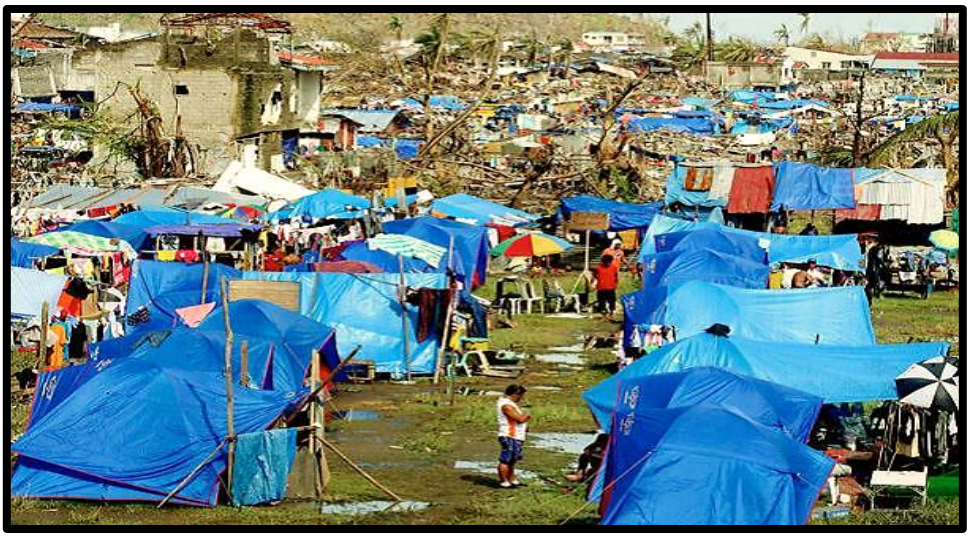

HANDOUTS FOR USAID/OFDA
SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS TRAINING COURSE
3 March 2017

Presenter: Charles A. Setchell, Senior Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, USAID/OFDA

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The USAID/OFDA Approach to Shelter and Settlements Sector Activities

GOAL: The goal of any USAID/OFDA Shelter and Settlements (S&S) activity will be *occupancy of covered living space that can serve as minimally adequate shelter for disaster/crisis affected populations in an expeditious and appropriate manner*.

APPROACH: USAID/OFDA emphasizes the use of *market-based assessments of damage and need to better gauge impacts, resources, and opportunities in disaster/crisis affected areas*. The core target group of proposed actions will be the most vulnerable among affected populations. Provision of support to this group may require technical assistance, rather than a reliance on self-help capacity.

Shelter will be *adequate, habitable, safe, private, and secure*, cognizant of Sphere Project and USAID/OFDA guidelines, and the related, possible need to engage in disaster risk reduction.

Where possible and appropriate, USAID/OFDA will emphasize community-based approaches and reliance on local materials and labor, to enhance prospects for sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and livelihood generation. USAID/OFDA will, therefore, *support shelter sector interventions that feature a settlements approach*, thereby permitting identification of, and linkages with, other sectors, particularly agriculture and food security, livelihoods, WASH, and protection.

Deployment of tents and/or pre-fabricated structures will not be considered as a default response, but will only be deployed after a field-based determination that no other shelter resources are available in affected areas, affected populations are willing to accept tents and/or pre-fabricated structures, and sufficient resources are available to support purchase and deployment costs.

Shelter sector interventions will be designed to facilitate or "jump-start" the recovery of affected populations by emphasizing transitions to the longer-term housing development process.

USAID/OFDA will also:

- Continue to *integrate disaster risk reduction into S&S interventions*, to include training programs where possible and appropriate, enhance prospects that interventions reduce long-term hazard risk in affected settlements
- Continue to *engage with development entities* such as USAID Bureaus and missions, World Bank, U.N. agencies, and the private sector to better integrate S&S activities into development policy, and
- Continue *to work with other humanitarian community actors* on relevant policy and technical issues to enhance organizational capacity and highlight transition concerns.

ON THE HORIZON: Upcoming S&S activities include support of a North American shelter sector network, possible support of an electronic "scrapbook" of Better Shelter Practices to provide specific, project-based information on humanitarian shelter activities, support of research on livelihood-shelter linkages, and support of research on urban displacement.

WEBSITE RESOURCES: USAID/OFDA reference material on S&S, as well as other program information, appears on-line at:

- http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/shelter.html

C. Setchell, Feb. 2009

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

DESCRIPTION OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS SECTOR ACTIVITIES

When natural disasters or complex emergencies result in housing damage or destruction and population displacement, people typically desire to return rapidly to their communities to rebuild or repair their homes. Unfortunately, this return to normalcy cannot be achieved immediately and often takes months, if not years, particularly when people are displaced far from their communities. In the interim, humanitarian shelter and settlements (S&S) assistance can provide immediate relief while also contributing to recovery, thereby fulfilling USAID/OFDA's mandate of saving lives, alleviating human suffering, and reducing the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies.

The objective of humanitarian S&S assistance is to ensure access to safe and appropriate living spaces in neighborhoods where affected households can resume critical social and livelihoods activities. S&S assistance facilitates a process of sheltering and associated neighborhood and community interventions—including provision of health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities—that focus on immediately reducing economic, social, and physical vulnerabilities of disaster-affected households while simultaneously laying the foundation for longer-term recovery. Humanitarian shelter S&S assistance addresses the health, livelihood, privacy, security, and WASH needs of affected populations in a comprehensive and integrated manner and may even evolve to meet permanent housing and community solutions.

There are two main types of humanitarian S&S assistance: the provision of emergency and transitional shelter activities. Emergency S&S assistance is intended to meet the immediate survival needs of households who have been displaced by disasters and is short-lived—typically less than six months. Transitional S&S assistance often complements emergency S&S assistance and is intended to address the short- to medium-term needs—up to three years—of disaster-affected households.

Humanitarian emergency and transitional S&S assistance interventions share three main characteristics:

- Consistency with internationally recognized guidelines such as the Sphere Project, including provision of minimally adequate space, whenever possible.[1]
- Reduction of the social and economic impact of present and future disasters through integration of DRR measures into S&S activities.
- Reflection of the particular needs of affected households, especially those considered most vulnerable (e.g., elderly, handicapped, female-headed, orphan-headed, etc.) in S&S activities.

Humanitarian emergency S&S assistance may include the following[2]:

- **Emergency Shelter Kits.** The provision of inputs such as plastic sheeting, ropes, and tools, as well as dissemination of basic information needed to support the self-construction of temporary living spaces.
- **Emergency Shelter.** The provision of shelter materials and training, technical assistance, or both, as conditions warrant. Emergency shelter assistance may include customized shelters for vulnerable households.

[1] Minimum "covered living space" of 3.5 square meters per capita, and 45 square meters per capita in camp settings.
[2] The list encompasses the conventional range of humanitarian emergency S&S assistance, and is for illustrative purposes only, as USAID/OFDA does not always implement projects featuring the listed outputs.

- **Emergency Tents**. The provision of tents for emergency, short-term sheltering delivered in the aftermath of disasters.
- **Emergency Settlements (Camps).** The creation and management of emergency shelter in identified geographic areas, whether spontaneously or developed programmatically, including site improvements and support services where needed.
- **Collective Centers.** The provision of short-term relocation assistance and maintenance or upgrading of structures and facilities where multiple households are sheltered in large buildings—in most cases public buildings such as stadiums and schools—until they return to their homes or can be relocated safely to other locations.

Humanitarian transitional S&S assistance may include the following[3]:

- **Transitional Shelter.** The provision of inputs—sometimes including salvaged materials—construction, technical advice, and oversight needed to create shelter in compliance with the minimum Sphere Project metrics for living space, where conditions permit. This form of shelter assistance is also intended to re-engage disaster-affected households into the longer-term incremental housing development process that was disrupted by a disaster or crisis, thereby accelerating the transition to recovery and reconstruction.
- **Hosting Support.** The provision of assistance to host and displaced families to sustain hosting arrangements and reduce strains on relations and finances. Assistance could entail a range of activities, including creation of new shelter space, improvement of existing space, and livelihoods-based assistance.
- **House Repair.** Minor repair and improvement of existing, damaged housing to facilitate occupancy that is safe, secure, and private. This might include creation of "one dry/warm room" outputs.
- **Technical Assistance.** Training on improved construction techniques and humanitarian settlements planning to facilitate rapid recovery, and the creation of safer settlements.
- **Transfers.** The provision of cash-grants, vouchers, rental support, and in-kind materials to disaster-affected households to help them secure shelter in compliance with minimum Sphere Project guidelines for covered living space.
- **Transitional Settlements.** The improvement of existing neighborhoods, including informal settlements, to permit provision of shelter and basic services while reducing hazard risks and the need to relocate affected populations to new settlements. These area-based interventions can also serve as platforms for subsequent recovery and reconstruction.

