the community mobilization campaigns and in the HLP due diligence process. As part of other projects being run by the organization, local authority members were also trained on ethical tender processes and referral pathways.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Cash installment at end of the process created challenges for households.** As the second cash installment was paid after the completion of works this created challenges for households as it essentially reimbursed households for money that they needed to spend up-front, which many households did not have. Many households made verbal agreements with suppliers and contractors to agree to pay them upon their receipt of the final cash installment.
- × **Heavy procedures for monitoring of small cash grants.** As per donor requirements, the monitoring and documentation process was extremely thorough, with the documentation of each intervention step required for each housing rehabilitation. While this ensured rigorous oversight, it was time-consuming and resource heavy, and in the case of the small cash grants (for example of USD 200) for minor repairs, this approach was seen as overly burdensome and not cost-effective.
- × **Unrepairable homes beyond the scope of the project.** There were cases of very vulnerable families with structurally damaged or totally destroyed houses that were beyond repair. The organization had no possibility to intervene to provide reconstruction support to these households as this was not within the scope of the project and there was a funding gap in supporting full reconstruction.



The organization made regular field visits to support households and monitor progress throughout the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Simplification of procedures for minor repairs.** The organization is discussing with donors (with mixed success) the possibility of simplifying the monitoring process for minor repairs so that the process could be less resource intensive and increase efficiency in delivering assistance without jeopardizing the quality of response.
- **Introducing a third cash installment.** The organization has revised the cash installment process so that the total amount of cash assistance is now split across three cash installments instead of two in order to reduce the degree to which households need to spend other money up-front or seek alternative solutions.
- **Communication with communities and community leaders/stakeholders is a key for a successful implementation.** The organization intends to invest more time and resources in the preparation phase and ensure that this is properly budgeted for in project proposals.
- **The gap in funding for households whose homes are beyond repair needs to be addressed.** The organization has raised this issue to the Cluster and donors to advocate on behalf of the critical needs of such households. The organization has managed to secure funding to pilot the construction of shelter units for households whose homes have been totally destroyed.

CASE STUDY

SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2018–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

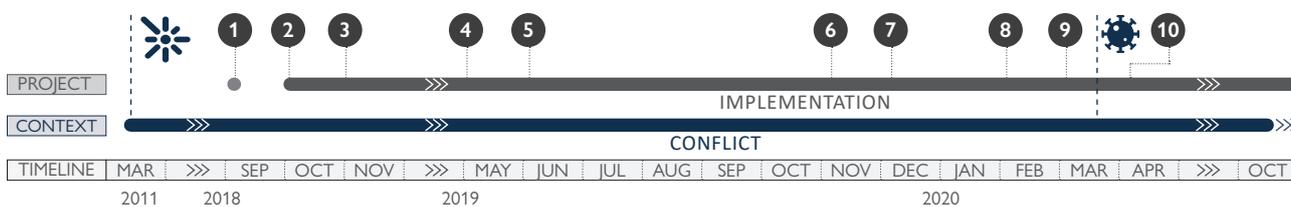
KEYWORDS: Collective center upgrades, Housing rehabilitation, Site improvements

CRISIS	Syrian Crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	4.3 million people affected by conflict in Northwest Syria of whom 2.8 million are IDPs*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	2.7 million IDPs living in Northwest Syria*
PROJECT LOCATION	Northwest Syria
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	33,893 HHs (169,466 individuals, comprised of 158,944 IDPs and 10,522 non-IDPs)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	<p>2,000 HHs: shelter repair/sealing off kits 1,962 housing units and 22 collective centers rehabilitated 2,000 HHs: comprehensive shelter kits 14,983 HHs: household NFIs (for newly displaced) 8,159 HHs: winterization support 1,953 HHs across 10 sites supported through site improvements</p>
SHELTER SIZE	50.7m ² per HH on average for rehabilitated houses
SHELTER DENSITY	7.6m ² per person on average
DIRECT COST	USD 733 per HH
PROJECT COST	USD 900 per HH
*Source: North-West Syria: Shelter & NFI Emergency Overview (Dec 2020)	



PROJECT SUMMARY

The goal of the program was to respond to critical emergency, survival and protection needs of the most vulnerable communities in Northwest Syria by delivering a timely and at-scale multisectoral humanitarian program, which included increasing access to safe, comprehensive and gender-integrated WASH and shelter. This involved improving shelter and living conditions, and increasing access to safe, secure, comprehensive and gender-sensitive shelter solutions, including repair and rehabilitation of housing units and collective centers, improving camps through infrastructure rehabilitation, and providing a range of standardized shelter kits. This case study mostly focuses on the rehabilitation of houses inhabited by IDPs.



- Mar 2011: Syrian Crisis began.
- 1** Sep 2018: Identification of local partners and remote management set up.
- 2** Oct 2018: Launch of the project.
- 3** Nov 2018: Initiated the shelter rehabilitation activity in four communities and in collective centers (CCs).
- 4** May 2019: Distribution of new arrival and kitchen sets to newly displaced IDPs.
- 5** Jun 2019: The donor approved the rehabilitation of 919 houses and 12 CCs and implementation started.
- 6** Nov 2019: Distribution of cash for winterization.
- 7** Dec 2019: 8,000 extra new arrival and kitchen sets requested to respond to increase in displacements.
- 8** Feb 2020: Shelter rehabilitation initiated in another five communities and in 7 CCs.
- 9** Mar 2020: Adaption of the project to meet the escalated need for settlement rehabilitation.
- 11 Mar 2020: WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 10** Apr 2020: The donor approved the rehabilitation of 1,043 houses and 7 CCs and implementation started.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in the Northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) [see A.22](#).

PROJECT APPROACH

As a result of the continued Syrian crisis, the availability of safe, adequate shelter for IDPs by 2020 had been significantly reduced. The program started as a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) through a consortium supporting shelter/WASH and health needs in Northwest Syria (NWS). The project was launched almost immediately following the renewal in violence and displacement of families in 2019. More flexible shelter assistance was needed, using a range of interventions including NFI assistance, shelter repairs, and winterization support via cash distributions to meet the diverse needs. The shelter/NFI component of this program supported both displaced and host communities to improve their privacy, safety and dignity.

The main objectives of the project were to:

- Improve protection against harsh weather;
- Improve privacy and security, especially for women and girls;
- Improve hygiene and access to water and sanitation facilities;
- Reduce basic health and safety hazards;
- Promote good mental health and psychosocial well-being, not only through the services, but also through how the services were provided;
- Improve basic electrical amenities such as lighting and power sockets and access to sustainably sourced electricity, where possible;
- Address the differing and specific needs of families (e.g. size, culture) as well as those of, for example, elderly people and Persons with Disabilities; and
- Create additional space to reduce overcrowding (contributing to mitigating GBV risks).

The shelter component was reactive to the changing needs of the situation and continuously planned, re-planned and

redesigned the shelter activities. Shelter kits were found to be less popular with households than shelter rehabilitation through a contractor. The shelter NFIs were challenging to utilize in an urban context with concrete buildings. In more stable locations the organization promoted the use of rehabilitation of housing and collective centers. However, when further displacement occurred in December 2019, NWS had a further 1 million IDPs forced to settle in spontaneous camps. It was clear that settlement upgrading would be vital to ensure good access to IDPs, connecting them to services and other actors. For those IDPs in a protracted scenario the teams looked to add further shelter options to their projects in NWS, building upon learning from this project, and looking for more sustainable, robust shelter solutions.

The organization worked with a local implementing partner (IP) in NWS to distribute shelter NFIs, repair kits, rehabilitate housing units and collective centers and provide cash for winterization (fuel, heating, blankets etc.).

The project was run remotely with the field team based in Syria and the coordination done remotely from Gaziantep, Turkey. This was a learning curve, and remote management proved challenging at times, but a framework of monitoring and communication via phone with technical teams proved successful. Donor compliance was set to a high level and the organization had three independent ways of carrying out monitoring and verification to ensure high quality programming. Donor technical standards were also developed in tandem with the teams to assure contextual suitability and timely sign-offs to speed up implementation.

The shelter activities were part of a multi-sector program which was consortia led, covering shelter, WASH, protection and health. The overall program was guided by the health interventions as they were the primary activity. Supporting health centers and hospitals provided an entry point into communities, and shelter and WASH rehabilitations were done in the same areas where the project was supporting these health services. Technical assessments of housing and collective center's also prioritized health and protection risks.



The organization worked with local Implementing Partners (IPs) in all parts of the project including for the distribution of NFIs.



Housing rehabilitation was one of a range of interventions designed to support the different shelter needs of different households.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project proposed a range of shelter solutions to meet different needs as part of a planned rapid response. **Shelter repair kits** (including tarpaulins, wood and tools for sealing off openings) were initially planned as it was assumed families would potentially be on the move and continuously displaced so the tarpaulins and other materials could potentially be carried with them. However, it was recognized that a range of options were needed so the program adapted to include, **comprehensive shelter kits, household NFIs for the recently displaced, collective center rehabilitation, housing rehabilitation, site improvements in camp settings and winterization distributions (cash and winterization kits)**. The majority of IDPs found accommodation in sub-standard housing blocks and it became clear that the shelter repair kits were not well suited to sealing off concrete structures. It also became clear that families were willing to stay longer in apartments and welcomed the rehabilitation option over a shelter NFI distribution. For those unable to find housing to rent, spontaneous camps were the only option. The project was able to adapt to the context with donor support, and site improvements were added as a project intervention.

Collective centers and housing units for rehabilitation were identified through the consortia approach and then checked through a verifications process. Using the Cluster due-diligence check list, landlords (or designated representatives in the case of remote landlords) signed the MoU for the completion of work, and the signatures were witnessed by three people from the community. The work was then carried out through contractors, with technical assessments and BoQs carried out by engineers from local partners on the ground. Upgrades prioritized works and items which aimed to improve health conditions (especially following the COVID-19 outbreak) by reducing damp, increasing ventilation and improving poor WASH facilities and enhancing access for people with limited mobility. Upgrades also prioritized reducing protection risks and supporting the needs of women and girls, through providing room partitions, doors on bedrooms and bathrooms, and locks where needed to increase safety, privacy and dignity. Accessibility was also improved, ensuring entrances to buildings were level, making it easier for those with mobility challenges, and upgrading sanitation provisions such as disabled toilets and ramps to bathrooms.

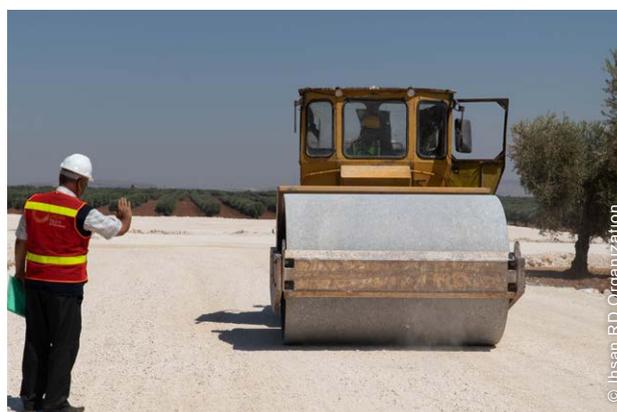
Site improvement works involved work in and around camps, such as road improvement, leveling sites, improving drainage, and adding plinths under tents to raise and insulate them. This was implemented through local partners and contractors.

Winter kits distribution was carried out through a mix of cash and NFI distributions using the Hawala agencies (networked money brokers) for cash transfers, and local partners undertook distributions of cash, shelter kits, household NFIs and winterization kits.

Type of intervention	Contents	Amount
Shelter repair kits/ sealing off kits	Tools, fixings, plywood, padlocks, hinges	2,000 kits
Housing and collective center rehabilitation	As per BoQs	1,962 housing units and 22 CCs
Comprehensive shelter kit	Tools, fixings, household NFIs, tarpaulin, padlocks, hinges	2,000 kits
Household NFIs	Kitchen sets, household NFIs, padlocks, hinges	14,983 kits
Winterization response	Unrestricted cash + winterization kits including heaters and blankets	8,159 HHs received distribution of USD 130
Site improvements	As per site BoQs	1,953 HHs in 10 settlements



22 collective centers were upgraded as part of the project. Upgrades prioritized reducing protection risks and improving health conditions.



Site improvements at IDP sites included improving accessibility and reducing flood risk.

TARGETING

Northwest Syria is a predominantly rural region, with only Idlib city as its urban center. The majority of the nine communities where implementation took place were small towns in the Idlib and Aleppo Governates. Before deciding on any location for either rehabilitation or shelter kit distribution a coordination meeting took place between the implementing partner and local councils to identify the needs, highlight the gaps and coordinate with different actors. It was also essential that the locations were not exposed to shelling and were relatively safe, not high-risk areas. Coordination with the Clusters was important to identify gaps and to follow the movement of IDPs. The organization aimed to reach IDPs at the end point in their journeys when they decided to settle for the time being.

Vulnerable groups targeted in the response included IDPs, the affected host community and those who had recently returned to their own communities (returnee or host community). It was important to address the vulnerabilities associated with recent, short-term, protracted and multiple displacements that families had experienced but also to consider peoples' current shelter situation (in collective centers, camps, inadequate apartments or houses). Therefore, newly displaced persons were considered particularly vulnerable and were prioritized, especially those without hosts and access to basic NFI. Additional vulnerable groups included women, children, Persons with Disabilities and the elderly, especially those who were dependent on others and had no direct access to income.