Currently, humanitarian S&S assistance often overlooks linkages to longer-term needs, mainly because those needs are well beyond the mandates, protocols, expertise, and institutional memories of most humanitarian actors. Thus, humanitarian S&S assistance does not include, for example, the reconstruction of permanent housing, the development of new settlements, or efforts to resolve chronic market, policy, and institutional deficiencies related to the provision of housing and basic services, including housing finance. However, recent humanitarian interventions, most notably in Haiti and Pakistan, have highlighted a number of emerging issues that need to be more coherently addressed to appropriately link humanitarian S&S assistance to the recovery of disaster-affected populations, particularly in urban areas. This may include guidance, for example, on how to incrementally improve and expand transitional shelters to turn them into permanent housing, how settlements-based interventions can bridge the gap between relief and recovery efforts, and how a focus on DRR can inform settlements planning to create safer structures and spaces. USAID/OFDA will continue to engage the humanitarian community in addressing the need for improved S&S practice so that the long-standing gap between relief and recovery does not continue to undermine efforts to assist disaster-affected populations.

[3] The list encompasses the conventional range of humanitarian transitional S&S assistance, and is for illustrative purposes only, as USAID/OFDA does not always implement projects featuring the listed outputs.

GLOBAL SETTLEMENT TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Situation: Although no one knows the precise date, human beings likely became a primarily urban species about 6-7 years ago, and there's no going back: **Nearly 92% of *TOTAL GLOBAL* population growth during the 2010-2030 period is projected to be located in the cities of countries in less developed regions**.

In absolute terms, that's about 1.4 *BILLION* additional urban residents in those countries, or the *equivalent of a city the size of Curitiba, or Cape Town, or Dar-es-Salam, or Surabaya emerging every two weeks during every month of every year for 20 years*.

And urban growth will become even more pronounced during the 2030-2050 period, when 108% of TOTAL GLOBAL population growth is projected to be located in the cities of countries in less developed regions, resulting in two of every three humans on the planet living in an urban area by 2050.

This massive urban growth will be uneven, with Asia growing the most in absolute terms, and Africa experiencing the most rapid rate of growth. Further, the bulk of this growth will occur in smaller cities, i.e., those least able to manage growth, be it rapid or not.

Currently, roughly one billion people are living in slums. Slums and related informality are almost synonymous with "urban" in many of the countries that humanitarian actors work in, and with urban populations growing exceedingly fast, slum population shares are as high as 70-80 percent of the total.

- Currently, 1 in 7 human beings on the planet lives in a slum
- By 2030, the number could be 1 in 4, and
- This will be achieved by a doubling of the global slum population to two billion people in the next 15 years.

Implications for Humanitarian Actors: The rapid growth and urbanization of settlements, the places where people live, will likely contribute to and be affected by persistent poverty, environmental

degradation, climate change, sea level rise, urban heat island effects, limited governance, limited services, and a host of other issues combine to form a challenging work context for humanitarian actors. It is likely that the doubling of urban populations in the coming years will lead to a three-fold increase in urban land area. Much of this physical expansion will be located in low-lying, risk-prone areas, in many cases along vulnerable coastlines where rising sea levels may have wide-scale impacts.

To this mix will be the *likely increase in the number and severity of destructive events, and the* ***urbanization of these events*****,** be they so-called natural disasters, or more clearly human-caused events such as conflicts and technological disasters. Further, these disasters/crises will likely accelerate and exacerbate the urbanization process.

All of this suggests both a rapid concentration of people in cities over time, ***and*** a rapid increase in the ***vulnerability of billions***, not millions. The degraded living environments associated with these **landscapes of vulnerability** can lead to some horrific consequences. As we now know all too well, when Ebola was confined to distant rural areas it was not seen as a threat, but with its the arrival in the cities, and more precisely the slums, of West Africa, and now beyond, the virus has evolved into a global public health emergency.

Clearly, much needs to be done in both urban and rural settlements to respond to needs, reduce risk, and foster longer-term recovery. Urban displacement, while poorly known at present, raises a number of methodological and conceptual issues, chief among them how to define "Harm's Way," how to keep people out of harm's way, and how to reduce risk among those living there.

Although the challenges are many and complex, urban areas also present numerous opportunities. In nearly all countries, cities are the centers of economic growth, core public and private sector institutions, culture, education, technology, expertise, and wealth. Tapping into this resource base is a huge challenge, but also - relatively speaking - an embarrassment of riches. It's no mistake, for example, that cash-based humanitarian responses often work fairly well in urban areas, simply because there's a cash economy to tap into.

Post-crisis, long-term shelter response is vital

Failure to deal with the long-term aftermath of a disaster and bring development thinking into the humanitarian response at the outset usually leads to further trouble, argues ***Charles A. Setchell****, a Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor with the USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA).*

In the 1989 movie, Dead Poets Society, a teacher played by Robin Williams challenged his students with carpe diem, a Latin phrase commonly translated as "seize the day." Although the phrase is heard to this day, few will recall that the teacher lost his job because he didn't consider the long-term implications of his actions.

The teacher's fate in the movie is not all that different from many humanitarian shelter responses: Not thinking long-term when acting short-term – or more specifically, not informing relief actions with developmental thinking – can get you into big trouble.

So how long is the long in the long-term? In a related vein, and given recent changes in the humanitarian community organizational landscape, how early is the early in early recovery? When do we start long and early?

Based on innumerable discussions I've had with people directly affected by disaster or crisis, often while standing amidst the rubble of their destroyed homes, the response would likely be now, tomorrow, or perhaps even yesterday.

No organization can be that responsive, of course. But a well-conceived recovery programme that links relief and reconstruction activities can have beneficial outcomes – or, at least, minimal harm – at significant scale to affected populations in the four- to eight-month time-frame common to most humanitarian shelter programmes.

Whether done well or not, and whether done knowingly or not, humanitarian assistance also initiates a much more complex process of addressing the need for shelter in a developmental context. This context features largely urban-based growth occurring on a massive scale well into the future, primarily in developing countries. Those engaged in humanitarian shelter, then, would be wise to know of this interplay of action, process, and context.

Alas, we will have to craft our own story, with shelter the main character.

This is not a trivial matter, for it is not an understatement to claim that many recent conflicts have had their genesis in unresolved resource, social, and political issues. It is also not an understatement to claim that many recent disasters have had their genesis in development policies that have placed -- and continue to place -- people in harm's way. One way of refuting these claims is changing humanitarian shelter assistance so that it more effectively contributes to, indeed jump-starts, efforts to address these larger development issues.

Ian Davis provides us with guidance in this regard, and has done so quite clearly in his brief article. Additions to his list of self-evident truths could include the potential of shelter as a significant livelihood generator, and recognizing and learning more about the scale and mechanisms of remittance-driven shelter financed by affected populations.

These truths, together with some presented by Davis, suggest strongly that shelter assistance should focus less on "four-walls-and-a-roof" approaches, and more on the institutional requirements and strategic vision needed to promote a settlements-based approach to guide delivery of shelter at scale. Such a focus will require concerted humanitarian community engagement with development community actors so that long-term shelter strategies reduce the risk of future conflict and disaster.

Two truths mentioned by Davis, namely transitional shelter and "building back better," merit further elaboration. Recent experience in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere suggests that transitional shelter – emergency shelter that designed intentionally to jump-start recovery and reconstruction – appears a useful means of addressing short-term needs within a long-term framework, perhaps because it reflects the following:

- **Respect for the Past.** A common feature of transitional shelter is the emphasis on salvaging of building materials for reuse in post-crisis/disaster shelter programs. Davis even calls for a ban on destruction of salvageable building materials, in the name of efficiency. Much more importantly, however, reuse of these materials connects affected populations with the past in a tangible, respectful manner, and

- **Linkage to the Future.** Transitional shelter often requires new inputs, sometime from outside affected regions, to supplement salvaged materials. This merging of new and old materials, together with "building back better" measures, can serve as a model for shelter activity precisely because it links to the incremental, and thus long-term, housing delivery process present in most countries, which must be accessed to achieve meaningful impacts at scale.

"Building back better" is far more than measures to resolve communal violence, or promote seismic mitigation. This form of "thinking long, acting short" is an opportunity to re-acquaint development community actors with crises and disasters, enabling those actors to take measures that reduce vulnerability to hazards, both natural and human-caused, and mitigate the causes of conflict. Whenever and wherever possible, such opportunities should be recognized and exploited with carpe diem zeal. To do otherwise, is to put people back in harm's way.

By the way, no sequel to Dead Poets Society was ever made. We'll never know, then, whether the Williams character would have been able to resume his teaching career after heeding the message of "Think Long, Act Short" reflected above.

Had there been a sequel, and the message heeded, the humanitarian community would have had quite a story to guide its work.

Alas, we will have to craft our own story, with shelter the main character.

- Note: this article reflects solely the views of the author – not USAID or the US Government.

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Photo: Charles A. Setchell/USAID

◄ *Two-story transitional shelters in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Ravin Pintade.*

Under One Roof

▸ Promoting **transitional shelter** as both humanitarian response and permanent housing reconstruction.

By **Charles A. Setchell**, Senior Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, and **Eddie Argenal**, Shelter and Settlements Advisor, USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

WHEN A natural disaster damages communities, or when conflict forces people to flee their homes, housing is often the most visible loss suffered by affected populations, as well as a very tangible and all too often overlooked need. In these dire situations, humanitarians strive to respond with appropriate solutions to assist displaced people.

Transitional shelter, or *t-shelter*, has emerged in recent years as one of the most forward-looking humanitarian response sheltering options, typically using a combination of plastic sheeting and new and salvaged building materials to create functional covered living space. Once completed with the support of humanitarian actors, t-shelters have then been expanded and improved over time with more robust building materials (e.g., concrete floors, finished wood walls and windows), either through programmed activities or self-help efforts by residents. This process transforms t-shelters into permanent housing that reflect the needs and desires of the people who live in them. When these activities are also guided by community-wide efforts to plan for and provide services, infrastructure and disaster risk reduction measures, entire neighborhoods become safer and more habitable places to live and work.

T-shelters not only address immediate needs, but also serve as a cost- and time-effective approach to reengaging disaster-affected populations ... in developing a home.

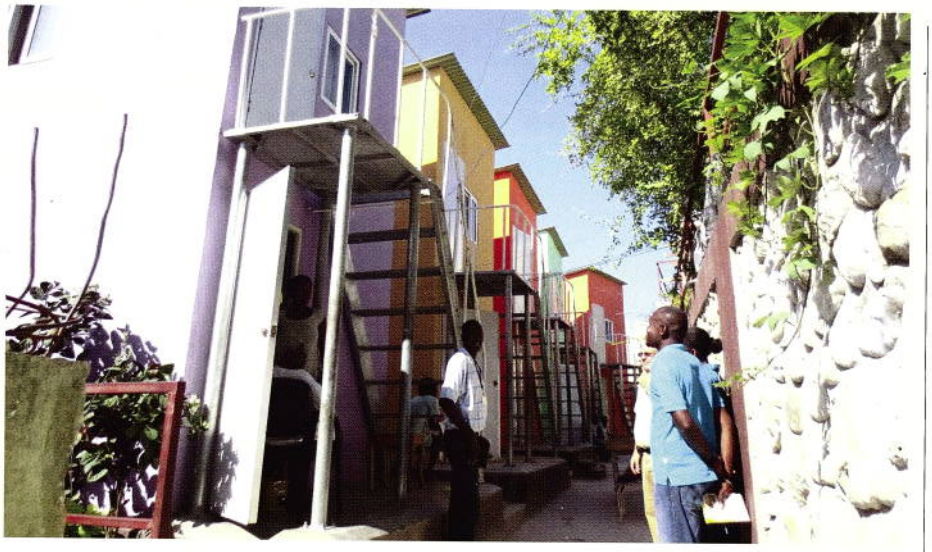
As a result, t-shelters not only address immediate needs, but also serve as a cost- and time-effective approach to reengaging disaster-affected populations in the longer-term process of developing a home. Indeed, t-shelters have performed so well in this regard that it is time to promote them as a substitute for the more conventional provision of permanent housing in post-disaster reconstruction efforts. This is especially important since efforts to provide permanent housing have been plagued with conceptual, resource, policy, and implementation challenges—all too often resulting in significant delays and cost overruns, and the provision of far fewer homes than planned.

Although donors have supported numerous t-shelter projects, three projects funded by USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) exemplify how t-shelters can respond to immediate shelter needs, while at the same time jump-starting the longer-term incremental housing development process. The following projects—constructed in different countries at different times and under divergent circumstances—demonstrate the utility of t-shelters in facilitating the recovery and reconstruction of disaster-affected communities.

DRC

USAID/OFDA's first intentionally conceived, designed and implemented t-shelter project followed the January 2002 eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano near Goma in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lava and ash fall damaged and destroyed housing across the city and left up to 105,000 people—many who were already vulnerable due to extreme poverty and conflict-related insecurity—in need of shelter.

With thousands of jobs lost and the economy devastated, humanitarian agencies mounted a rapid response in Goma. Responding to the security and economic concerns expressed by affected communities, and knowing that sufficient space ▸



▶ *Haiti transitional shelters upgraded to permanence in 2013.*

to accommodate residents was indeed available in Goma, USAID/OFDA provided funding to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Concern International to combine t-shelter assistance and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities to enhance self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and strengthen resilience. Five thousand families received t-shelters within nine months of the eruption. Support from other donors who embraced the combined strategy assisted an additional 10,000 households. In total, USAID/OFDA contributed nearly $5 million for recovery assistance in Goma, nearly half of which supported the combined DRR and urban-based t-shelter program.

In 2012, a decade after the disaster, USAID/OFDA conducted an assessment of shelter conditions in Goma and found that approximately 90% of the 5,000 t-shelters provided in 2002 had evolved into permanent housing by 2004, and that nearly 100% of the t-shelters had become permanent housing by 2012. Almost all disaster-affected beneficiaries who continued to occupy their houses had transformed their t-shelters into permanent housing using their own funds—a substantial achievement that illustrates how t-shelters allow displaced populations to assume ownership of their housing recovery process.

Photo: Charles A. Setchell/USAID

Photo: UN-HABITAT

Bangladesh

In 2007 and 2009, two major tropical cyclones hit Bangladesh, resulting in widespread destruction. In November 2007, Cyclone Sidr ravaged southern Bangladesh with winds close to 137 miles per hour affecting 8.9 million people in 31 of the country's 64 districts. The storm killed approximately 4,200 people and injured 55,000 others, while destroying nearly 564,000 homes and damaging 955,000 more. A year and a half later, Cyclone Aila struck Bangladesh with 75 mph winds, affecting approximately 3.9 million people in 11 of the same districts previously impacted by Sidr. In total, the storm killed 190 people, injured more than 7,000 and damaged or destroyed nearly 600,000 homes.

Numerous humanitarian agencies responded in the aftermath of the storms, including USAID/OFDA, which funded CRS and Caritas to provide approximately 4,000 transitional shelters, incorporating numerous flood- and wind-resistant mitigation measures. During a July 2013 assessment of the response, USAID/OFDA staff visited communities in Bangladesh's heavily affected Khulna Division and found that all assessed shelters constructed after Cyclone Sidr remained occupied by original recipients and sustained no structural damage as a result of Cyclone Aila. Many surveyed beneficiaries had gradually upgraded their shelters in the years after the cyclones by improving flooring, replacing bamboo mats in walls with corrugated iron sheets, and adding new living spaces such as kitchens and bedrooms. As in Goma, the assessment in Bangladesh confirmed the utility of transitional shelter as a platform for both promoting DRR and facilitating the longer-term, incremental housing recovery process.

Haiti

A major international disaster response was mounted after a devastating magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010. As one of the numerous donor agencies to respond, USAID/OFDA initiated a program

continued on page 27

Photo: UN-HABITAT

Urban Sheltering Approaches

▶ How moving from provider to enabler increased program impact in **Baghdad.**

By **Laura Heykoop** and **Fiona Kelling**, Consultants, Intarsia Ltd.

HUMANITARIAN practitioners know that working in urban areas is much more complicated than in rural settings. Population density, the higher number of stakeholders, integrated systems and an intricate web of social networks all make for a complex working environment, including for those trying to tackle shelter needs.

Conversations about urban humanitarian shelter response and recovery have moved forward considerably in recent years. However, much of the discourse has focused on adapting rural methodologies to urban contexts: for example, making greater use of cash programming or market interventions rather than undertaking more traditional material distribution or construction projects.

While adapting rural methodologies has increased the ability of organizations to provide assistance in urban areas, it has not addressed more fundamental questions about the role and approach of humanitarian actors. In a complex urban environment, how do humanitarian actors really add value?

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) program in Baghdad is an example of how a humanitarian organization has taken a wider view.

As a result of three decades of conflict and ongoing sectarian violence, the current situation in Iraq is marked by large-scale displacement, poor living conditions and increasing amounts of informal housing. ▶

Transitional Shelters

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that would ultimately become its largest-ever shelter and settlements endeavor. The office's total post-earthquake response to shelter needs exceeded $108 million, with humanitarian shelter interventions—such as hosting support, repairs to damaged houses and transitional shelter—benefitting more than 313,000 individuals. That amount equates to approximately one-fifth of the estimated 1.5 million people displaced by the earthquake. This total included the provision of more than 28,500 t-shelters, representing approximately 25% of the total population that received transitional shelters through the humanitarian community's collective efforts in Haiti.

In the densely populated and heavily damaged neighborhoods of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, innovative t-shelter activities helped initiate the rebuilding of the city in a way that accounted for community needs and environmental limitations. For example, in order to provide shelter, service improvements and risk reduction measures to the greatest number of people in the Ravin Pintade neighborhood, USAID/OFDA implementing partners CHF International and Project Concern International produced innovative two-story t-shelters that used scarce land efficiently and better reflected the reality of the teeming city. In other cases, some humanitarian community actors designed t-shelters as attached units with common walls, permitting higher densities in crowded neighborhoods.

USAID/OFDA continues to learn from its experiences with t-shelters in Haiti by engaging implementing partners on post-project evaluations, assessing performance and conducting research on earthquake- and hurricane-resistant shelter design. A September 2013 assessment of numerous completed t-shelter projects found that a significant number of t-shelters had been upgraded to permanence, either through self-recovery efforts or programmed activities. The result is far greater output than permanent housing reconstruction efforts, at greater speed, and at much lower cost. These findings are consistent with those from Goma and Bangladesh. Transitional shelter can respond to immediate sheltering needs, and it can also facilitate longer-term recovery, even in highly diverse circumstances.