After selecting locations for interventions, key informant interviews took place with community members and the local councils to explain the project, targeting, selection criteria and timeframe. The local councils provided lists of potential households that met the selection criteria and registered their names and information. A council is made up of elected representatives from the community who are the official authority in NWS and who are responsible for coordinating and liaising with NGOs. The activity and criteria were publicly displayed to ensure the information was shared with as many people as possible. The implementing partner (IP) verified and registered each applicant throughout the implementation process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement was done by working with local community leaders, the local council members, and the key informants who facilitated the fields teams to move around the areas, identify the needs, and locate collective centers in need of support. WhatsApp was used to communicate any challenges the families had with the works being carried out on their home – the most popular way to give feedback and lodge complaints. Throughout the implementation there were two complaint WhatsApp numbers; one for the organization and another for the IP, which were shared widely in the community to give feedback. The organization and IP categorized, verified and shared all complaints with the relevant program or department to respond to them.



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Wall divisions were one of the priority rehabilitation interventions, in order to improve privacy and reduce protection risks.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Housing, land and property (HLP) rights challenges.

In this context it was difficult to contact remote owners of buildings/apartments and to get permission to carry out rehabilitation works. The owners who had often been displaced abroad but would like to return eventually were hesitant to have work done on their property in their absence. The Cluster suggested to limit interventions in these situations to 'light works' only. Some donors suggested that occupants had to agree to leave any materials added to the property in place when they left and decline any ownership rights.

Managing expectations was difficult, due to what was achievable within structural limitations and budget. This was carefully managed by field staff and contractors through discussing with families their main priorities and highlighting the importance of improving safety issues over other needs.

Compliance with the donor's technical standards and expectations was sometimes difficult. The donor required the organization to share all BoQs for their sign-off. Delays in getting BoQs signed off by donor technical teams had significant impacts on the ground. The organization made an effort to ensure new proposed donor standards were informed by the context and Cluster partners so they were more realistic given the constraints on the ground, such as limited access to sites, making some follow up checks difficult.

Transferring cash in USD to NWS and gaining financial checks for the cash agent proved complicated. A suggested solution was to spread out support to the most vulnerable over a longer period of time which was easier to manage than a concentrated caseload.

Consulting more women and girls on their preference and need throughout the project implementation was needed to ensure the right upgrades were being implemented, however it was not always possible to speak to women and girls alone. Focus group discussions helped to a certain degree, but the organization endeavored to find more ways of getting direct input into BoQs from women and girls.

Often distributions carried out during the day attracted attention and created critical and risky security situations. IP's started to carry out distributions at night to avoid being targeted by armed forces, as the darkness of night provided suitable cover, but was not without other risks.

Distributing kits and rehabilitating houses while taking COVID-19 precaution measures, physical distancing and minimum contact was challenging in part due to the denial of COVID-19 locally. Many people felt they had other greater worries, such as shelling and bombing. This perception started to change as cases increased in NWS.

Finding options for people without any shelter options at all was a gap. HLP issues linked to finding land and getting permission to use free of charge/public or government land for camps was an on-going challenge to all Cluster actors.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

There is a huge shelter gap inside NWS. It was vital to improve the housing stock and increase potential housing which could be rented. The project made houses more adequate and had a huge impact for families living in the collective centers, especially in terms of dignity and privacy. Shelter rehabilitations also made it more convenient for individuals to isolate inside houses for COVID-19. Following the interventions, households were more settled, having solved their immediate shelter needs and able to move onto other priorities such as looking for work, working towards recovery and self-resilience.

Work on external elements of buildings such as walls and windows greatly improved winterization and protection for the inhabitants. The winterization support (un-restricted cash) provided freedom of choice, allowing families to select the most needed items. The site improvement works supported rehabilitation of old camps, adding extensions or planning new camps, upgrading the main roads, ground leveling and graveling – all this improved access for other actors/services. In total the program supported nearly 170,000 people (34,000 HHs/families) with shelter and settlements assistance.

High satisfaction levels were reported from families, especially those in rehabilitated collective centers and housing units of which 82% of respondents from a 123 household sample said that the works were of a high standard. Meeting emergency shelter needs provided a foundation from which they could start to rebuild their lives.



Upgrades of building elements such as doors and windows to ensure that buildings were better sealed off greatly improved winterization and protection.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **The organization always consulted women, girls, men and boys and Persons with Disabilities** on how interventions could meet their specific needs and take into consideration different protection risks.
- √ **A strong system for reviewing all documents ensured high program quality.** MOUs, HLP documents, BoQs, handover notes and the satisfaction surveys produced by the IPs were then reviewed by the organization, and BoQs sent to the donors. Once everything was signed off it was filed physically and digitally.
- √ **A strong process for monitoring implementation** was put in place, which included daily visits to sites from the organization's consultants and the IP's engineers, sharing of photos and videos, third-party monitor reports, and MEAL teams sending monthly reports attached to the partner's payment request.
- √ **The project had a strong feedback mechanism using WhatsApp and a Hotline.** Complaints were tracked and shared in daily flash reports with clear guidance developed on how to respond to issues.
- √ **Working through local partners** identified specifically for the program ensured a strong understanding and awareness of the changing context and challenges, this also allowed the project funds to stay within communities through use of local contractors and laborers, and sometimes also material vendors.
- √ **Providing a range of shelter support options** meant the project was flexible and could adapt to the context and changing emergency needs. What started as a Rapid Response Mechanism was adapted into a 2-year program with the donor topping up the funding for the shelter activities given the severity of the needs.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Suitability of some shelter interventions.** Shelter repair kits were not so suitable for families living in concrete framed buildings but were intended for families who may need to move again depending on the location of the front line. The scope of shelter support options was broadened to address the different situations of different IDPs.
- × **Long cycle of technical approvals consumed a lot of time causing delays** in responding to needs and losing access to locations.
- × **Some of the households' needs could not be met due to donor restrictions.** Plastering, tiling and painting were not permitted activities for household upgrades despite having important cultural and well-being impacts for Syrian society.
- × **Some donor standards were not suited to the context.** The types of housing units occupied by IDPs were concrete structures – this limited the organization from meeting 3.5m² of covered space per person – it was not possible to extend an already existing concrete structure.
- × **More durable shelter support needed.** Despite the project providing a wide range of shelter solutions, there was still need for more durable options which provide longer term security and protection and an ability to meet the evolving needs of those in long term displacement.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Collaborate on donor's technical standards** in the planning phases and keep them as a live document which can be adapted over time. It is useful for standards to be developed with the Shelter/NFI Cluster and for donor technical staff to be encouraged to take part in Cluster Technical Working Groups.
- **There is a need to widen the scope of work** to provide more durable solutions and improved spaces for habitation, improved mental health and well-being, access and protection.
- **Remote implementation** was possible with strong communication mechanisms between project managers, field teams and contractors and having 2-way communication with households.
- **Framework agreements with service providers** could be put in place in different locations earlier on in the project to save time while still maintaining flexibility in when and where implementation could take place.
- **Working with donors to build in more flexibility in shelter options at proposal stage**, in order to be able to take solutions from the context itself and build on what IDPs are already doing, focusing more on process over product.

CASE STUDY

SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2019–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Durable solutions, Housing construction, Settlement planning

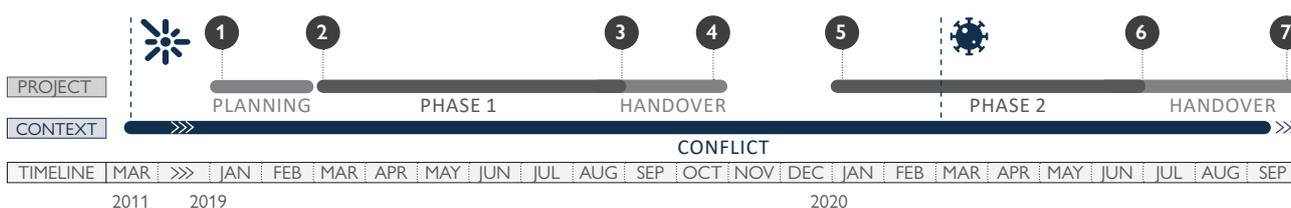
CRISIS	Syrian crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE AFFECTED	4.3 million people affected by conflict in Northwest Syria of whom 2.8 million are IDPs*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	2.7 million IDPs living in Northwest Syria
PROJECT LOCATION	Al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	204 HHs (1,224 individuals) directly supported
PROJECT OUTPUTS	<p>204 apartments built</p> <p>893 job opportunities created (849 construction workers + 44 suppliers)</p> <p>Drinking water and sewage networks installed</p> <p>1,410m of roads constructed</p> <p>6 shops constructed</p>
SHELTER SIZE	46.5m²
SHELTER DENSITY	7.75m² per person
DIRECT COST	<p>USD 3,205 per HH (for buildings, not including infrastructure costs)</p> <p>USD 3,500 per HH (including infrastructure costs)</p>
PROJECT COST	USD 5,022 per HH



PROJECT SUMMARY

To support IDPs facing protracted displacement due to ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), the project built 204 new-build permanent homes as part of a new housing development to be occupied by IDP households and managed by the local council. The organization identified local representatives and agreed the scope of the project with the local authority, the community, and other stakeholders. The project focused on a permanent shelter solution, including durable structures and infrastructure such as water and sewage networks and roads. The construction activities also created livelihood opportunities for 893 host community members and IDPs.

* Source: [North-West Syria: Shelter & NFI Emergency Overview \(Dec 2020\)](#)



-  **Mar 2011:** Syria Crisis began.
- 1** **01 Jan 2019:** Signed agreement with Al-Bab Governor and The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD).
- 2** **01 Mar 2019:** Phase 1 construction started.
- 3** **31 Aug 2019:** Phase 1 construction completed (112 homes).
- 4** **31 Oct 2019:** Handover of 112 homes completed.
- 5** **01 Jan 2020:** Phase 2 construction started.
-  **11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.
- 6** **31 Jun 2020:** Phase 2 construction completed (92 homes).
- 7** **31 Sep 2020:** Handover of 92 homes completed.



The project supported IDP shelter needs through constructing permanent new-build housing.

CONTEXT

For more background information on the crisis and response in the Northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) [see A.22](#).

The project targeted an area of northern Aleppo (Al-Bab district). Prior to the crisis, the population lived in mainly urban and peri-urban areas. These areas had services such as electricity and running water but had only limited official recognition and registration. Al-Bab has a cold semi-arid climate with hot dry summers and cool wet and occasionally snowy winters. People mainly worked in agriculture and some small industry workshops. The common building style in Al-Bab, especially in urban and peri-urban areas is building with cement blocks with reinforced concrete.

The area is considered relatively safe in comparison with other areas. In north Aleppo between Al-Bab to Jرابلس, there are 55 camps; most are informal and self-settled and many have been occupied for many years. Most IDPs in camps in Northern Syria suffer from poor living conditions, where many tents became worn-out. The roads in camps are rarely paved and are in poor condition, causing floods, especially in the winter season. Additionally, camp infrastructure is lacking, and many services are unavailable, including adequate electricity and WASH services. Children also encounter many difficulties in accessing education in camps.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY/RESPONSE

In Northern Syria, humanitarian organizations primarily follow the Shelter Cluster (Turkey Hub) strategy. The Shelter Cluster's two strategic objectives are:

1: Provide life-saving and life-sustaining shelter and NFI support.

2: Reinforce an enabling protection environment and communities' cohesion by improving housing and related community/public infrastructure.

This project linked to the second sector objective to increase adequate housing stock available to targeted households and communities through providing sustainable

and safe housing and related community/public infrastructure and facilities to IDPs and host community.

The project also linked to the Early Recovery & Livelihoods (ERL) Cluster objective of strengthening access to livelihoods by creating income-generating opportunities and by improving access to production and market infrastructure to support local economic recovery through providing short-term work opportunities in the project.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project approach was to provide dignified, secure housing and to provide livelihood opportunities for targeted IDPs and host community family members during the different stages of project implementation. The project drew on the skills of IDP and host community households throughout different phases of the project, which helped to revive the economy within the project area.

The main goal of the project was to alleviate the suffering of displaced families by providing safe and adequate housing. The intended project outcomes were to:

- Improve the community's resilience, coping mechanisms, and local participation by providing adequate housing to 204 displaced families;
- Improve the living conditions of displaced persons by supporting development of technical skills, practical experience, and career opportunities that can be used to alleviate poverty and restore livelihoods; and
- Support the most vulnerable groups in society, including orphans, widows, and the elderly, as the primary recipients of shelter support.

Due to the protracted nature of the crisis, IDPs have been living in precarious situations for a long time. The project location in northern Aleppo is relatively safe and secure with no bombardments or clashes for more than 3 years. As such, the organization decided to develop new-build permanent housing as housing security and more dignified shelter were considered by IDPs to be the first steps to recovery.



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The project approach was to provide dignified, secure housing and to provide livelihood opportunities for IDPs and host community members.

PROJECT LOCATION AND LAND IDENTIFICATION

The organization began selection of the location for the project based on a series of criteria including the ratio of IDPs to non-IDPs in each sub-district, the degree of severity of each affected sub-district, the security situation and access reports, and the market assessment and availability of raw materials in the targeted location.

The organization prioritized a list of potential locations and selected the community of Sussian (a small village within the district of Al-Bab city located 10km north of Al-Bab) because raw materials and persons with building experience were available in the region, the region is safe and stable and had a population of 900,000 people, half of whom were IDPs, and the area was hosting more than 55 camps and self-settled sites.

Identification of appropriate land for the development was done using a set of criteria to evaluate different options, including, for example, factors such as ownership of land (that it was publicly owned), water availability, links to road and electricity networks, and access to infrastructure such as schools, health centers, and access to construction materials and labor.

Once the site was identified, the organization conducted Housing, Land and Property Verification and determined the land was a public property under control of the local council of Al-Bab, who provided the ownership documents, which the organization verified by consulting a community representative, local elders, the mosque's Imam, and the Mukhtar of Sussian Village.

COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A small shelter committee was established, and included local council representatives of Al-Bab and Sussian, a member from the Turkish authority in Al-Bab, a member from The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), and members from host community dignitaries in Sussian. IDP households who would move into the new housing had not yet been selected, so there was no resident representative in the committee. The organization agreed on the scope of the project with the local authority and the community. The organization also conducted community outreach activities through holding meetings with the Turkish authority and local councils, shelter committee meetings, and focus group discussions. The local authorities and host community dignitaries were consulted on the project's pros and cons for their communities.

HOUSEHOLD SELECTION

To select the households to move into the new housing, the organization created a preliminary list of households by creating registration opportunities in local councils; conducting house-to-house registration visits; and considering households suggested by the local authorities.

The nominated list then passed through two filters, the first being the eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria included, but was not limited to, that the household was displaced and without adequate shelter; unable to get back to their place of origin within Syria, and were not receiving another form of housing assistance such as Cash-for-Shelter or rental assistance. Households who met all the eligibility criteria were then prioritized according to a list of vulnerability criteria. The selection was done in collaboration between the local council and the organization.



The land for the new development was located 15km from the city of Al-Bab. In addition to housing, six shops were built on the site. Space was also allotted for social infrastructure including a school, however at the time of project implementation, funding to build the school had not yet been secured.

SITE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

After the household selection, the organization started technical design and site planning. The total project design included 51 2-story blocks, consisting of 204 homes, each with two bedrooms, one sitting room, a kitchen, and bathroom. The organization also installed/rehabilitated the drinking water networks and sewage system, three septic tanks, asphalt roads and sidewalks. The project included installing electricity infrastructure (connections, cables, switches, and lamps) in order for the houses to receive electric power from any supplier.

In addition to space for housing, space on the site was allocated for social infrastructure including a school, however at the time of project implementation, funding to build the school had not yet been secured. A mosque was built on the site, funded by a private donor. Small trees were planted between the blocks.

The site plan included six shops of 16m² each. The shops are managed and rented by the local council, with the shop tenants being either residents from within the development itself or from the host community. The revenue from shop rental payments is used to contribute to running costs in the new development, such as garbage disposal or infrastructure maintenance.



During the planning phase of the project, displaced households were consulted on the layout of the apartments.



Feedback on the apartment design included that it was important to have a separation of spaces, both for privacy and to allow for different functions within the home.

HOUSING DESIGN

In the planning phase, displaced households were consulted on the size and internal divisions of the apartments. The apartment plan was modified as per their feedback and considering cultural customs, such as having two rooms to separate women and men or give privacy for elderly household members: separated kitchen, a small sitting room to host guests, and a private and detached bathroom. A small front space was also added between buildings to allow for social interactions between neighbors.

The reinforced concrete building design was in line with standard Syrian specifications. The technical standards for the housing design were developed to meet the following conditions: compatibility with Sphere Standards, secure and safe with protection from humidity, thermal comfort, ventilation, privacy, rain proofing, including a food preparation area, water supply, toilet and sanitation facilities, fittings for stoves and water tanks, sewage system and sufficient space to sleep and conduct daily activities.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

The construction works were carried out by contractors who competed using a tendering process and committed to using workers from the IDPs and host communities. The housing construction was split into two phases.

In terms of quality assurance throughout the project, the project relied on the Syrian building standard issued from the Syrian engineer's syndicate and the Syrian union contract system. The field staff issued weekly and monthly reports and conducted all inspection and tests of the raw materials and the building elements. Two qualified engineers oversaw the daily quality control and quality assurance to ensure it matched the project specifications.

New construction workers undertook an inception training within skilled groups, and an on-the-job training method was used with workers learning by doing under the oversight of the workgroup's foreman. The project implementation period provided short and medium-term jobs to many professional and skilled workers who were out of work due to the crisis. Some of the construction workers were from displaced households who would become the residents of the new housing.



Construction was mainly carried out by contractors, with the organization overseeing quality control and quality assurance.

HANDOVER

The organization handed over the completed development to the local council of Al-Bab and signed an agreement with them. There were a number of important provisions within the handover agreement, including that the ownership of the development is public property administered by the Local Council of The City of Al-Bab, the homes were to be occupied by the households from the agreed upon list, the housing should be free of charge to residents with no rent to be collected, and contracts with residents would be signed annually with the status of the resident household being re-assessed annually by a committee formed by the Council. The approach to management of the housing adopted some social housing principles.

The local council will manage the solid waste removal and septic tanks desludging and any needed maintenance. While the housing is free of charge in terms of rent, this does not include utility expenses. The residents along with the local council established a committee of resident representatives to address this by collecting small fees from the residents to cover these costs. After completion of the development some other NGOs have also started providing some utility services.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Initial delays. In the first phase the project experienced initial delays due to a change in the organization's financial policies, and delays in the signing of the funding agreement with the donor. The start of the project then coincided with the beginning of Ramadan and with a severe heatwave that affected the pace of construction works. To address

this the project start and end dates were adjusted, the workplan was compressed, and the number of construction workers was increased to finish the project as quickly as possible

Heat wave. The challenges created by the heatwave were overcome by taking precautions to reduce working hours and to work in the evenings and early morning to avoid harm to both workers and cement works, avoiding work being carried out during the hottest times of the day. Ice cubes were also used in pouring and mixing concrete.

COVID-19 pandemic. The second phase of construction works was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in new work procedures being brought in such as ensuring social distancing, using personal protective equipment, and ensuring meetings with stakeholders were managed in a way as to avoid crowds forming.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

The project contributed to providing permanent housing for displaced people, which will contribute to their stability and improve living conditions. The project also generated short and medium-term livelihood and business opportunities for engineering staff, technicians, workers and suppliers during the project implementation period. The newly acquired skills for the new construction workers may help them in the future to find work on other building projects in the area.

This project drew the attention of other NGOs to the importance of permanent shelter options. In 2020 many NGOs started similar projects in the north of Aleppo.



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Small trees were planted between the housing blocks.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Durability of shelter support.** The project provided permanent housing that is durable, will have a long lifespan and provides housing security to residents.
- ✓ **Livelihood opportunities.** The project enhanced skills and generated income opportunities for local host communities and for displaced people, contributing to social cohesion.
- ✓ **Availability of raw materials for construction in the project area.** This meant that materials such as sand and gravel could be procured locally, benefiting the local market.
- ✓ **The project enhanced social cohesion** between the host community and IDPs wherein the new project alleviated a part of the burden on the host community. Investing in permanent new infrastructure and housing that will be managed in a similar way to social housing going forward also provides an asset for the local council.

WEAKNESSES

- × **The distance from Al-Bab City** (15km) caused difficulty for residents to access the market and other services. While this was a consideration in the site selection criteria, this site was the best available option. While the site plan created spaces for services, the development still lacks some key facilities such as a school and a pharmacy.
- × **Heating costs.** Cement homes need heating in the winter, and the project did not include support for an operational period.
- × **No energy source provided.** Electricity infrastructure was built into the homes, but there was no electricity provider to link the grid up to. The project could have included the installation of a solar energy system to generate electricity for lighting homes and/or a solar water heating system.
- × **The absence of balconies in the house design.** It was noted that there is a big problem in spreading the laundry on the rooftops.
- × **Accessibility.** The lack of ramps for entering the ground floor entrance caused hardship for people with mobility challenges and those using wheelchairs when entering homes.



Lessons learned note that specific play spaces for children could have been designed in to the settlement plan.



Accessibility was noted as a weakness of the project, with ground floor entrances creating a challenge for people with reduced mobility.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The location of new housing in relation to existing settlements and services is key.** In this case, selection of a site closer to Al-Bab would have ensured better access to markets and services. Given the distance of the new development from the city, transportation links needed to be better considered, and a wider range of primary service buildings and social infrastructure needed to be included, such as school, mosque, shops, administration office, a small clinic, and play areas for children. Spaces on the site plan were left with the potential some of these services will come later.
- **More in depth engagement with residents on the housing design could have identified design issues sooner,** such as the lack of balconies and access constraints.
- **Operation of utilities and service costs need full consideration.** The project missed the opportunity of supporting the development with solar panel system and solar heating system to provide the electricity and hot water for the houses. An additional learning is that supporting operational costs for a period of six months after the end of construction work would help with the transition and handover.
- **Launching microfinance and small projects** could secure income for the residents and ensure the development is more sustainable.

CASE STUDY

TURKEY 2017–2020 / SYRIAN CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Community engagement, Gender mainstreaming, Housing rehabilitation, Infrastructure upgrades

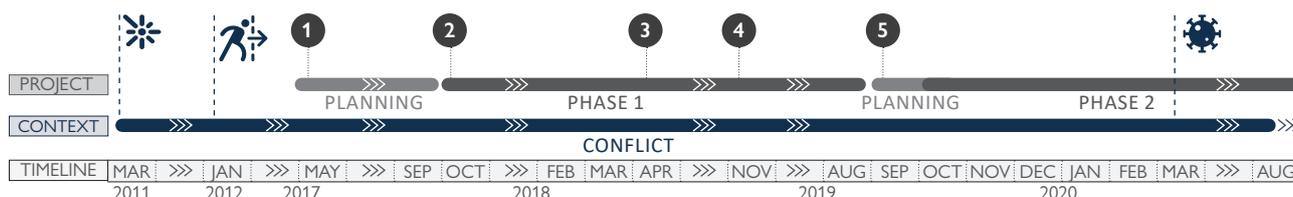
CRISIS	Syrian crisis, 2011 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	3.6 million people displaced to Turkey (peak in 2019)*
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	Approx. 1.98 million people in Southeastern Turkey with basic needs**
PROJECT LOCATION	Gaziantep, Kilis and Sanliurfa Provinces of Southeastern Turkey
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	House upgrades: Phase 1 1,090 HHs (26,649 individuals) Phase 2 889 HHs (7,148 individuals)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	1,979 houses upgraded 10 community level interventions completed
SHELTER SIZE	Average of 40m² for an apartment
SHELTER DENSITY	Average of 3.5m² per person
DIRECT COST	USD 400 on average for HH level upgrades USD 500 on average for building level upgrades
PROJECT COST	USD 800 on average for house upgrades



PROJECT SUMMARY

The project supported conflict-affected refugees inside Turkey (Syrian and other), returnees, internally displaced populations (IDPs) and host communities through interventions at three scales. This included household level upgrades, building level interventions to improve communal areas, and community level interventions done in consultation with communities and in partnership with the municipality to improve shared spaces and services for the whole neighborhood. The shelter project was part of a wider program focused on Shelter, Protection, and Women's Economic Empowerment.

* Source: UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response Operational Portal
** Source: Turkey: Basic Needs Sector Dashboard (April 2020)



- Mar 2011:** Eruption of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria).
- Jan 2012:** Influx of refugees due to new violence in Syria.
- 1** **May-Sep 2017:** Needs assessment.
- 2** **Oct 2017:** Shelter/WASH Project started.
- 3** **Apr 2018:** Changed to Cash-for-Shelter modality.
- 4** **Nov 2018:** Rise in inflation changed the price of materials.
- 5** **Sep-Dec 2019:** A joint and integrated communal upgrade process established.
- 11 Mar 2020:** WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.



The project was implemented predominantly in urban areas, in Gaziantep, Kilis and Sanliurfa Provinces.

CONTEXT

Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world in absolute numbers, including over 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees – with Gaziantep, Kilis, and Sanliurfa being the provinces hosting the most. While Turkey has had formal mechanisms to support Syrian refugees – such as the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) – refugees are increasingly politicized which creates significant protection risks.

The displacement of refugees and their arrival in Turkey started in 2011 and has continued to the present day. Refugees are mainly from Northern Syria; Aleppo, Afrin and Idlib and Kurdish territories predominantly from urban areas. Arriving in the Southern provinces of Gaziantep, Kilis and Sanliurfa, refugees firstly stayed in camps and border district level settlements. In 2014 when the number of refugees started to reach into the millions, the Turkish government allowed the refugee population to move in the provinces into rental houses, with the rental costs covered by refugee families themselves.