The future of transitional shelter

A key challenge confronting the rapid transformation of transitional shelter to permanent housing is creating appropriate guidance and training for humanitarian actors that result in safer structures and more resilient settlements. To accomplish this, the humanitarian community must bridge the gap from traditional humanitarian relief to more permanent development activities. As the three project experiences above demonstrate, transitional shelter can bridge this gap and do it well. It can transform rapidly and offers an effective alternative to the costly and time-consuming establishment of permanent housing. Transitional shelter can, therefore, empower people to develop their shelters into permanent homes over time, in a manner that is quite familiar to them and billions of others around the world.

The views expressed in this article are the personal views of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the official views of the United States Agency for International Development.

1984 and Today

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victims. We don't listen to them. Aid often arrives late. These analyses of what is wrong are the same as they were in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. … We remain good at analysis yet bad at [actual] change."

Still, Walker finds hope in truly transformative areas—such as electronic cash transfers to disaster survivors, and the use of digital tools that preclude humanitarian groups from effectively claiming "we don't know what people want." In one telling example, he notes that "Khartoum has better Internet band-width than Boston." In other words, the Global North can no longer claim the tools don't exist to hear what those in the Global South need or want.

If the momentum of the past 30 years continues, he believes the notion of improved local capacity could actually become more of a reality. The main job of Northern NGOs might eventually become one of simply "filling in the gaps."

THE OFDA "SALVAGE-TO-SHELTER" PROJECT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AFTER HURRICANE GEORGES: AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

Situation: In the wake of Hurricane Georges in October 1998, OFDA supported a wide range of relief activities in the Dominican Republic (DR). Although emergency shelter needs were addressed, an estimated 44,000 people were rendered homeless due to high winds and flooding. Most of these disaster victims were provided emergency shelter in schools and other public facilities, but these facilities soon proved to be inadequate. The use of schools as emergency shelter was also a particularly contentious issue, in that delays in reopening schools in affected communities resulted in increasingly strained relations between community residents and disaster victims. With limited funding, OFDA was tasked with formulating a shelter program for as many of the homeless as possible.

Response: Initial damage assessment reports indicated that significant quantities of forest cover were knocked down by hurricane-force winds. Further investigation by OFDA staff indicated significant potential for salvaging downed timber for use in shelter activities. The use of salvaged timber was viewed as the only means of addressing outstanding shelter needs, given budget constraints, the high cost of locally-available and imported lumber, the high cost of pre-fabricated structures, and the high cost of substitute building materials (e.g., cement block).

Working closely with the USAID/DR mission, OFDA staff met with selected NGOs in December 1998, and eventually approved proposals totaling approximately $2.6 million. This funding level supported a salvage logging operation, provision of 3,360 transitional shelters, and the construction of 3,587 latrines. This activity commenced in February 1999.

Results: By the end of project activity in July 1999, the sanitation and shelter needs of approximately 20,160 people, or 46 percent of the total number of people rendered homeless by the hurricane, were addressed as part of the effort. (Shelter needs of the remaining

24,000 homeless people were addressed by other donors and the Government of the DR.) In addition, the sanitation needs of 21,500 people were addressed because each latrine was shared by two families. The average cost per housing unit was $506, and the average cost per latrine was $251.

The adoption of an innovative shelter solution emphasizing the use of salvaged timber proved to be far more cost-effective relative to more conventional approaches. OFDA staff estimated that use of salvaged timber resulted in per unit housing costs that were less than 30 percent of prevailing market costs for equivalent-sized units ($506 vs. $1,750). This cost savings thus enabled OFDA to provide shelter to far more disaster victims than could have been assisted using more conventional shelter solutions (20,160 people, rather than the 5,830 that could have been sheltered using locally-purchased lumber).

The shelter solution also improved beneficiary targeting, in that the rustic character of field-cut salvaged timber dissuaded potential unintended beneficiaries from acquiring project outputs. The problem of unintended beneficiaries would have been much greater had the shelter effort featured the use of finished wood products available in local markets.

Finally, other direct results of the shelter project were:

- Reducing fire hazard potential in areas of salvage logging by reducing fuel loads
- Reducing soil erosion potential, and
- Reducing insect infestation by removing potential habitat

The effort was supplemented by USAID/DR mission funds to rehabilitate and replant the roughly 2,100 acres of salvaged timberland. The project also provided equipment and training to the DR forestry agency, and identified fire prevention training needs that were subsequently funded by the US Forest Service. This disaster risk reduction activity enhanced environmental management efforts and served as a model for reducing fire hazard in salvaged areas throughout the DR.

"PRE-FAB" SHELTER: SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

***Direct Cost*.** Pre-fabricated ("pre-fab"), or modular, shelter units are typically quite expensive, both in absolute and relative terms (i.e., versus tents or locally-developed designs). As a consequence, it is difficult to purchase in volume as part of a disaster response.

***Indirect Costs*.** "Pre-fab" costs typically do not include transport, customs, site and service preparation, and set-up costs. These indirect costs can easily double the overall cost of a pre-fab unit. Customs fees collection and processing, for example, are often quite time-consuming, costly, and highly variable. If "time is money," the cost of delay and uncertainty associated with customs and transport must also be factored into decisions on the use of pre-fab housing.

***Capital Flight*.** Pre-fabs are often imported into a disaster area from another country -- and the money needed to pay for the pre-fabs goes in the opposite direction. Rather than benefiting from the investment, the local/regional economy affected by a disaster is robbed of important capital that could circulate within that economy, thereby aiding in the overall resurgence of that economy.

***Economic/Employment Impacts*.** Related to the above, the homebuilding industry generates more employment per dollar invested than just about any other economic activity. This is true only if local materials and local labor are used intensively as part of the homebuilding process. Pre-fabs only require minimal inputs of local labor and materials, so the potential to generate local employment -- and local incomes -- is not achieved when compared to locally produced shelter. Quite the contrary: In many cases, specialized labor has to be imported to set up the pre-fab units. If this is the case, most of the income that specialized laborers earn is sent out of the country, again undermining efforts to revitalize the disaster-affected economy.

***Cultural/Social Appropriateness*.** Use of pre-fab units negates an extremely important function of shelter: the need for family, community, social, and cultural expression. This is not insignificant. If pre-fabs do not meet these needs, they often are poorly maintained and abandoned at far higher rates than locally-based shelter solutions. This can result in higher management and maintenance costs, and additional costs for replacement shelter.

***Functional Appropriateness*.** Given the high per-unit costs, pre-fabs cannot typically be introduced into a disaster area in large numbers. As such, they become a scare resource relative to other shelter solutions, and one that is often perceived as "modern" and superior to more familiar shelter solutions. Scarcity, particularly in a disaster area, can often generate community-level friction/acrimony between those who receive (pre-fabs) and those who don't. This can often result in a range of complex and time-consuming political and social problems, and ultimately delay shelter provision.

If decisions are made to introduce pre-fabs, and where the potential for a "have-have not" situation is great, pre-fabs should *ONLY* be used for communal purposes (e.g. as health clinics, classrooms, daycare centers, showers/bathrooms, warming facilities, laundry facilities, eating halls, police posts, government offices, etc.), so that ALL community residents have access to a relatively scarce resource.

***Standardization of Output*.** Related to the point above is the negative effect that pre-fabs have on standardization. By design, pre-fabs are different from several other forms of emergency shelter. In addition, for reasons noted above, they are not typically the standard form of shelter response. When they are introduced into a disaster area, pre-fabs have the effect of undermining the shelter sector standard of output, which can lead to significant and time-consuming discussions among donors and NGOs even before the "have-have not" effects of differential output reach the community level. This can undermine attempts to coordinate donor and NGO strategy, areas of responsibility, and other activities that require organizational coordination, and lead to further delays in shelter provision.

C. Setchell
USAID/OFDA Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor
14 February 2008

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TENT ON TENTS: SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

Tents Are a Poor Shelter Option. Tents are useful when there are absolutely no other shelter options, but this is hardly ever the case, as disasters and conflicts rarely generate complete and total destruction of permanent structures. Assessment of shelter conditions and needs typically results in the identification of hosting activities in homes and community facilities, as well as spontaneous rebuilding efforts featuring salvaging of building materials, which could be supplemented with plastic sheeting, tools, and other inputs. These two shelter responses are cost-effective, socially acceptable, and self-selected options to tents.

Tents Are Too Small. No -- repeat, no -- tent provided by leading humanitarian organizations conforms to Sphere Project guidelines for families of more than four people, and average family sizes are typically larger in nearly all places where OFDA provides assistance. It is more than understandable, then, why people get sick, why protection issues emerge, or why psycho-social issues emerge when they have to live in undersized tents for more than a short period of time.

Tents Are Expensive. Even the most modest of tents typically cost $150-$200, and often much more. Transport and handling costs increase the price further. The total cost of tent provision is often greater than the hosting or salvaged-based options mentioned above, and the investment in tents does not typically generate economic benefits in affected communities, unlike the aforementioned options. Careful consideration of contextual conditions, then, could result in a basis for claiming that cost-effective and economically beneficial options to tents already exist in affected communities.

Tents Are Not Very Flexible. Related to the above claim of limited size, tents promote a "one-size-fits-all" approach to shelter, in contrast to the use of plastic sheeting, salvaged building materials, and other inputs, which can be applied to specific family and site conditions in a flexible manner, thereby resulting in more appropriate and acceptable shelter.