By 2017, the ESSN support was activated in Turkey and the government also facilitated the process for refugees to move into other cities from where they first registered. However the housing capacity was not enough to host the increased population, and the rental costs increased significantly. From 2011-2016, rental housing being occupied by refugees was often shared by a minimum of 2-3 families. As conditions of the housing stock slowly improved and rent costs stabilized, over 90% of families started to live as one household in each house/apartment.



The project worked across three scales, with interventions at the household, building, and community levels.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project aimed to support communities affected by conflict and displacement to become self-reliant, empowered and able to achieve basic needs and rights. This was done by collaborating with civil society, women's movements and the Turkish authorities, and through utilizing community and gender-based approaches to achieve long-term sustainable solutions, lasting change and social cohesion.

The project supported conflict-affected refugees inside Turkey (Syrian and other), returnees, internally displaced populations (IDPs) and host communities – with a focus on vulnerable women, girls and boys.

The organization worked in three provinces of the Southeast Region, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Kilis, where the majority of refugees are hosted. The organization applies a 'One Neighborhood Approach' model. This approach is an integrated sectoral approach based in a specific geographic area, starting with the identification of a neighborhood with high levels of vulnerable refugees and host community members.

The shelter intervention was part of a wider holistic program which works at three different scales:

- **Household level interventions** focused on individual household upgrades;
- **Building level interventions** upgraded shared spaces between households; and
- **Community level interventions** upgraded shared spaces or services available to the whole neighborhood.

Assessments showed that nearly half (49%) of the shelters/apartments were recorded as 'requiring upgrading' and could be repaired. The majority of the upgrade needs were found to be replacing or installing doors (82%), upgrading the toilet (68%) and upgrading or installing a bathroom (65%). The top protection issues raised were having no rental agreement (66%), followed by not having enough privacy at home (39%). The top three shelter concerns of women and girls were the need for lockable doors for toilet/bathroom (80%), doors and locks for sleeping areas (76%) and kitchen improvements including taps, tiling and counter tops to improve hygiene and reduce household chores/labor (70%).

This project started with a predominantly contractor-led approach in 2017. Following some challenges with delays in completion and managing the relationships between contractors, laborers and households, the team decided to pilot a purely household-led approach using Cash-for-Shelter. Cash transfers were made through the Post Office and local vendors were used to supply items. Awareness sessions were run for all participants on housing, land and property (HLP) issues, information, education and communication (IEC) materials on tenants' rights were distributed and hotline numbers shared.

TARGETING

To identify targeted neighborhoods, a neighborhood assessment was carried out which consulted stakeholders including tenants, landlords, local authorities, Mukhtars (heads of villages or neighborhoods who are selected through local elections) as well as local and international NGOs.

Household selection prioritized families living in sub-standard housing that also had a high dependency ratio (e.g. children, older persons, or adults who cannot work); had a family member who was disabled, chronically ill, or otherwise incapacitated; female-headed households; and families with a gender-based violence (GBV) survivor.

To avoid increasing social tensions, the shelter project aimed to support vulnerable Turkish host community members as well as refugees. In addition to Syrian refugees, the organization also prioritized refugees from other countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSEHOLD LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- Following assessment and approval for assistance, the shelter team provided a basic level of training on “DIY - Do It Yourself” activities using DIY materials, explaining the simple repairs, that households could do themselves.
- MoUs were signed between the organization, the tenant and the landlord outlining that during the 12 months following the completion of the rehabilitation works, the tenant must not be evicted and the monthly rent should not be increased.
- For more comprehensive repairs the team created a BoQ and cost estimate for the household, which calculated the amount of the cash payment.
- The team compiled a list of suitable vendors in the area who stocked the list of items as well as tested local skilled laborers and shared this list with the with households.
- For other more heavy or technical repairs (accounting for about 10% of the upgrades) such as plumbing, households were linked to technical providers in the neighborhood through skilled labor lists and recommendations from other households via a Whatsapp Group.
- Women in the households were prioritized to be the one to receive the cash where it was possible and safe to do so.
- The organization transferred 75% of the cost estimate amount to the household and connected them with local skilled laborers, who were mainly Syrians.
- The team’s engineers scheduled a follow-up visit after two weeks to confirm that the rehabilitation had been done according to standards.
- Once completion and the approved quality check was done, the organization transferred the remaining 25% of the cash to the household.
- If the household failed to complete the upgrades, the remaining funds (25%) were not transferred. In case of a change in prices of materials leading to an increase in cost from the original estimation, the organization supported the household with the additional cost.



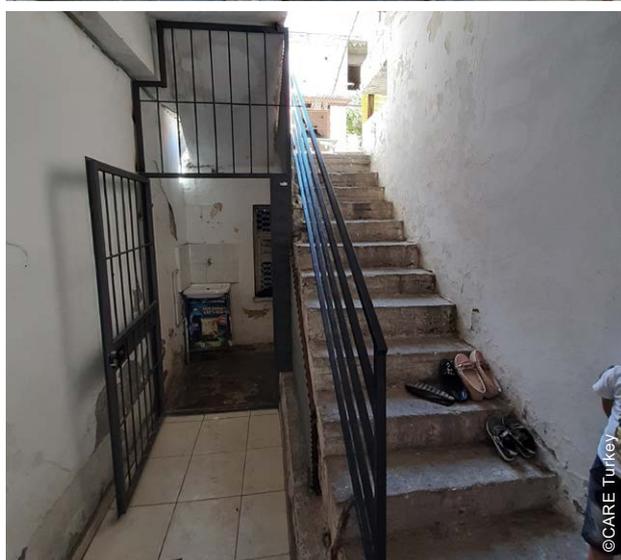
Before and after: Installing doors to improve protection, security and weather-proofing was a priority intervention.



Before and after: Many upgrades included improving kitchen areas to improve sanitation and usability.

BUILDING LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- During the initial assessment the shelter team also identified needs in the apartment buildings in which household interventions would take place. Upgrades to the common areas were prioritized (entrances, stairways, gates) and spaces between buildings (alleyways, sidewalks, and public gathering spaces).
- The team surveyed each building using a standard checklist, which included assessing protective measures against GBV risk such as secured entrances, lighting in common areas, and exterior lighting.
- Through meetings and social worker visits, residents then prioritized which upgrades were most important.
- Upgrades and rehabilitation in common areas included access to utilities (such as safe connections to the electric grid and wiring), insulation from rain and wind, and protection-related items such as lockable entrance doors and lighting of communal areas.
- Improvements were made based on input from and considerations for women’s and children’s well-being.
- A sub-contractor model was used for these upgrades.



Before and after: Building level interventions included improving the safety of shared staircases.



Before and after: Community level interventions included improving parks and recreation areas. Collaboration with local authorities led to the authorities co-funding projects in some cases.

COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

- In the neighborhoods where the upgrades were planned the team organized focus group discussions with residents and stakeholders to seek input on ideas and prioritization of community level upgrades.
- Continuous discussions were also held with local authorities.
- Some examples of interventions included improving street lights (for safety), garbage bins and collection areas, free public laundromats, renovation of benches, and improving recreational parks, playgrounds, and other spaces for young people and women to be able to safely gather.

GENDER AND PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

The needs of women and girls were prioritized throughout the project. Assessment teams always included female field staff to ensure access to talk to women on their own. Women could prioritize the upgrades they felt were most important, with a focus on dignity, privacy, safety and family hygiene. These priorities were tracked throughout the shelter project by the program quality team to ensure they featured on the BoQ and in the final inspection. The names of women in the household were always prioritized as being the recipients of the cash grant while making sure this did not cause conflicts within the family.

MAIN CHALLENGES

An unstable economic and political context within the country meant that work was sometimes delayed. Building in flexibility to the workplan to allow for days where it may not be possible to work in the field or contractor delays was necessary.

Tensions between host and refugee communities caused by different issues related to access to resources, was challenging especially during field visits where the demands from host communities increased and local residents were denied access to specific neighborhoods. As a result, the program was extended to also cover upgrades for host communities.

Inconsistency between organizations. Different organizations implementing shelter support provided different levels of support which caused tensions.

Unstable market prices and inflation. Monitoring the market and adjusting the average BoQ expectations from year to year allowed for some movements in cost of materials. The team maintained an overview of the changes in the market prices and made the necessary increases in the BoQs and cash grants.

Carrying out critical field activities during COVID-19 restrictions was not possible. Alternative remote ways of working were developed to ensure project continuation such as remote assessments via WhatsApp video calls, and sending photos showing progress of the works.

The demand for rehabilitation in neighborhoods increased as the project gained more and more visibility. Direct implementation through contractors was costly and slow. Switching to a cash approach meant that more households were met with support without increasing the budget, as savings were made by reducing the use of contractors.

There was limited access to Turkish households. It was sometimes hard to get permission to do assessments as this was seen as sensitive. This was overcome by advocating to the authorities that staff were only assessing the houses not the people.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Between 94-100% of families interviewed were satisfied with the Cash-for-Shelter approach. According to monitoring, they appreciated the freedom of the unconditional second tranche, and also found it an interesting new way of working with NGOs. The cash approach promoted greater ownership over rehabilitation and involvement of households.

Through the cash approach, households were directly linked to the local market, using local vendors and services, which supported the local economy. This in turn also encouraged more social integration and an increase in self-confidence – especially for refugees. Households also received support from their relatives, neighbors and skilled labor in the neighborhood.

94% of households did not experience any repercussions with landlords. Any challenges they did have were associated with COVID-19 lockdowns limiting their access to markets and vendors. Houses were reported to be healthier which was especially important for COVID-19 as sanitation areas were improved.

The cash for shelter activities increased the interest of other humanitarian organizations and donors in shelter/WASH programming in southeast Turkey.



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Switching the modality of household level upgrades from implementing through contractors to a cash-based approach proved to be more cost effective and to have multiple other benefits.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Scale and timeliness.** The Cash-for-Shelter programming was successful in reaching quality and speed in rehabilitations.
- ✓ **Capacity building.** The project focused on developing the practical skills of the households through DIY methods which directly contributed to the Cash-for-Shelter approach being more impactful.
- ✓ **Local markets strengthened.** The cash approach linked households to local vendors who were pre-vetted – this also allowed second-hand items to be purchased and re-used where safe to do so, reducing the environmental impact of the project.
- ✓ **Gender mainstreaming.** The needs and priorities of women and girls were prioritized throughout the project and the project approach and tools were adapted accordingly. Systems such as having a strong internal M&E mechanism supported this through verification that the inputs of women and girls were included in the selected upgrade interventions and in BoQs.
- ✓ **Collaboration with local authorities.** The organization had a good relationship with municipalities and other public institutions. Specifically, the community level projects encouraged a collaboration with the local authorities, namely the mayor's office, resulting in the infrastructure projects being co-funded by the town hall in some cases.
- ✓ **Security of tenure.** Through MoUs signed with landlords the project improved household's security of tenure. The project also contributed to advocacy on tenancy rights and increased awareness within the community and with government institutions in order to highlight refugee rights.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Capacity to meet need.** The organization was stretched to meet the increasing demand from the community for rehabilitation needs.
- × **Security of tenure.** It was not always possible to make a longer-term agreement with landlords and rental increases continued in some cases after the rehabilitation. Yet, minimal evictions occurred, and in these cases the team supported these families to find new accommodation. HLP issues could be improved by better engaging the municipality or local leaders.
- × **Modality of rehabilitation delivery.** Although the modality shifted to cash support for the household rehabilitations, contractor-led work continued for the communal projects, with some delays, higher costs, and no local labor or vendors used. The program therefore started to pilot the communal rehabilitation activities through Cash-for-Shelter using the same process as household upgrades.
- × **Host community support.** Only 7% of the project participants were from the host community as there were barriers to accessing Turkish households linked to government approvals.



Community level interventions – such as the provision of laundry facilities – were prioritized by community members and other stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Supporting households to take a DIY approach** where possible increases the skills of households and can also increase self-confidence. The cash approach resulted in households being able to make savings and spend money on other priority needs. In this project the team specifically focused on supporting female headed households.
- **Community level interventions.** Working in collaboration with local authorities, for example in this case collaborating on community level interventions, can build stronger relationships, demonstrate the wider benefits of interventions for host communities, and lead to potential co-funding. Phase 3 of the project plans to build on the community infrastructure work, focusing on making the project identification process more community led using participatory planning workshops with coordination at a municipal level. The project hopes to empower local neighborhoods to advocate for appropriate, locally rooted projects.
- **Gender mainstreaming needs to take place at all scales of interventions.** In this case for example the focus on gender inclusion and reducing protection risks was integrated into the household, building and community level interventions.

SECTION B

OPINION PIECES

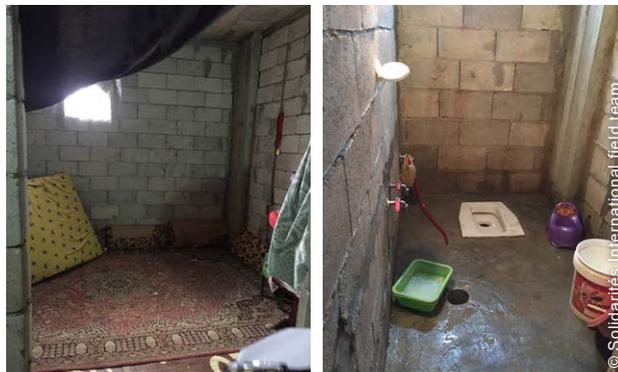


A HEALTHIER HOME IS A BETTER HOME

By Emma Weinstein Sheffield and Susannah Webb



In South Sudan, this project supported the construction of fuel-efficient stoves, which reduced health and protection risks. For more information see [Shelter Projects 2017-18 \(A7\) p30](#).