Tents Do Not Make Very Good Shelter. As a general rule, tents used by the humanitarian community are difficult and costly to winterize, hot in warm weather, leaky during rainy weather, difficult to keep clean, hard and potentially hazardous to cook in, do not last very long, and generally lack privacy for occupants. An extreme example of the latter point was found in Burma earlier this year, where authorities forced up to ten unrelated cyclone survivors to occupy tents designed for four, thus generating a range of protection, psycho-social, and gender concerns.

Tents Are Often Spelled C-A-M-P-S. Tents are a core feature of camp development efforts, which are often unnecessary, reflecting rushed judgments on shelter needs, rather than careful assessment of shelter conditions. Only in recent years have tents been widely considered for use in non-camp settings, including on the land of displaced populations. While this is often preferable to camp settings, other options typically exist that would reduce the need for tents.

Tents Retard Recovery and Reconstruction. Recovery begins yesterday for affected populations, and it's often the case that they will start rebuilding their homes, or building new ones, using whatever materials are available, rather than wait for assistance from others. In far too many cases, then, provision of tents is a step backwards on the road to recovery and reconstruction. This retrograde action is not useful, efficient, cost-effective, or appreciated. Again, careful assessment of shelter conditions and needs might identify emergent, spontaneous recovery efforts that could be supported, rather than resort to tents as a default response.

C. Setchell
USAID/OFDA Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor
7 November 2008

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA),
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

GUIDANCE ON USE OF PLASTIC SHEETING AS PART OF SHELTER & SETTLEMENTS SECTOR ACTIVITIES

NOTE: Plastic sheeting is often included as an NFI item in proposed Logistics/Relief Commodities sector activities. This is the "back door to bad shelter," as use of the sheeting is not informed by basic shelter guidance, resulting in poor shelter and wasted resources. Therefore, plastic sheeting and related shelter inputs should be transferred from the Logistics/Relief Commodities sector to the S&S sector.

SPECIFICS:

Households and Linkage to Sphere Project and OFDA Guidelines: What is the average household size of the affected population and proposed beneficiary group, if different? Is this figure linked to the Sphere Project- and OFDA-identified "minimally adequate" total of 3.5 square meters of "covered living space" per person? In this regard, please refer to S&S Sector Indicators in the USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines (http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/pdf/updated_guidelines_unsolicited_proposals_reporting.pdf) to ensure that proposed activities are consistent with OFDA guidelines.

Shelter Design: To ensure cost effectiveness, cost consciousness, and the presence of shelter framing, sketches of proposed shelters are requested, along with a detailed Bill of Quantities (BOQs) needed to create the proposed shelters. The BOQ must include, indeed feature, framing material to support use of the plastic sheeting or other materials in a manner that creates adequate, habitable, safe, private, secure, and appropriate shelter for identified beneficiaries. The BOQ may not be what is proposed, but what is likely to be used by affected populations and others when creating shelter that includes sheeting provided as part of an NFI distribution.

Sheltering Process: Describe the process of provision, to include a discussion of who has been selected for assistance, based on what criteria. Who participated in identifying beneficiaries? Who will construct the shelters? Over what time frame? How will proposed implementing partners ensure that those who may be unable to construct shelter are assisted as a priority activity?

***Disaster Risk Reduction*:** Are proposed locations for use of sheeting in hazard-prone areas? If so, what provisions have been made to reduce beneficiary vulnerability to hazards (e.g., identification of hazards, evacuation planning, etc.)?

Shelter Transition and Sustainability: Please discuss proposed locations of shelters, the sustainability of those shelter locations over time, the possible need for risk reduction measures, how shelter and supporting services (e.g., water, sanitation, etc.) are linked to support beneficiary existence over time, i.e., how proposed activities link to longer-term efforts.

C. SETCHELL, '17 Feb 22

Photo Courtesy of J/P HRO

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID Helps Haitian Families Return Home After Hurricane Matthew

After Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti in October 2016, response actors estimated that as many as 35,000 families—approximately 175,000 people—in Grand'Anse and Sud departments whose homes were damaged or destroyed relocated to temporary shelters. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) responded by distributing emergency shelter supplies, including plastic sheeting and shelter repair kits, to help displaced households return home quickly.

In Grand'Anse's Jeremie commune, USAID/OFDA partner J/P Haitian Relief Organization (J/P HRO) provided USAID/OFDA-procured emergency shelter materials for more than 3,800 families. A key innovation of J/P HRO's effort was hiring and organizing teams of local carpenters and other construction workers to help families properly affix the shelter materials to their houses, and then hiring technicians to inspect and approve all repairs. This form of implementation significantly increased the quality and efficiency of shelter assistance.

USAID/OFDA Senior Shelter and Settlements Advisor Charles Setchell noted, "J/P HRO did an outstanding job on this project, which is a model for emergency shelter best practice. The organization hired carpenters who live in the same neighborhoods as beneficiaries and understand local culture and building practices. J/P HRO also trained the carpentry teams to be resourceful and innovative when affixing plastic sheeting to structures; for example, the teams used locally available materials, such as bits of old tires, bottle caps, and pieces of wood, as washers when commercially-produced plastic washers were in short supply."

With USAID/OFDA support, nine response organizations in Haiti are providing emergency shelter assistance to nearly 59,300 households, or approximately 296,000 people, in hurricane-affected communities. This assistance includes a portion of USAID/OFDA-procured plastic sheeting; in total, USAID/OFDA procured 9,100 rolls of plastic sheeting for distribution by humanitarian partners, sufficient to address the emergency shelter needs of up to 91,000 households.

These emergency shelter activities are also building the foundation for a second phase of "Build Back Safer" transitional shelter assistance, which intends to ensure durable shelter solutions for more than 6,000 vulnerable families in Haiti.

◀ *The dense settlement patterns of urban areas pose a significant challenge to humanitarian agencies when implementing shelter and settlements assistance programs. In this picture, a portion of a backyard was used to host six neighboring households who were friends and family of the landowner. In this example, programmed hosting support was provided primarily in the form of transitional shelter. An estimated 20 percent of all transitional shelter assistance in the Port-au-Prince area was actually provided in support of a hosting arrangement.*

Hosting Support

▸ An overlooked humanitarian shelter solution.

By **Charles A. Setchell**, Senior Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, USAID

WHEN DISASTERS OR CRISES strike and homes are lost, people don't always wait for governments and international humanitarian agencies to lend a hand, but instead often rely on those close to them: family and friends. Perhaps because this spontaneous sheltering of people doesn't always entail four new walls and a roof, and is thus often difficult to see, the shelter that family, friends and neighbors provide to disaster or crisis survivors can be overlooked or even dismissed by some policymakers and shelter advisors as inappropriate, not "real" or not truly durable shelter. However, hosting by family and friends, or even by strangers, is socially defined, self-selected, culturally appropriate and typically provided before humanitarian actors arrive and—importantly—long after they leave. Hosting is, in fact, an effort to help, be it for social, family or even altruistic or nationalistic reasons, so how could it not be considered humanitarian in nature?

Humanitarian community actors have increasingly recognized in recent years the utility and acceptance of hosting as a form of spontaneous sheltering among affected populations. As a result, these actors have come to provide various types of basic support to ensure that hosting does not strain relations or host families' pocketbooks, while also facilitating the role of hosting as a durable shelter solution. Such assistance can entail fuel, education or livelihood assistance, as well as provision of bedding, cooking and eating utensils, water/sanitation and shelter upgrades to support people living with host families.

▸ *Program support by humanitarian agencies often supplements shelter that is provided spontaneously through friends and family, and sometimes strangers. In this picture, the new shelter for the displaced family is located next to the existing host family shelter in the same compound. In Haiti, this spontaneous assistance was often supplemented programmatically with livelihood, nonfood item (NFI), water/sanitation/hygiene (WASH) and other forms of humanitarian assistance to ensure that hosting arrangements were sustainable, and not burdensome.*

Hosting was vital in the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2009 conflict in Pakistan. These major events generated considerable media coverage and resource commitments to support conventional "four-walls-and-a-roof" shelter efforts. However, less attention has been given to the important role that hosting support has also served in overall humanitarian shelter and settlements sector assistance efforts.

Hosting in earthquake-affected Haiti

The devastating earthquake killed an estimated 316,000 people and affected approximately 3 million others, according to the government of Haiti, while damaging and destroying over 180,000 housing structures. The earthquake also generated a mass exodus of over 600,000 people from Port-au-Prince and other disaster-affected areas to seek shelter with family and friends in home towns in outlying areas that were not damaged by the earthquake. Although an unknown number of those who left the affected area have likely returned, many chose to remain in a ▸

Photo: (top) Charles A. Setchell; (bottom) LeGrand Malany, USAID/OFDA

hosting relationship. Without some form of support, however, these relationships would have strained the patience and resources of all concerned, possibly resulting in movement of people to the then-burgeoning spontaneous camps, thereby exacerbating conditions. Although numerous humanitarian actors initiated shelter and settlements sector programs, not all included hosting support in their efforts, in part due to the difficulty of locating and identifying hosting arrangements, and defining assistance packages.

Still, the level of hosting support has been notable, resulting in the provision of humanitarian shelter for thousands of families. However, what is even more notable is the apparent evolution of nearly 18,500 hosting arrangements, or 70 percent of hosting total supported by three NGOs (see sidebar), into *permanent* housing solutions for those families, as they have decided to stay in hosting arrangements and host communities for the foreseeable future. Moreover, many families have stated in post-project interviews that they never want to return to the disaster-affected area. Hosting is thus not only an important humanitarian shelter solution, but also

Hosting is, in fact, an effort to help, be it for social, family or even altruistic or nationalistic reasons, so how could it not be considered humanitarian in nature?

appears in Haiti to be helping address longer-term housing needs at a cost far below housing reconstruction efforts, and long before those efforts even commence.

Finally, although assistance in support of hosting arrangements provided by some NGOs was located in communities away from Port-au-Prince, even the better known transitional shelter efforts of humanitarian actors in Port-au-Prince and other earthquake-affected communities included shelters that were built on land provided by host families. USAID/OFDA grantee activity suggests that the percentage of hosting through transitional shelter assistance may be as high as 20 percent of overall output. This finding is consistent with experience in other countries that hosting support can occur in both rural and urban settings.

Hosting in conflict-affected Pakistan

During 2009, a complex emergency due to fighting between the Pakistani government and militants in the northwest caused more than 3 million people to flee the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPk) province for safer areas. Later that year, additional military operations in South Waziristan displaced another 380,000 people. The ongoing conflict resulted in a steady stream of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into KPk.

Between January 2009 and January 2011, more than 3.4 million people had been displaced from their homes, and nearly 90 percent of this total was hosted. Often, families hosted strangers and did not know how long they would be staying. However, thousands of host families readily provided shelter, food and water to IDPs for several months. Due to the overwhelming number of individuals living with host families for months or more at a time, the international community focused not only on providing IDPs with assistance, but also on providing support to the families hosting them. Direct support to host families often included programs to alleviate crowded conditions by expanding living spaces, often through the construction of an additional room or stand-alone shelter. Some relief agencies also established mobile medical clinics that served multiple host communities and voucher programs that allowed IDPs to purchase additional food and household items, thereby reducing the strain on host families.

Other cash-for-work, cash grant, and rental assistance programs also allowed IDPs to pay for a portion of their host family's household expenses. Nearly two-thirds—more than $75 million—of OFDA's combined assistance for Pakistan's conflict-affected individuals in our 2009 and 2010 fiscal years directly benefited IDPs and host families in KPk, supporting the kinds of activities promoted by the humanitarian community, with the remainder benefiting families returning to former conflict areas.

A willingness to help

Haiti and Pakistan present diverse settings, events and circumstances, but what is common in both countries is the willingness of people, whether compelled by family, friendship or community ties, or simply compassion for others, to help those in need by creating hosting arrangements. This activity occurred in both post-disaster and post-conflict settings, be they in urban or rural areas. It did, however, impose social, economic and other strains on the arrangements, making it important for humanitarian actors to support them where possible and feasible using a range of measures.

Hosting is not a universal panacea. It will always be context-driven, and is best implemented when family and friends are involved. However, supporting this form of sheltering can sustain it to the point that it becomes an important element of humanitarian shelter assistance, and can even lead to the evolution of hosting arrangements into permanent housing solutions, as the Haiti experience indicates. Finally, hosting support can be provided expeditiously and on a cost-effective basis when compared to higher cost approaches, particularly the creation of camps. There will likely be even greater support of hosting in the future, as budgets tighten and the scale and frequency of disaster events increase. MD

USAID and Hosting

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), as part of its effort to support a range of humanitarian shelter solutions, approved grants to three implementing partners to engage in hosting support after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti: CHF International, the Centre d'Etudes et de Cooperation Internationale (CECI) and Mercy Corps. Although initially designed to support a total of 19,550 hosting arrangements in communities north of the earthquake-affected area (in Center, Artibonite and Northeast Departments), the three NGOs eventually combined to support 26,523 such arrangements as of mid-November 2011. An estimated 95 percent of hosting families were either related to, or friends of, the hosted families, and assistance to support hosting arrangements ranged from $250-$800 per hosting arrangement.

Urban Displacement and Growth Amidst Humanitarian Crisis

New realities require a new strategy in Kabul.

BY CHARLES A. SETCHELL, SHELTER, SETTLEMENTS, AND HAZARD MITIGATION ADVISOR, USAID/OFDA, AND CAROLINE N. LUTHER, SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICER, USAID/OFDA

Photo: USAID/OFDA

BY 2008, AN UNPRECEDENTED half of the world's population resided in urban areas. The current total population of 6.8 billion people is projected by the Population Reference Bureau to increase to more than 8 billion by 2025, with a majority of growth occurring in the urban centers of developing countries. While sufficiently daunting, the projections fail to capture urban growth attributable to displacement. Enduring conflict and frequent natural disasters in parts of the developing world encourage or force rural migration to urban centers at rates that accelerate and exacerbate the urbanization process. In recent years, for example, cities such as Freetown, Khartoum and Prishtina, among many others, have experienced dramatic population increases (far beyond projections) that confound efforts to promote urban recovery and development. A new approach to urban recovery that addresses humanitarian concerns and incorporates risk reduction strategies is required to address needs generated by rapid urban growth, reverse the cycle of perpetual humanitarian crisis among a largely invisible segment of urban populations, and ultimately lay the foundation necessary for successful urban development.

An often ignored phenomenon

The manifold challenges confronting Kabul include, most predominantly, rapid growth—perhaps the fastest in the world. In the years since September 11, 2001, Kabul's population has tripled in size to approximately 4.5 million people, with returning refugees and migrants (both those economically motivated and those forcibly displaced) constituting 80 percent of the change. In 2002, only 22 percent of Afghanistan's population lived in urban areas. The figure may have increased to as much as 35 percent by 2009, indicating unprecedented urban growth countrywide, a trend data suggest will continue for the foreseeable future.

Volatility amid continuing efforts to eradicate the insurgency, the ravages of recurrent drought and environmental degradation, limited employment opportunities, and natural disasters in communities with poor risk management and response capacities continue to erode coping mechanisms in rural areas and prompt residents to flee to Kabul and other cities. Current and future migration rates remain indeterminable and unpredictable, respectively, adding additional challenges to urban recovery planning in the capital city.

Urban displaced populations are often difficult to count, invisible amongst significant numbers of other urban poor. Rarely do displaced households reside in designated areas, but rather with host families, in demographically diverse informal settlements, or in abandoned buildings.

The absence of mechanisms to locate displaced individuals living in the city, in part a consequence of limited humanitarian engagement in the urban ▷

Urban Displacement: A Burgeoning Area of Study

http://blogs.odi.org.uk/blogs/main/archive/2009/06/19/world_refugee_day.aspx

- Over the next two years, the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) will be studying urban displacement in partnership with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and in collaboration with the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University, UN-Habitat and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) research on urban displacement includes:
  http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/4a1d33252.pdf
  http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/487b4c6c2.pdf
- Preparations for the December 2009 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges and 'Urban Displacement,' further details of which can be found at:
  http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/4a12a6ce2.pdf

USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

USAID/OFDA programs account for unique vulnerabilities, natural hazard risks, cultural context, existing social and economic systems, and the role of Kabul Municipality:

The multi-sectoral KASS project:

- **Provides seismic-resistant transitional shelter and basic services and infrastructure using local labor and resources;**
- **By generating livelihoods, promotes recovery and local ownership of projects;**
- **By accounting for risks, incorporates long-term view to support development; and**
- **By investing in existing communities to upgrade and expand shelter and services, ensures cost-effective, timely humanitarian assistance, while building on established social and economic networks.**

Capacity building in Kabul municipality:

- **USAID/OFDA partners build the urban recovery management capacity of Kabul Municipality.**
- **Means include technical assistance, advisory services and technology transfer.**
- **Urban planning advisors address strategy and policy issues related to large-scale urban displacement and growth.**

For additional information, please see:

- **Shelter and Settlements Sector Update, Sept 2009 http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/shelter.html**
- **Overview of the KASS Project http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/files/kass_summary.pdf**
- **Delivery of Humanitarian Shelter in Urban Areas: The Case of "KASS" http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/files/case_of_kass.pdf**

context, allows government and international actors to downplay the displacement crisis, advocate for status quo programs, and ignore a growing segment of the population, many of whom require immediate assistance after arriving in Kabul with limited or no resources. Efforts by the humanitarian community to distinguish between the urban displaced and urban poor—and, therefore, demarcate humanitarian assistance and development assistance—have generated controversy among both policymakers and assistance providers. Two clear facts emerge as indisputable, however: humanitarian needs exist among Kabul's population, due in large part to rapid and untenable growth, and these needs are often more acute for households displaced from rural areas.