In Lebanon, this project undertook housing rehabilitations with the aim of reducing protection risks and improving health outcomes. For more information see [A.21 p114](#).

Since the early part of this century, a foundation of humanitarian shelter response has been the desire to Build Back Better, and safer. More recently still, the need to define ‘better’ has been advocated,¹ along with calls for more holistic shelter practices and a focus on the wider impacts of shelter. Health should be central to these debates. Emergency shelter is often called “life saving”, yet this is seldom articulated in terms of health outcomes, despite recognition in other sectors that a healthier home is a better home. It promotes both physical and mental health. The realities of the connections between shelter and health were strikingly exposed to all in 2020, with the former UN special rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing stating: “Housing has become the frontline defense against the coronavirus. Home has rarely been more of a life or death situation”.²

Housing and wider settlement characteristics have direct impacts on public health. This is a long-established reality, one addressed through the housing and planning legislation of most countries. Yet, the humanitarian Shelter and Settlements sector has been slow to integrate this knowledge into practice. Shelter-related challenges to health include overcrowding, indoor air pollution and protection from vectors of disease. Inadequate shelter and tenure insecurity also adversely affect people’s mental health and well-being. The ‘burden of disease’ (lives and healthy years lost) linked to housing, falls disproportionately on people who spend more time within the home, often women and girls, older people and people living with disabilities.

COVID-19 continues to exacerbate a wide range of inter-sectional and social issues: people living in overcrowded homes and settlements are at greater risk from COVID-19 as well as a multitude of other health risks and have limited

power to influence improvements to their living conditions. Shelter practitioners, adhering to ‘do-no-harm’ principles, must deliberately address environmental health, which is the branch of public health concerned with all aspects of the natural and built environment that affect human health. They must also become more conversant with, and act upon, the multiple and complex ways that humanitarian shelter activities intersect with mental health and well-being.

In its COVID-19 mitigation guidance,³ the Global Shelter Cluster identified six ways that ongoing shelter and settlements programs can help to minimize the spread of the virus including decongesting settlements, reducing overcrowding and building medical facilities. The Shelter and Settlements sector must continue to harness lessons learned from the pandemic; namely the growing acceptance that good shelter programming has a fundamental role to play in reducing immediate and long-term health risks. It is clear that several organizations are already starting to include aspects of environmental health into programming, as part of their drive towards a holistic approach, yet a collection of good practices has not yet been compiled.

Multi-sectoral responses do often work towards the achievement of health outcomes, yet due to frequently siloed working, not to mention the challenges of measuring health and well-being outcomes, shelter programs featured in Shelter Projects case studies rarely explicitly mention health. It may be that design, implementation and evaluation processes did address mental and physical health and well-being ‘on the ground’, but this is not explicit, nor detailed in program reports, so learning and replication of success is limited. If we fail to track and report on this, we are missing a huge advocacy opportunity to tell a stronger story about the importance of shelter.

1 Bill Flinn (2020), [Defining ‘Better’ Better](#)

2 Leilani Farha (2020), [Housing, the front line defence against the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

3 Global Shelter Cluster, [6 ways shelter and settlements programming is helping to tackle the effects of COVID-19](#)

Shelter Projects case studies that include a focus on health objectives or outcomes

Of the 22 case studies in this 8th edition of Shelter Projects, seven case studies include explicit reference to health objectives or outcomes. A.3 in Chad highlights that the construction of shelters was reported to have contributed to improving health, comfort and dignity. A.9 in Paraguay refers to shelter interventions that took place at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to raise awareness and to support households to adjust their living environments to reduce the risk of transmission. A.12 in Bangladesh refers to consideration of health in shelter design in relation to the need for cross ventilation. A.21 in Lebanon discusses the physical and mental impacts of tailor-made shelter rehabilitation interventions, which aimed to reduce protection and health-related vulnerabilities. As a result of their shelter needs being addressed, most households reported reduced risk of illness, increased feelings of safety and an improvement to their psychosocial well-being and daily lives. A.23 in Syria describes one of the aims of infrastructure upgrading interventions in IDP sites as being to improve the health of site residents. A.25 in Syria describes prioritizing housing rehabilitation interventions based on their impacts on health. And A.27 in Turkey describes one of the outcomes of housing rehabilitation being that houses were reported to be healthier, especially in relation to enabling better hygiene practices.

The World Health Organisation's 2018 Housing and Health Guidelines⁴ inform the development sector, yet no such guidance exists to steer shelter practitioners towards incorporating health outcomes into their programming. The Sphere Handbook includes few relevant specific standards⁵ or indicators, nor advice on contextualisation. The Global Shelter Cluster's Information, Education and Communication (IEC) compendium project⁶ has revealed a dearth of IEC materials which are focused on health aspects of shelter programming (4.7% of the total, of which around half are related purely to COVID-19). The majority focus on structural safety in disaster response, despite the prevalence of ongoing health risks such as household air pollution, sharing living space with animals, mud floors, or vector-borne diseases in the country of reference. For example, the huge multinational response to the 2015 Nepal earthquakes was overwhelmingly centered on rebuilding to seismically safe standards, despite a widespread and ongoing lack of sufficient household ventilation in homes reliant on solid fuel. The IEC planning and dissemination process at country cluster level should be examined further, both in relation to the relative risks faced by

4 WHO (2018), *Housing and health guidelines*, Geneva

5 An analysis of the connections between health, WaSH and shelter in the 2018 edition of the Sphere Handbook were analysed in a presentation 'The connect...make it so' by Sphere chapter authors, Dr. Eba Pasha, Kit Dyer, Ela Serdaroglu and Seki Hirano

6 Global Shelter Cluster, *The Shelter Compendium*

people recovering from crisis and in terms of what interventions or design tweaks will have the greatest positive health impacts, given the context. In practice, IECs could combine health actions with other DRR measures.

Adequate ventilation: one shelter issue that must be considered in every response

Ventilation has received arguably overdue attention during the current pandemic due to its role in mitigating airborne transmission of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Household air pollution (HAP), responsible for 4.3 million premature deaths annually, is not routinely addressed by shelter programs, although several studies recently have started to explore this issue.⁷ Better guidance⁸ for shelter practitioners on through-ventilation of buildings and volume rather than arbitrary⁹ area standards are needed. In addition, coordination between energy, environment, shelter and other sectors must address the related issues of stoves, energy, HAP and cooking and living spaces. Shelter actors have an important role to play in reducing the health and well-being risks of inadequate ventilation.

If physical health is an overdue consideration for shelter practitioners designing and evaluating interventions, the sector's understanding of mental health as a part of overall well-being is even more embryonic. Stay-at-home orders issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic revealed to the world the acute impact that inadequate, insecure, unsanitary and overcrowded housing can have on mental health. In post-disaster or conflict scenarios, poor living conditions can negatively contribute to the compounding effects of trauma, especially in cultures where the home is a material component of personal identity.¹⁰

7 For example Albadra D. et al (2020) *Measurement and analysis of air quality in temporary shelters on three continents*, Building and Environment

8 For example ARUP's contribution to the GSC 2020 annual meeting *COVID session*

9 As discussed in Kennedy, J., Parrack, C. (2013) *The History of Three Point Five Square Metres*, Shelter Projects 2011-2012

10 Brun, C. (2015). *Home as a Critical Value: From Shelter to Home in Georgia*. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 31(1), 43-54.



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this project included verandas for cooking in order to reduce health and fire risks. For more information see *Shelter Projects 2017-18 (A2) p7*.

Indeed, inadequate living conditions (and related physical health issues) are one of the ‘everyday stressors’ that can have as much impact on people’s well-being as more obviously traumatizing events such as conflict, disaster and displacement.¹¹ Good shelter programming can help to mitigate or reduce many well-being stressors, but better knowledge of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) amongst practitioners is required to provide appropriate assistance. Poor shelter programming, including programming that fails to be fully inclusive, can do harm. Shelter practitioners need to adopt a ‘MHPSS approach’ in programming.¹² The IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support presents exciting opportunities to support the integration of MHPSS into Shelter and Settlements programming, as discussed in the 2021 Humanitarian Shelter and Mental Health learning event.¹³

WHAT IS NEEDED?

To prompt change in practice, deliberate attention to health is needed at all stages of a typical humanitarian shelter program to improve the mental and physical well-being of crisis-affected households. For example, this should include:

- Identifying endemic health risks as part of preparedness activities, alongside identifying and understanding local hazards.
- Assessments/context analyses should include endemic contextual health risks and existing housing inadequacies that should not be replicated in programs. Without consideration of the wider health context of an emergency, shelter assistance can be inappropriate or harmful by inadvertently exacerbating health risks.
- Implementation should ensure emergency shelter addresses community-identified risks to health and considers how best to inform and facilitate healthier reconstruction, for example through health-related IEC. Monitoring should identify where reconstruction can be augmented to enhance health outcomes.
- Evaluation and Learning tools should include health outcomes, despite the complexities of collecting ‘good enough’ evidence within the time constraints of humanitarian emergencies. A number of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tools already exist to help facilitate a shift in practice.

At all stages, the partnership with, and participation of communities is crucial to ensure programs address people’s priorities and plans regarding housing health risks and opportunities.

11 For a discussion of this, see White and van der Bloor (2021) [Enhancing the capabilities of forcibly displaced people: A human development approach to conflict- and displacement-related stressors](#), *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 30, E34.

12 See IASC Reference Group on MHPSS in Emergency Settings

13 Webb and Weinstein Sheffield (in press) *Mindful Sheltering*. See www.self-recovery.org/health-and-shelter

WHAT CAN SHELTER PRACTITIONERS DO NOW?

Questions remain over what next steps are needed to achieve a feasible, cost-effective shift in practice oriented towards wider environmental health and well-being outcomes. Certainly, there is a need for field research to provide evidence of health outcomes of cost-effective interventions.¹⁴ Yet the lack of available evidence must not hold back this shift. In the meantime, the sector needs:

- A checklist or aide-memoire of aspects of homes and settlements that can affect physical and mental health, along with options for mitigating them. A Sphere thematic sheet¹⁵ is a good place to start, informed by research and practice from the development sector.^{16 17}
- To engage with the IASC agenda on integrating MHPSS approaches in all humanitarian sectors.
- Health considerations to be routinely included within the post-crisis Cluster technical working group (TWiG) process of developing IECs, so that context-specific risks are assessed holistically.
- Enhanced coordination between Shelter, Health and WaSH actors at all levels to develop shared operational frameworks and common strategies around the achievement of environmental health for all. An environmental health cross-sector working group should drive this process at the global level.

The Shelter and Settlements sector should build on the increased awareness of the connections between housing and health brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to forge a path towards programming that incorporates environmental health and addresses wider long-term well-being outcomes. Better understanding of shelter-related health outcomes in all areas of the program cycle will help practitioners better articulate shelter’s core contribution to health, not least to encourage more effective responses but also allow stronger advocacy with donors. Shelter is often the first step in the process towards longer-term reconstruction and recovery; strategies that prioritize physical and mental health as an outcome of the sheltering process will not only contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals but help to bridge emergency response and longer-term recovery. In this critical moment when living conditions are center stage, the Shelter and Settlements sector must do more to Build Back Healthier.

14 Webb, S., Foden, G., Weinstein Sheffield, E., Flinn, B., Cidón-Martínez, J., Solera-Mata, E. (2021) [Adopting an Environmental Health Lens in Practice, Roadmap for Research, InterAction](#).

15 Similar to [The Sphere thematic sheet “Reducing environmental impact in humanitarian response”](#) (Sphere Association, 2019)

16 For example, von Seidlein, L. et al. (2019) [‘Knowledge gaps in the construction of rural healthy homes: A research agenda for improved low-cost housing in hot-humid Africa’](#) *PLoS Med* 16(10)

17 ArchiveGlobal has launched a [Health Through Housing Coalition](#) platform

DESIGNING SHELTER PROGRAMS THAT EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

By Geomilie S. Tumamao-Guittap and Jennifer N. Furigay



Care must be taken to implement shelter interventions that empower communities and help build their resilience instead of having a predefined set of outputs and outcomes that often lead to unsustainable results.



Common difficulties encountered in evacuation centers following disasters are lack of space, privacy issues, and inadequate access to basic facilities.

INTRODUCTION

In humanitarian settings where speed and agility are essential in saving lives, processes toward empowerment are often set aside for later, as they can be deemed time- and resource-intensive. While efforts at improving the agency of the most vulnerable are gaining ground, “beneficiaries” are still mostly only at the receiving end of response and even development initiatives. With this, power and control over the disaster-affected population’s survival and recovery lie in the hands of external actors who have the resources and “expertise” to provide life-saving aid.

The United Nations defines ‘empowerment’ as the process by which people increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partners, networks, and/or a voice to gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives (UNSDN 2012).¹ On the other hand, a community is referred to as ‘different groups of people that may be exposed to similar physical, psychological, and/or social impacts from multiple coercive factors and/or share the same resources, often, but not exclusively, related by place’ according to the Community Protection Approach (CPA).² At the community level, empowerment is seen as the process of re-negotiating power for communities for them to gain more control over their lives; with communities as actors of change, rather than recipients (Luttrell et al. 2009 cited in Petesque et.al., 2020).³ Arguably, humanitarian organizations, donors, planners, and technical

experts can still improve on how power and control may be relinquished back into the hands of the communities they serve.

Shelter programs, with the well-intentioned objective of providing immediate protection – tangibly a roof over the heads of the most affected and vulnerable, sometimes fall into the trap of focusing on the number of units built, the number of beneficiaries served, technical compliance, and donor timelines. This approach tends to disregard other priorities of households and social realities on the ground; doing more harm than good in the long run. In some contexts of long-term displacement, in temporary settlements and relocation sites, the failure to consider the locations and types of livelihoods force displaced populations and relocatees to return to unsafe places of origin, leaving housing projects unused or abandoned. In terms of short-term seasonal displacement, the hesitance and outright refusal to evacuate among informal settlers living in disaster-prone areas often stem from the difficulties previously experienced in poorly designed/managed evacuation sites, such as limited provision for water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), cooking facilities, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and other facilities.

Shelter programs and projects, therefore, need to invest their capacities and resources not only in designing and building shelters per se, but in designing the program and its activities to empower individuals and communities to: 1) make informed decisions regarding their safety, 2) organize their resources and efforts to reduce exposure to harm, and 3) develop local strategies to safeguard their right to life with dignity.⁴ By acknowledging that disaster-affected communities, no matter how severely devastated

1 United Nations Social Development Network (UNSDN). (2012). *Empowerment: What Does It Mean to You?*

2 Petesque, M.; Cipriani, S.; and Arriaza, P. (2020) *Community Empowerment Manual*. Francesco Michele and Ayah Bseisy (Eds.) pp 07. WeWorld-GVC

3 Petesque, M.; Cipriani, S.; and Arriaza, P. (2020) *Community Empowerment Manual*. Francesco Michele and Ayah Bseisy (Eds.) pp 10. WeWorld-GVC

4 Petesque, M.; Cipriani, S.; and Arriaza, P. (2020) *Community Empowerment Manual*. Francesco Michele and Ayah Bseisy (Eds.) pp 12. WeWorld-GVC

they are, have capacities and resources that can be tapped into and augmented towards self-recovery, these communities, and their local governments may be supported with appropriate resources, tools, skills, and opportunities. We can challenge traditional notions of shelter aid delivery by reflecting on the following ‘W’ and ‘H’ questions: Who is the designer? When should we empower? What is the end goal? How to design shelter programs that empower?

WHO IS THE DESIGNER?

Empowerment requires enabling communities to move from being objects of designing, planning, and decision-making to become designers, planners, and decision-makers themselves. Without undermining the knowledge and technical expertise that shelter practitioners bring with them, or the local governments that have political jurisdiction over their constituents, it is worth noting that communities are, in their own right, experts of their cultural contexts, local practices, and social dynamics. By blurring the dichotomy between who is the designer and who is the object of design, the approach fosters a multi-stakeholder collaborative environment where local governments can perform their duties as primary duty bearers, secondary duty bearers like professionals can share their technical expertise, civil societies support and strengthen accountability mechanisms, while communities actively engage in decision-making.

WHEN SHOULD WE EMPOWER?

Previous disasters like Typhoon Haiyan showed the humanitarian community the latent capacities available within disaster-affected communities even after a major crisis. Affected communities tend to start repairing their homes right away, using whatever available resources they can salvage. In many places, mutual aid is commonplace, with families sharing food and supplies, as well as supporting rebuilding activities. When mobilized collectively, and directed efficiently, such latent capacity may be harnessed towards meaningful ends.

There is no specific window for empowerment to take place. We need not wait for disasters to happen before vulnerable communities can take part in shelter response and recovery planning efforts. While it is true that speed is a priority in emergencies, experience among community-based organizations implementing shelter response projects shows that some spaces and processes can and should be maximized to build the technical and social capacities of households and communities. Community empowerment can be woven into almost every stage of the shelter mechanism development process – from scoping studies, to the design development, deployment, and even in the project monitoring and evaluation stage. In most cases, emergencies may be one of the best times to infuse empowerment approaches because the material and financial support that can serve as entry points for community mobilization are available. This premise holds even in short-term shelter response projects.

WHAT IS THE END GOAL?

Shelter programs tend to measure the number of shelters built or technical compliance to standards as indicators for success. These are important indicators that lead to important outcomes. However, to empower, shelter programs need to put more emphasis on intangible and less measurable goals such as improving social cohesion and vesting the power to communities.

Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. Empowerment plays a crucial role in enabling these communities to tap into their latent abilities to address underlying conditions that shape their vulnerability as individuals and collectively as communities. Therefore, designing shelter programs or projects that empower communities not only addresses unsafe shelter conditions but also builds local capacity towards resilience. It facilitates a deeper understanding of the need to go beyond “band-aid solutions” towards sustaining small, incremental adjustments in living conditions. Empowering vulnerable communities:

- **Restores dignity and self-reliance** among disaster-affected communities by giving beneficiaries control over choices and decision-making.
- **Provides a strong foil against disruption** and setbacks brought about by changes in political leadership. Even as external actors come and go, the communities’ strengthened capacities remain intact.



Disaster-affected communities have existing capacities that can be harnessed and strengthened. Women can take on leadership roles in evacuation camps and support camp management efforts.

- **Improves social positions.** Underrepresented groups, such as Persons with Disabilities, the elderly, children, and women are enabled to use their capacities to contribute to response and recovery processes; and even take on leadership roles.
- **Creates an enabling environment for resilience** through strengthening accountability among duty-bearers.

HOW DO WE DESIGN SHELTER PROGRAMS THAT EMPOWER?

Despite the rapid pace of humanitarian response timetables, there are opportunities and elements in implementing shelter response activities where we can embed community empowerment approaches:

- **Risk assessment and analysis:** Beyond the presence of hazards, addressing underlying causes of vulnerability requires understanding contributing factors to risks. To contribute to community empowerment, shelter programs may also assess power dynamics within and outside these communities that serve as enablers and barriers for communities to gain power and control.
- **Goals and objectives:** While strong pressure to design projects based on goals and timelines of funding agencies based on measurable or quantifiable indicators exists in any organization, implementers can embed empowerment approaches in the objective, design, and activities of shelter projects. Measuring the communities' awareness, beliefs, and perceptions of their capabilities to undertake a more active role in their shelter response and recovery is a good starting point. In so doing, the means to an end can be the end itself.
- **Processes and approaches:** Resonating with the “nothing about us without us” movement seeking inclusion, self-reliance, and empowerment, vulnerable communities and marginalized groups should take part in the discussion and have a seat at the proverbial table right from the start. Participatory, rights-based, and inclusive approaches should also define each part of the process.
- **Activities:** Community organizing is key to empowering communities. Shelter project activities may be designed based on community organizing principles. For example, in shelter kits distribution, beneficiaries may be involved in planning the content of the kits, modality of shelter support, and even mode of procurement as well as in its distribution. Collectively rebuilding shelters through sweat equity enables faster rebuilding, facilitates skill/technology transfer, and contributes to community building.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Participatory M&E activities of shelter projects are also key in strengthening meaningful participation and empowerment of communities especially by enabling communities to take the lead in defining desired results, tracking and analyzing progress, and deciding on corrective actions.

CONCLUSION

During emergencies, it is often thought that there is no time nor resources to empower communities. As such, it is easy to go the route of providing ready-made shelter solutions and handing over predefined outputs to communities, all in the name of saving lives. However, it is important to note that there is no compromise or trade-off between saving lives and empowering communities. Understanding this requires challenging the way we think about disaster-affected populations and our role as shelter practitioners.

Communities are capable first responders and rebuilding partners. To achieve this, organizations, planners, and donors must transition from instructing to listening, from leading to facilitating, and from deciding to informing the process. Since no one holds the monopoly of talent and skill in delivering good solutions, enabling communities to co-create the service experience to suit their context — supporting them in conceiving, designing, steering, and managing these systems and structures, means that the so-called experts need to step back and lead from behind.

Shelter, being the physical and visible component of protection, is shaped by a multitude of decisions coming from multiple stakeholders. Shelter response activities may be embedded with community organizing and empowerment activities to help restore human dignity and self-reliance of communities, improve social positions, and create an enabling environment for resilience. When done inclusively, cross-learning among communities, government units both local and national, as well as the professionals involved in crafting shelter solutions ensure that the response and recovery measures taken lead to greater capacity towards self-determination. By putting people at the heart of the solution-making, we build better mechanisms to cope with, bounce back, and recover from disasters.



All members of the community can take part in designing and implementing shelter projects. This strengthens self-reliance and uplifts their dignity.

WHAT IMPACT?

On whether evidence is really needed and what drives us to get it

By Fiona Kelling with input from Simone van Dijk



Research as a buzzword: are current studies seeking information that can influence our decisions or just following global trends?



Power and accountability: whose interests does it serve to better understand the impacts of assistance?

Having researched and reflected on the (lack of) evidence on the impacts of shelter and settlements assistance and what should be done about it, I have come to the realization that, in the current conditions within the humanitarian sector, measuring impact is unnecessary. Simply put, if continued funding or programmatic decisions really depended on it, we would have done more of it by now.

I am, of course, being intentionally provocative. By claiming that impact evaluation is ‘unnecessary’, I mean to say that shelter and settlements practitioners are not using or relying on the evidence that emerges from impact studies in order to keep on doing what they are doing. I am not saying that more impact evaluation is not needed, or that we shouldn’t be seeking better evidence to improve what we do. What I am saying is that this need and utility will only be realized when we start to address why we haven’t.

THE EVIDENCE GAP: NEED VERSUS VALUE

Increasing accountability, coordination and standards have undoubtedly improved both the process and provision of aid and its subsequent documentation and evaluation. Yet of the 3,512 evaluations across all sectors in ALNAP’s HELP library,¹ only 61 of them are classified as impact evaluations – and a mere three of them tagged with shelter.

The need to improve our evidence base was highlighted to me through the research study I carried out for InterAction exploring the wider impacts of shelter and settlements assistance.² The report provides a variety of illustrations of the ways in which shelter can have impacts on a wide range of other sectors, including physical and mental health, education, livelihoods, food security, DRR and gender. However, the research also showed the weakness of the reliability of the evidence through over 190 relevant reports and evaluations from across the humanitarian, development and housing sectors. If you are fortunate enough to have the time and tenacity to read the

methodology and data analysis, you would find that more than 60 per cent of the included documents did not use any kind of quasi-experimental³ or controlled study, that is, which identified impact by comparing results against a counterfactual, by which we are able to identify what difference the intervention has made. What this translates to is a disturbing lack of ability to demonstrate robust results at the project or program outcome level. It is not that there aren’t any good examples, but rather that on the whole, the quality of our evaluation and reporting is woefully lacking.

This is far from the first report to conclude this.⁴ Furthermore there is no shortage of information and advice on why generating better evidence through outcome and impact evaluation is becoming more urgent, nor guidance on what needs to happen to accomplish this – some of it over twenty years old. Alongside a serious lack of independent peer review in the sector, the availability of numerous resources⁵ has done little to change the way in which the majority of evaluations are done. Notwithstanding our aversion to reading long reports, the bigger issue is the substantial gap between the rhetoric and reality regarding the claimed imperative to demonstrate impact.

And yet despite the apparently tolerable apathy to doing so, we would struggle to argue that knowing our impact would not be of value. So why is it that we have not done more of it? Is it not actually that useful? Are we too scared of what we might find out?

³ Quasi-experimental research design attempts to establish a cause-and-effect relationship, but where the comparative groups are not randomly assigned.

⁴ To choose but a few, [Guerrero et. al., 2013](#); [Watson, 2008](#); [Hoffman, 2004](#)

⁵ These include recognition of the challenges facing humanitarian action in particular, guidance on choosing appropriate methodologies and practical approaches, tools and quality assurance checklists. See: [Dillon, 2019](#); [ELHRA, 2019](#); [WFP, 2018](#); [Puri et. al., 2015](#); [ODI, 2010](#); [OECD, 2010](#); [Vaessen, 2010](#); [Proudlock et. al., 2009](#); [Oxfam, 2007](#); [Roche, 1999](#) amongst many others

¹ ALNAP, Help Library, <https://www.alnap.org/help-library>

² InterAction (2020), [More Than Four Walls and a Roof](#)

ACCOUNTING FOR THE LACK OF EVIDENCE

Perhaps there is just little incentive, because when it comes down to it, the point of humanitarian assistance is to deliver, not to evaluate. And impact evaluation – even good outcome evaluation – is complicated. It requires specific skills and resources and time and early consideration when there are numerous other pressing concerns and funding priorities in an emergency response. There are trade-offs to be made between getting the mostly right assistance there in time, or getting it better, but too late.

The reality is that some learning may be better placed to happen through experience and sharing rather than through formal evaluations. Evaluations can be expensive – although arguably this should encourage us to gain as much from them as possible when they are carried out. But with a broad range of factors to be considered, there are limitations on how much can be addressed.