Informal settlements become the norm

The time-warp speed at which Kabul grew in the last eight years hardly afforded government officials the luxury of foresight to effectively plan for and accommodate growth when war- and disaster-ravaged resources and infrastructure precluded even minimal responses to meet the most basic needs. Surprisingly, however, a significant majority of the population occupies what the World Bank describes as "substantial" structures, generally made from mud bricks. The government considers only 0.5 percent of the population homeless. The buildings where people live, however, form high-density, crowded settlements precariously balanced on steep hillsides and buttressing towering and dilapidated buildings in the city center. The construction of settlements kept pace with the high rate of displacement and three-fold increase in population, resulting in a four-fold increase in land devoted to urban activities. Unfortunately, continued government reliance on a 1978 master plan designed to accommodate only two million people resulted in one of the highest rates of informal housing in the world. Thus, although Kabul avoided a homelessness crisis, approximately 80 percent of the total population resides in officially unauthorized and unrecognized areas that lack adequate drainage, refuse disposal, graveled roads, water and sanitation facilities, and safe drinking water sources. Further, although "substantial," many structures remain vulnerable to collapse during seismic events—the latter a critical consideration in one of the world's most seismically active and vulnerable cities courtesy of the Chaman fault and low-quality building materials and practices. As a result of location and poor services, settlements are more vulnerable to other disasters as well, including floods, waterborne diseases, physical damage or loss of life caused by falling boulders in the hillsides, and landmines from earlier conflicts.

Responding to needs

The case of Kabul clearly demonstrates the need for humanitarian and development actors to re-think urban interventions. A new strategy that addresses humanitarian needs caused by rapid urban growth and displacement in a manner that supports long-term development goals is required. As the preceding assessment illustrates, the current situation is a complex intertwinement of significant humanitarian needs and basic development needs, compounded by the effects and high-level risks associated with natural and human-generated hazards.

Given the sheer number of structures, the minimal resources in Kabul Municipality coffers, and the need to quickly address pressing humanitarian needs, improving the informal settlements remains the most viable option at present. Two questions then arise related to supporting long-term development: how to develop and service settlements in a sustainable manner while strengthening local capacity to assume ownership of urban recovery; and how to mitigate risks in order to protect progress and maintain a foundation for development. For an overview of how the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), continues to answer these questions through the Kabul Area Shelter and Settlements (KASS) Project and capacity building programs, please refer to the sidebar. MD

The views expressed in this article are the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the United States Agency for International Development.

Disaster Risk Reduction in African Cities: The Case of Goma

Charles A. Setchell
Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, USAID/OFDA

In January 2002, the Nyiragongo volcano erupted near Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, devastating a city of 450,000 people. In less than a day, lava covered 13 percent of the city, or nearly two square miles, and destroyed up to 15,000 houses. Thousands of jobs were lost, and the urban and regional economy was devastated. As part of the international community's response, the USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) provided nearly $5 million in assistance, including $2.6 million for emergency relief and $2.3 million for transitional shelter and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities.

USAID/OFDA risk reduction activities included support of the Goma Volcano Observatory (GVO) to improve volcano hazard monitoring (e.g. provision of seismographs and telemetry equipment), train staff and provide technical assistance. Additionally, a two-year, community-based DRR program was supported to enhance early warning systems, upgrade evacuation routes, and improve community awareness of what to do and where to go during eruptions and earthquakes, i.e., to learn to live with their risks.

More than six years after the eruption, the long-term impact of the OFDA-supported projects is visible to varying degrees:

- In 2002, OFDA provided transitional shelter to 5,000 families, which served as the template for the provision of an additional 8,000 transitional shelters by other donors. Over time, these families have transformed their shelter into permanent housing. This has resulted in re-establishment of local markets and communities, and contributed significantly to overall recovery

- GVO volcano monitoring continues, with most of the equipment provided through OFDA programs still functioning, though upgrades are needed, and

- GVO continues many of the same community-based education activities supported earlier by OFDA, such as providing a volcano activity weekly report on local radio stations, sharing information at a local volcano information center, and updating alert levels in public areas.

Incorporation of DRR into the 2002 disaster response aimed to strengthen the resilience of Goma's citizens by lessening the impact of future disasters. A recent assessment found that many of the OFDA-sponsored projects promoted the transition to recovery and reconstruction. However, vigilance will continue to be needed to maintain awareness of the hazards from the many volcanoes in the Goma area.

Multi-Sector Disaster Risk Reduction as a Sustainable Development Template: The Bamako Flood Hazard Mitigation Project

By Charles A. Setchell, Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance*

Photo: courtesy of Charles A. Setchell

Bamako, Mali, is perhaps best known as the center of a vibrant music scene. Less well known is that portions of the city haven't flooded in nearly nine years, in part due to a flood hazard mitigation project funded by the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) shortly after the devastating floods of 1999.

That's the good news. The bad news is that precious few know about the project, or how it might serve as a template for sustainable development, which is the subject of this article.

Background

Flash flooding throughout Bamako in August 1999 resulted in death, destruction and significant economic losses for several thousand families. OFDA responded by providing funds to Action Contre La Faim (ACF) for local purchase and distribution of relief supplies to flood victims. Subsequent OFDA analysis of the causes of the flooding resulted in the October 1999 approval of a four-year, $525,000 mitigation project in the city's most affected commune, which was implemented by ACF.

One of the primary causes of flooding in Bamako and cities in many countries is the disposal of refuse in waterways, which compromises the ability of those waterways to safely absorb floodwaters. Efforts to reduce flooding risks are thus linked to improvements in urban service provision (e.g., improved retention, drainage, and refuse collection and disposal), a typically mundane development activity that becomes an extremely useful disaster risk reduction (DRR) tool when linked directly to hazard mitigation.

Project Objectives

The project focused on five objectives:

1. **Watershed management**, including retention strategies (e.g., slip trenches and diversion efforts) and waterway bank restoration;
2. **Refuse removal, collection, and disposal,** including removal of backlogged refuse in waterways, and the establishment of a refuse collection system and landfill operation;
3. **Livelihood generation** related to drainage/retention improvements, refuse collection and disposal, and the initiation of a composting operation;
4. **Public health and sanitation improvement** through enhanced water management, training and awareness raising; and
5. **Decentralization support** to promote democratic governance by engaging local government authorities and project area residents in a process of identifying needs and priorities throughout the project cycle.

Results

In addition to promoting decentralization, other project outcomes included:

1. Restoring channel volume in key project area waterways through the removal of several hundred tons of accumulated refuse and debris, which improved drainage capacity and reduced flood risk;
2. Improving water retention capacity in selected sites throughout the project area by constructing slip trenches (a.k.a., soak pits), thereby reducing both runoff volume and flood vulnerability;
3. Establishing a refuse collection and disposal service through the creation of eight collection routes, each served by a collection team using tractor-trailers, with disposal at a nearby landfill established by ACF. (This service generated numerous livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth, and became self-sustaining, in that collection fees soon more than offset costs.);

4. Garnering the attention of the national government and other donors, which resulted in the project's replication elsewhere;

5. Reducing the incidence of selected water- and mosquito-borne illnesses in the project area by 33-40 percent; and

6. Changing development policy. After the project was completed, USAID/Mali requested that OFDA review its development policies to better reflect DRR concerns. The review remains an excellent example of integrating DRR and development policy, thereby enhancing prospects for sustainability.

Summary

The Bamako project was much more than just reducing flood risk: it demonstrated that such an effort can also be a cost-effective means of promoting several other objectives. At a time of constrained project budgets, the multiple benefits of DRR in Bamako should be recognized, appreciated and considered as a model for DRR programming activities elsewhere. When these activities include public service provision or other inherently developmental efforts they can become templates for the pursuit of the broader objective of sustainable development.

Why Is The Bamako Case Important?

At least two reasons come to mind. First, water-related disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts are not at all trivial. According the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies World Disasters Report 2007, 98.5 percent of the 2.7 billion people affected by natural disasters during the 1997-2006 period and 85 percent of the $788 billion in economic losses during the same period were caused by hydrometeorological events. Given these daunting totals, promoting Bamako-like DRR projects on a wide scale seems more than prudent.

Finally, Bamako also serves as a good example of addressing DRR issues where most human beings now live: in cities. Often located in "harm's way," cities in developing countries are projected to double in population and triple in physical area in the coming years, thereby placing even more people in "harm's way." Thus, the need for multi-sector DRR in urban areas reflecting the multi-faceted character of those places has never been greater.

It seems then that Bamako has a whole lot more to offer the world than good music. ●●○

**The views expressed in this article are the personal views of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the United States Agency for International Development.*

Flood Hazard Mitigation in Kinshasa, DRC: A Disaster Risk Reduction Success Story

Charles A. Setchell
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OFDA continues to monitor the positive results of flood mitigation and watershed management activities first implemented in Kinshasa in late 1998, which are serving as a basis for planning of future mitigation work in several countries.

The initial intervention began in May 1998, when OFDA approved a Disaster Declaration request for $25,000 to assist in emergency clean-up activities in two communes of Kinshasa. Torrential rains had inundated the homes and businesses of 10,000 commune residents with an estimated 3,000 cubic meters of sand and mud, causing widespread damage and dislocation. An additional 90,000 commune residents were indirectly affected by the flooding and sand/mud inundation, which disrupted transport and adversely affected livelihoods. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) received the emergency funding to undertake clean-up activities.