However, there is increasing recognition that organizations should create space to think about and invest in certain practices more and earlier. As a response goes on, it becomes more feasible to invest more time in data collection and analysis to be able to assess an intervention’s effects – whether that is by establishing a baseline or evaluating the context to inform a solid Theory of Change.

ACCOUNTABILITY AS A DRIVING FORCE

Without implying that humanitarian organizations do not care about what they are providing (or who they are providing for), it is apparent that the aid system operates without natural feedback loops, as exist in most other client-producer relationships. Consumers simply don’t buy a product if they do not feel a company is providing quality goods or services. In this context the end-user makes their own decision – as opposed to with humanitarian assistance – where the end-user is ill-placed to reject help offered, even if it is not the most efficient or effective.

Even though many steps have been taken to increase downward accountability – for example, through increased participation – without consumer checks in place the onus remains on the decision-making ‘producer’ (be they donors or implementers) to ensure the responsible use of power. Measuring the real impacts of assistance, intended



Closing the feedback loop: how many organisations ask the population for verifications of findings or to explore the actions that should be taken to address recommendations?

and unintended, is part of this. This process and power-imbalance underlies why measuring impact has sadly been dispensable.

BEING HELD TO ACCOUNT

The intrinsic nature of humanitarian assistance is such that its purpose is rarely questioned. Who can argue that having a roof over your head is not important? Nevertheless, having more reliable results could contribute to sectoral advocacy and more effective decision-making in a resource-scarce environment. Yet often we are only required to report on whether we did what we said we would, rather than on what it accomplished or how. A number of evaluations were excluded from the Wider Impacts research, as although they provided detailed descriptions of what was carried out, they did not include any analysis of what difference it made. Given the commitments made in the Grand Bargain, the strong upward accountability and influence donors have, and fundamentally, the financial resources that would enable implementation, there is a question as to why donors have not wielded their power more strongly to create incentives for humanitarian organizations to do better.

Contextual and cultural factors hinder or enhance the accomplishment of intended change, as much in the shelter sector as in any of our project evaluations (see Figure 1). Looking at the drivers and inhibitors of change in the humanitarian system⁶ and the prospects for progress emphasizes the need to understand the motivations and incentives that might contribute towards or deter any process of change. In this regard, donors have their own ‘context’; limitations and incentives which do not always align with professed priorities.

This brings us back to both accountability and necessity. Does the fact that donors are not requiring us to improve our evidence base mean that we shouldn’t? Or does it mean that we should be requesting donors to also improve? Perhaps it is time that donors are the ones being held to account on their commitments towards the affected population.

6 GPPi (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*; ODI (2010), *The Humanitarian’s Dilemma: collective action or inaction in international relief?*

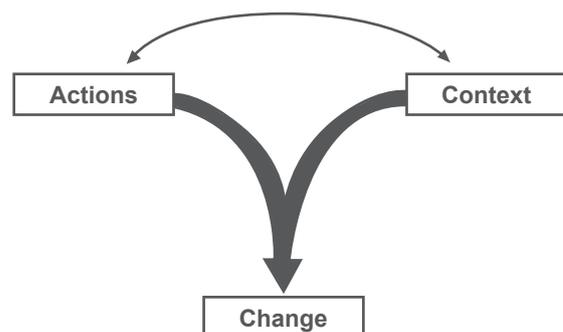


Figure 1: Actions and context combine to produce [or hinder] change (Roche, 1999: 24)

BRIDGING THE GAP

Huge investment and improvements in M&E have been made by organizations, even if they are largely compliance-oriented rather than results-focused. For many years, M&E has been added-on rather than built-in to programming, resulting in a separation of functions where programs 'do' and M&E 'measures'. As a result, technical teams can feel criticized or defensive when told they are 'not meeting their indicators' and 'need to do better'. Likewise, the shelter sector can feel self-protective if research implies their assistance is not helping because robust evidence is lacking.

Instead of pitting one discipline against the other, reframing the role that M&E plays within a program or organization would recognize and result in greater inter-reliance and mutual benefit. For program staff to realize the value of M&E to their work, a people-centered approach is required that puts utility for programming at the center, instead of reporting. A rise in adaptive programming and settlement-based approaches may be heralding a change, where M&E specialists act as facilitators to conversations on what needs to be altered and why in light of ongoing data collection and analysis. Rather than adding more work or doing someone else's job, it becomes about technical staff thinking about and being involved in data collection that is useful for them, supported by M&E specialists.

CONCLUSION: MAKING IT EVIDENT

What is clear is that having the tools or technical guidance is not enough to transform our performance. Information needs to be relevant, timely, and succinct.⁷ It needs to take account of and appeal to implementer's motives and desires, whether that is improved quality, a more efficient response, or more funding.

The InterAction report warns that 'to accept the examples collated in this report without engaging with the need to generate better evidence runs the risk of perpetuating the lack of information available and delaying the required investment in generating better data.' Assuming we do really want to know where to best direct funding, how to maximize inter sectoral linkages, or what conditions might need to be in place for an intervention to achieve certain outcomes, we need to address the evidence gap. Investment is essential at all levels, but first we need to honestly reflect on our priorities and motivations. Only then will we have the drive to do what we need to fill it.

7 UCL (2013), [Data, decision-making and disasters](#)



Making an impact: better evidence can support advocacy, inform decision making and ultimately improve response.

A BURNING ISSUE FOR SHELTER PROGRAMMING

Reducing fire risk through better shelter program design and implementation

By Danielle Antonellis, Phil Duloy, Jim Kennedy and Liz Palmer

As many as 180,000 deaths per year result from burns, many associated with fire.¹ Informal settlements and the settlements of displaced communities are particularly susceptible to fires due to the combustible nature of commonly used shelter materials; the methods and fuels used in cooking, heating, and lighting; and the densely built nature of many sites, among other factors.

Small fires can quickly evolve into large conflagrations causing significant losses of life and property, injuries, and subsequent exacerbation of the vulnerabilities of displaced persons. Fires that destroy shelters, camps or supporting facilities such as warehouses with humanitarian supplies have wider impacts on humanitarian agencies' ability to provide assistance to affected populations and on their reputation. Many humanitarian agencies do not have the financial resilience to bear this burden nor insurance against fire losses. Options remaining are to recoup them from donors or to reduce program targets.

The 22nd March 2021 fire in Cox's Bazar killed at least eleven people, injured another 560 and displaced 45,000 people. It was perhaps the largest and the most high-profile fire ever in a humanitarian settlement, but by no means an isolated incident. At the time of writing, there had been 70 further fire incidents across the adjoining camps. A major fire in Susan's Bay, informal settlement in Freetown, Sierra Leone also made it into the headlines, but many other fires do not. The lack of data on prevalence hampers efforts to prevent recurrent fires.

Improving fire safety is a matter of protection and of accountability to affected populations. Fire disproportionately affects vulnerable people, both in terms of death and injury, but also in loss of assets and livelihoods.

While the impacts of recorded fires are clear, there are no global statistics for fires in humanitarian settings, and coordination for data collection and sharing is severely lacking. Furthermore, fire safety has fallen through the cracks of the Cluster Approach. It is so cross-cutting that it is everyone's (and therefore no-one's) responsibility. There is a lack of data illustrating the scale of this risk and lack of ownership by any cluster, sector or agency. As a cross-cutting issue, it is rarely referenced meaningfully. Coordination between agencies, clusters, affected communities and local governments is urgently needed to develop an effective approach.

Between September 8-10, 2020, fires broke out in Moria Reception and Identification Centre on Lesbos Island in Greece, resulting with the displacement of more than 12,000 migrants and refugees. Reports indicate the fires in Moria were caused by arson. Some may therefore say this disaster was not preventable because ignition was intentional. But the scale of this disaster was preventable. The physical conditions in the camp and its layout are what enabled the fire to spread so rapidly and across the entire camp. As many major fires are caused by arson, addressing fire risk also entails addressing root causes of discontent, but can also involve deeper issues such as the underlying conflict that has caused the displacement.

1 RICS (2020), *Developing a global standard for fire reporting*



Devastation after the 22nd March 2021 fire in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The fire's consequences went far beyond the deaths, injuries, and physical damages, as it impacted affected populations' mental health and psychological well-being, relationships between refugees and host communities, agencies' ability to provide immediate and long-term assistance, and more.



Affected community fighting fire in Dadaab, Kenya. Communities are almost always the first responders to fires in informal settlements and the settlements of displaced communities. Where the host country's fire services do respond, their response is often not timely or effective due to delays in communication, limited fire response infrastructure (roads, water, etc.), and other factors

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The Shelter and Settlements sector has a particularly important role to play in fire safety. Fire risks often emerge through settlement planning, shelter construction materials and methods, NFI distributions, fuel and appliances for cooking, heating and lighting. Conversely, strategic decisions can lead to significantly reduced fire risks. Awareness needs to be raised and good practices shared, to go beyond just firebreaks and systematically incorporate site-planning elements which enable evacuation, access for firefighters and emergency vehicles, and the containment of fires themselves. The network of roads and paths in standard models of site plans and shelter cluster layouts may need to be reviewed; for instance, to ensure that each shelter has access to at least two separate remote assembly points, via two separate and clearly marked escape routes.

Methods for reducing risk require careful context-sensitive selection. Not all of them are appropriate for every context. For example, while communal cooking areas may reduce fire risk across the shelter blocks of a camp, they are only likely to do so if the communal cooking areas are large enough and accessible to everyone, and if communal cooking is culturally appropriate in the given context. The imposition of communal cooking areas without taking these issues into consideration may result in many households simply building their own private cooking areas informally, hidden, and without the support of humanitarian agencies, and thus in the end increasing the risk which they were meant to reduce. Similarly, the use of plastic sheeting with fire retardants may contribute to an overall reduction of risk – but only if it is part of a comprehensive fire-safety plan and with sufficient attention to other approaches, such as fire safety education and safer site planning.

Critically affected people need to be effectively engaged in fire safety activities, from maintenance of fire breaks to knowing what to do in case of the outbreak of a fire. In camp settings this requires active work by CCCM (Camp Coordination and Camp Management).



A gendered and child friendly approach to fire safety is critical. Here a shelter practitioner in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon provides fire extinguisher training to a Syrian refugee family.

When developing a fire risk reduction strategy, the selection of (context-specific) risk mitigations should address the following 5 key principles:²

- **Prevention:** Safeguarding against the outbreak of fire and/or limiting its effects.
- **Detection and Communication:** Rapid identification of a fire followed by informing residents, trained response teams and, where available, the fire service.
- **Occupant Protection:** Facilitating residents' escape from the effects of fire.
- **Containment:** Limiting fire and all of its consequences to as small an area as possible.
- **Extinguishment:** Suppressing fire and protecting the surrounding environment.

2 IFSSC (2020), *International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles*



Fire safety education is critical for fire prevention and preparedness, which should include locally appropriate Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, classroom based training, and practical fire response training (incipient firefighting, fire drills for evacuation, etc.). Here fire officers from the Bangladesh Fire Services and Civil Defense provide fire safety training for men and women Rohingya refugees living in camps in Cox's Bazar.



In 2017, a UK-based fire safety NGO carried out a detailed fire risk assessment and analysis of displaced Syrian populations and host communities in Lebanon. This work led to the establishment of an Inter-Agency Coordination Working Group for Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Response. This working group focuses not only on physical changes to shelter and settlements, but it also provides firefighting training and equipment, and fire safety training for men, women, and children; and it delivers community fire preparedness activities (e.g. evacuation drills). The working group’s facilitation of coordination between UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs, host and refugee populations, and the Lebanese National Government and Civil Defence has been fundamental for this work. While a project evaluation is not yet complete, anecdotal evidence suggests first responses by refugees have been improved and pilot interventions to slow fire spread between dwellings has had a positive impact.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR FIRE SAFETY?

Humanitarian actors in Shelter and other sectors are in a position to reduce fire risks, but are the resources available to them sufficient? The short answer is, ‘not yet’.

There is helpful, if disparate, advice on fire safety peppered throughout a range of materials, but only a limited amount is geared towards the humanitarian context, with the notable exception of the Camp Management Toolkit. Fire-safety considerations are not well integrated into assessment tools used by Shelter & Settlement specialists. While fire risk assessments are invoked as a requisite for site planning in Sphere these are, anecdotally at least, rarely undertaken. There are no dedicated resources to support humanitarian actors in carrying out fire risk assessments.

In a few cases, like the Lebanon example referenced above, international fire safety experts have been flown in to carry out fire risk assessments and provide recommendations for fire risk reduction. This only happens when fire is

identified as a significant issue, usually after a large fire, and where resources and timelines allow. While this approach can be very beneficial, the outcomes are highly reliant on the expert judgment of the fire specialists and this can lead to unrealistic recommendations if standards of developed countries are applied to extremely low resource settings as are often seen in displacement contexts. Their level of understanding of the local context and what is (and what is not) appropriate and achievable in humanitarian settings is critical. There are very few people with the relevant knowledge and expertise globally. The authors are only aware of six such assessments having been carried out – in Kenya, Thailand, Lebanon, South Sudan, and Bangladesh, all with variable results, so this is not considered to be a scalable solution. There is, then, a critical need to develop expert-informed, scalable tools to reduce deaths, injuries and losses from fire in humanitarian contexts through wider guidance and delivered through inter-agency and inter-cluster coordination.

THE GROWING URGENCY FOR MAINSTREAMING FIRE RISK REDUCTION

The resources and approaches that currently exist are either too vague, too lax, too context-specific and/or too specific to the Global North. Greater attention to evidence gathering, prioritization by donors, funding, and a recognition of the likely increasing risks associated with climate change (given increased displacement and migration but also drier ecosystems) are required to address the problem.

A number of academic institutions, engineers, fire fighters, fire risk-specific NGOs, forensic investigators, global cluster coordination teams, major donors, satellite data analysts and shelter practitioners have committed to study, develop and share best practices to reduce deaths, injuries and losses from fires in humanitarian settings. These disparate stakeholders’ commitment, while laudable, will count for little without a wider, more concerted and coordinated effort. It is currently only an embryonic movement – but one whose urgency is repeatedly underscored by a steadily growing number of tragedies.



Shelter and NFIs often contain significant amounts of plastics, which burn quickly and emit toxic black smoke that affects people and the environment, as shown in this 2017 fire spreading through an informal tented settlement established by Syrian refugees in Lebanon.



Fire damage from a February 2019 fire at Monguno Camp in Borno State, Nigeria, where multi-fatality fires have frequently harmed affected populations, destroyed IDP camps and undermined humanitarian assistance.

ALL THE WAYS HOME

A proposition for the Shelter & Settlements sector to embrace Homes & Communities

By Sahdia Khan, Miriam Lopez-Villegas, Bill Flinn, Olivier Moles, with input from Richard Evans, James Schell, Emma Weinstein Sheffield, Seki Hirano, Charles Parrack, Susannah Webb.¹



A child, 6, plays with her dad in their Beirut apartment after they fled from Syria with their family five years before. They received shelter and rent assistance and other support to meet their family's needs.



This low-cost housing project in Bangladesh provides families with core houses which are then completed through safe self-build practices in progressive or incremental stages as a crucial step of self-recovery.

“I want a home, but you have given me a shelter?”

quote from a displaced person

Shelter is still too often equated with a physical structure – ranging from an emergency tent to a prefab structure to a basic living space provided within Sphere standards. At the same time, there are spirited discussions and many attempts to expand the understanding and scope of the shelter sector.

The zealots amongst us may propose to entirely do away with ‘shelter’ and replace it with ‘home’: a concept that goes beyond its tangible dimensions to evoke more elusive aspects such as a place where a family nurtures and cares for its loved ones, where people belong, feel safe, cook and share meals, converse, study, produce and where memories are stored and future plans are created.²

We suggest considering a shelter–home spectrum to maintain relevance as a sector. Programming may lean across this spectrum depending on context. The role of the shelter actor may thus vary from direct delivery of emergency shelter to an enabler of ‘home-making’.

¹ The authors appreciate the further contributions from colleagues within their organizations (CARE, CRATERre, CRS, Habitat for Humanity, NRC and Oxford Brookes University – CENDEP)

² For more reflection on the concept of ‘home’ please refer to: Brun, C and A.H. Fábos (2017) Mobilising home for long term displacement: a reflection on the durable solutions. *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 9(2): 177 – 183
Brun, C. (2012) Home in temporary dwellings. In *International Encyclopaedia of Housing and Home*, edited by S.J. Smith, M. Elsinga, L. Fox O’Mahony, O. S. Eng, S. Wachter, R. Dowling. Elsevier, Oxford, pp. 424–433.

In the same vein, the term ‘settlement’ tends to limit the ambition to just the built environment. For some the word ‘community’ is preferred as it represents relationships (solidarity but also tension and power dynamics), common values, a collective vision and agency. Some commentators suggest that a deeper exploration is required before we can use the concept with confidence. We see value in better understanding and engaging with the various dimensions that the term ‘community’ may represent to craft a more considered response.³

A home increases the chances to cope and recover. However, it is important to recognize that humanitarian actors cannot ‘create’ a home or a community for, or in the place of, the affected population. Rather they can be enablers and facilitators, supporting the affected population that seeks to reach a more wholesome sentiment towards their possibly temporary house, or towards the place where they have been forced to flee during displacement or during the reconstruction of a damaged or destroyed home.

It is equally important to note that the meanings of both home and community are elusive.⁴ This text does not attempt to (re)define them. What follows is a proposition to engage with these concepts.

³ “Community” may represent a tight-knit group of people with similar beliefs and values. It may equally represent a group of people with a shared objective and interests. “Community” is not necessarily equal to a geographic location (e.g. online communities, diaspora, etc.). The word may also have different meanings and connotation in different languages. And finally one geographic location may be comprised of many communities.

⁴ The meanings also vary between different languages, different cultures and contexts.

WHY THE NEED FOR ADAPTING?

At its inception the humanitarian ‘shelter sector’ was severed from the multidimensional framework for the Right to Adequate Housing to define humanitarian interventions more narrowly to emergency response (thereby leaving housing to development actors). The one-dimensionality that was given to the humanitarian shelter sector falls short of our ambition. Of the seven dimensions that define Adequate Housing,⁵ most of the quality standards and indicators we have developed tend to focus on the habitability dimension. We recognize that being forced to flee means losing one’s home and the impact is beyond the loss of a building. The immediate impact is the loss of the protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, and against other threats to health, safety and well-being. Beyond that, other basic needs are likely to be compromised as well: being cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools and other community facilities and social networks; being separated from loved ones; the (incremental) loss of the ability to express cultural identity and the loss of the sense of belonging.

We are responsible for adapting the shelter sector in the face of current humanitarian trends: record numbers of displaced persons; increasing urban disasters; growing complexity; increased use of cash and voucher assistance; localization; national and regional bodies increasingly taking on the coordination of humanitarian responses and the ever dwindling humanitarian funds; as well as the increasing role of the private sector and philanthropical actors, not just as donors, but as partners in the shelter/housing space. Adding to the above, the lines between humanitarian, recovery, development, and peace building are increasingly blurred. In response to these trends, shelter actors are expanding or shifting from direct delivery to enabling greater access to shelter or housing and engaging in the systems beyond the humanitarian sphere. There is an untapped potential in understanding shelter and settlements as homes and communities as a productive response, and as a natural and logical extension of a sector-wide desire to explore the wider impacts of shelter programming on recovery and wellbeing.

“Homes and communities puts the humanity back in humanitarian work.” *quote from a session participant*

⁵ The global instrument for the Right to Adequate Housing encompasses 7 dimensions: security of tenure; affordability; habitability; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; accessibility; location; cultural adequacy. More information is available here: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/AboutHRandHousing.aspx>



Brigitte prepares some food while her two children study at a table inside their new house. "I had no home, but now I have one... My son says that he feels safe now in this house because a big house like this with thick walls can protect us."

AN ARRAY OF HOMES AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIES

Beyond direct delivery of shelter, some humanitarian organizations are looking at systemic challenges faced by families and communities. This approach addresses systemic failures that individuals and families face when accessing safer shelter/adequate housing. These organizations take a people-centered approach and aim to work within a spirit of complementarity, partnering with community entities, local civil society, the private sector, governments, academia and peer organizations. This approach has two distinct advantages: 1) the complementarity brings about a greater impact in the shelter sector and allows work across sectors; and, 2) it allows for the scaling-up⁶ of good practices by influencing and empowering strategic partners to enable greater access to safer and better shelter/housing across larger areas. These models show the potential to navigate through the recovery-preparedness-prevention-development realm.

Humanitarian organizations are also articulating their approach referring to the Right to Adequate Housing or the Integral Human Development framework and the dimensions they encompass to embrace the shelter-home spectrum. We are acknowledging that the living conditions during displacement or after losing a home significantly affect a person’s mental health, well-being, agency and self-esteem. Starting with addressing **habitability, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure** we address basic health and safety. Acknowledging that an increasing number of affected people find accommodation

⁶ Scaling up can be seen as a process whereby the replication of a good practice or innovation is pursued through enabling and empowering other actors in the shelter/housing value chain. This is done with the objective to reach a larger population than one agency alone could reach. In the face of ever-increasing displacement, it has become imperative to find solutions at scale. More information on scaling-up is available here: <https://expandnet.net/scaling-up-framework-and-principles/>

within host communities and the risk of eviction is often a concern, housing, land and property (HLP) due diligence processes contribute to **security of tenure**; and rental market interventions and linkages to integrated programs and particularly livelihood activities contribute to **affordability**. The development of settlement-based approaches and current guidance in the sector focused on inclusion (such as the *All Under One Roof* guidelines), are giving us an opportunity to touch into **accessibility, location, and, cultural adequacy**.

Whereas they firmly acknowledge the importance of immediate emergency shelter as lifesaving, they also recognize that in the longer-term, people affected by disasters and conflict will invariably attempt to undertake the complex process of 'home-making', whilst, if displaced, this home-making does not necessarily change their desire to return to their place of origin – their real home. By acknowledging this, these organizations aspire to be enablers of a housing solution and support a process that encourages families to engage in the functional and aesthetic improvements of their dwelling. In return, this process may restore a sense of agency and potentially hold therapeutic or healing benefits.

Some actors focus on building evidence to demonstrate the wider impacts of adequate shelter/housing on, for instance, health, well-being, child development and social cohesion.⁷ The longer-term goals are: 1) to see more intentional and sustained impact as an integral part of 'success'; and 2) to facilitate an environment in which affected people can create their own homes. It is also hoped that evidence around the wider impacts of shelter will increase cross-sector collaboration.

Across a spectrum and depending on context, settlement interventions also have the potential to enable a collective (re)establishment of a community that is inclusive in its service provision, which nurtures a sense of protection and belonging.

7 These wider impacts have long been recognized in the housing sector. However, it is only recently that the shelter sector has ventured in this domain. For examples of broader impact works please see here: <https://www.interaction.org/blog/more-than-four-walls-and-a-roof/>; <https://www.habitat.org/our-work/impact>



A household comprised of four sisters have set up a home-based workshop creating beautiful traditional Afghan carpets. An example of the link between shelter assistance and economic inclusion.

Organizations are in the early stages of institutionalizing these ambitious ways of working and are gradually adapting their organizational structures to be able to adopt these approaches more systematically and at scale. We acknowledge accommodating a new approach may present a challenge to conventional systems.

HOW TO EMBRACE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AT SCALE?

Shelter practitioners will be instrumental in influencing their organization to gradually embrace a Homes and Communities approach. Intra-agency engagement can ignite and accelerate ideas on the 'how'.

On an organizational level, we are seeing that expanding to Homes and Communities might require a change in our current organizational structure, allowing flexible management for instance to navigate the nexus, upgrade staff skills to become enablers, strategic use of (flexible) funding and monitoring processes to measure the wider impact of this approach.

On the sector level, we are challenging the way we define 'success' beyond basing it solely in terms of the physical output. We must move beyond production metrics to unlock the potential impact of a home in a functioning community. Under the Homes and Community banner, achievement is better assessed through the lens of wider impacts including, but not limited to, physical and mental health, education, livelihoods, resilience against climate change, social cohesion, and protection.

In addition, the sector and individual organizations should use the results of the wider impact assessments to raise awareness (including of donors) and further raise the profile of the sector.

The concepts of 'Home' and 'Community' are both universal and extremely personal. Their interpretation varies among individuals, families, languages, cultures, geographies, and generations. This opinion piece recognizes that some of these topics are in their infancy among us, and so it is reasonable to expect that the sector would benefit from a wide consultation among a diverse group of peers. Having said that, what we propose is to build upon the valuable experience we do have across the spectrum from housing and HLP, to construction systems, planning and community development, which all have a direct contribution to strengthening family and community bonds to establish strong social, economic and cultural ties which will further contribute to personal, household and community resilience and recovery. More importantly, we acknowledge the privileged position and space we have to articulate and share these thoughts. Affected people should be directly involved in these discussions. Promoting Homes and Communities as an approach can only start by listening carefully to their voices so that we can better accompany them in the creation of a home and the goal of recovery.





In 2019 and 2020, the total number of people displaced by crises in the world continued to grow. By the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were displaced due to conflict or violence, and during 2020, 98.4 million people were affected by disasters. With such large-scale needs, there is also an imperative to ensure that the assistance that is delivered makes best use of often limited resources.

Spanning humanitarian responses from all over the world, this book is the eighth in a series of compilations of shelter and settlements case studies, response overviews and opinion pieces. The case studies included in this book show projects that took place in contexts of conflict, disasters and complex crises, demonstrating a wide range of approaches to shelter and settlements assistance.

The book is intended to support learning by highlighting the strengths, weaknesses and some of the lessons that can be learned from different projects, which try to maximize emergency funds to safeguard the health, security and dignity of affected people, whilst – wherever possible – supporting longer-term shelter and settlement needs and sustainable recovery.

The target audience is humanitarian managers and shelter and settlements program staff from local, national and international organizations at all levels of experience, as well as local and national government representatives involved in crisis response and recovery. Shelter Projects is also a useful resource for advocacy purposes, showcasing the work done by the sector, as well as for research and capacity-building activities.

All case studies and overviews contained in this book, as well as from all past editions, can be found online at:

www.shelterprojects.org



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