The intervention focused on the causes, and not simply the effects, of flooding. During the review of the disaster declaration request, questions were raised regarding the proximity of communes to adjacent watersheds, and how vulnerable commune residents would be to a reoccurrence of flooding in the future. Replies to the questions served as the basis for a proposal request to reduce floodwater runoff from the adjacent watershed through a package of disaster reduction measures. OFDA approved the CRS request for approximately $131,000 in late May 1998, and the flood/erosion reduction project was initiated in June 1998.

During the six–month period ending 15 March 1999, 17 small dams were constructed in the watershed adjacent to the communes. These dams were made from bamboo cuttings, grass, and sandbags. Three water retention basins were strengthened, drainage canals were cleaned, and portions of the watershed were seeded with grass. Local residents were organized to perform the work and maintain improvements. Residents were also provided with information on the importance of reducing flood hazards, maintaining drains and waterways free from refuse and other materials, and public health.

Adopted disaster reduction measures were tested severely during the 1999 rainy season. Torrential rains again visited Kinshasa in February 1999, and although two of the 17 dams failed, no flood-related damage was sustained in the two communes, no residents were injured or displaced, and no livelihoods were affected.

The benefits and costs of disaster risk reduction were demonstrated dramatically when the impacts of the adopted measures were assessed. By adopting conservative assumptions -- and only accounting for direct economic losses -- *one dollar of OFDA "investment" in disaster risk reduction in 1998 resulted in a "savings" of at least $45.58 during the 1999 rainy season.* Furthermore, this "savings" has occurred up to the present time, thereby compounding the initial benefit several times over. More importantly, 100,000 project beneficiaries did not have to again incur direct economic losses amounting to $7.1 million, or $71.06 each, in 1999 because of the OFDA "investment" of $1.56 per beneficiary in 1998.

On a per-family basis, OFDA-supported disaster risk reduction measures resulted in a "savings" of $426, or the equivalent of nearly 54 percent of average annual income, thereby enabling families to purchase the food, clothing, medicine, and other essential items that they may have had to forego in the event of a flood reoccurrence.

Again, these benefits have continued to accrue over time because there has not been a repeat of the flooding that occurred in 1998. There was also another beneficiary: OFDA. The 1998 investment in disaster risk reduction eliminated the need for subsequent OFDA disaster response funding in the intervening years, thereby saving time, effort, and money that could be applied to natural and complex disasters elsewhere.

This success was repeated in *another* commune of Kinshasa in 2000-2001. Torrential rains in late 1999 generated similar damage to the housing, possessions, and livelihoods of 50,000 residents. Adopting measures used in the earlier project, CRS received a $45,000 grant from OFDA to support additional mitigation activities, beginning in early 2000. As a result, the commune has not flooded since 2000, proving yet again that small investments in disaster risk reduction can result in large benefits for vulnerable people.

Finally, an additional, unintended benefit of reducing flood risk has been the contributory influence of project activities in improving public health conditions in the commune flooded in 1999. A 2002 study by the DRC Ministry of Health indicated that project risk reduction measures, together with the public health education component of the project, combined to improve commune environmental conditions to such an extent that the *incidence of cholera was reduced by over 90 percent when compared to pre-flood conditions*. The Ministry of Health study thus provides independent support for the claim that flood hazard reduction measures contributed to a significant improvement in public health.

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◀ This map was created as part of the Kabul, Afghanistan KASS project funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in 2006-7. The map is from a part of a District 13 shelter program which addressed some of the pressing neighborhood and settlement issues. A later map was signed by the individuals involved and by the Kabul deputy mayor to "certify" the validity.

Addressing the Land Issue

▶ Tackling land issues in **shelter programming** after disasters.

By **LeGrand L. Malany**, Former Senior Shelter Advisor, American Red Cross

SHELTER IS ONE OF the top necessities in any major disaster involving displacement. Almost immediately after the disaster response starts, the provision of physical shelters becomes a critical concern. In quick order, two important associated matters arise: settlement (the neighborhood and environment in which the shelter exists) and the demands for land (the site on which the shelter sits). This operational triad of shelter, neighborhood and land must be managed as a unit. Without an integrated approach, one cannot produce a meaningful and sustainable shelter solution. This solution should: provide the expected level of humanitarian protection; support family recovery, community development and enduring growth; and begin a pathway to permanent housing solutions. In this operational triad, land is fundamental—obviously without land, there can be no shelter or settlement.

Fundamentally, the land component can and should be addressed using a design and methodology similar to shelter and housing. Shelter responses are usually designed and phased to handle immediate emergency and transitional shelter needs, while also setting the stage for upgrading accommodations and eventually for the change over to permanent housing. All this is done—or should be done—in harmony with the expected local development. This model can be replicated for land issues. The key is to establish a proxy land management system that supports the shelter and settlement humanitarian response programs while also preparing the way for movement toward permanent housing.

Conceptually and practically, there cannot be land security without three interrelated and crucial constituents: government approval and support, a land management system, and a rule of law process. The three constituents together form a sure and sustainable, law-based land system. In many places where humanitarian shelter and settlement services are delivered, all three constituents are deficient for a multitude of reasons. Government approval may be confusing, unpredictable and unstable. The framework for a functional civil land system may be unclear, incomplete and contradictory. Moreover, land transactions may be subject to manipulation and are often corrupted.

These systemic defects put the burden on those providing shelter and settlement interventions to devise a proxy land system to appropriately compensate for the gaps. If these gaps are not alleviated, there will be no security, certainty or protected tenure for the shelter program or its beneficiaries. The program's impact will probably not last long enough to justify the effort or financial commitment.

Establishing the proxy solution

So how does one engineer a proxy land management system and effectively embed it into a shelter intervention? Like politics, all land law behavior is local. This is most true in the kinds of places where humanitarian shelter responses take place. There is usually no overarching, formal land management framework. Instead, land boundaries are often described by common natural features or man-made structures that lack sufficient permanence. Sometimes local leaders unilaterally decide or people agree among themselves

Photo: LeGrand L. Malany

who owns or has the right to use a piece of land. Transfers may be made based on ceremony and social contacts, and not documented formally. Disputes may be resolved through the community's social structure rather than an established law-based process.

However, do not be too quick to condemn such systems. The English land system of today—the basis for the American land system—sprang from a feudal system that had many of the characteristics that responders find and bemoan in shelter program settings. The evolution of the English land system is due in large part to two instruments: the establishment of common law (precedence setting) courts; and the institution of statutory law (legislative enactments). In this history are the seeds for the way forward.

Details and levels of sophistication will differ from place to place. But all land systems, formal or informal, must have rules and procedures for measuring and mapping, transactions, recordation and documentation, land use management, and dispute resolution. These are the *minimum* elements for a proxy land system. They form the skeletal structure, which should be fleshed out using local custom and gap-filling measures identified by the relief and development community. This gap filling should be done using a participatory, community-led land policy approach tailored to the given context and agreed-upon program needs. It should also take into account the anticipated course of the community's development.

Task 1: Identify the parcels of land, their boundaries and ownership. Even in the best of times, land boundaries may be confusing or difficult to determine. But after a disaster, when common markers are moved or destroyed and existing buildings are reduced to rubble, boundary identification can border on impossible. Locals know who owns or belongs to what land parcel better than anyone else, so land parcel identification should start at this level. One may literally have to find and measure each boundary line individually and have the adjoining "owners" sign off. It may take some time, but usually one can eventually create a sketch map with agreement on almost all of the boundaries in the community. Those that cannot be agreed upon can be referred to existing dispute resolution mechanisms.

The process should guided by *charrette* planning. Charrette is a collaborative process that brings together all interested parties to create and support a master plan for the community. In this stage of developing a proxy land system, this means ensuring that the community is *totally* involved in the process and in creating the participatory sketch map. This will also end up yielding useful information for taking a charrette approach to subsequent steps in the recovery and rebuilding process. The next step is to memorialize this work.

Task 2: Create a measured map, survey monuments and "official" parcel descriptions. The sketch map reflects the community consensus. To give this consensus more permanence, the sketch must be converted into and memorialized in a surveyed land map known as a plat. Doing so involves creating a proper land survey. Unless the community already has real survey standards, this will require some professional survey assistance.

The first activity is to create a *monument*—or more than one if necessary. A monument is a precisely measured location that is permanently marked, usually with a metal disc—called a marker—imprinted with a legend on its face showing the point being established. The marker is set in a concrete base. A logical place to set the monument is in the center of the community (like the city square) where it can and should be protected. It may also act as a focal point for the identity of the community. The next step is to survey every parcel on the sketch map and tie everything to the newly established community monument.

When the survey is done, one can write accurate parcel descriptions and establish a cadastral map. A cadastral map is a parcel map showing boundaries and parcel owners; taxing authorities use this type of map. The cadastral map then can be used for a host of land-related activities, such as writing deeds, making easements, dividing or combining parcels and setting taxes. This accomplishment in itself will be a huge benefit to the community in the long term.

Task 3. Resolve conflicts. Usually at this stage there are still some outstanding land conflicts. Once the cadastral map starts to take shape, a brokered approached can resolve many of the remaining disputes and the results can be adjusted on the map. Any conflicts that cannot be resolved will have to await a more for-

mal process, but at least they are now better defined. The remaining map gaps should be noted and programs worked around the gaps. Hopefully, the outstanding disputes at this juncture will not be impediments to the intended humanitarian programs.

Task 4. Using the cadastral map to build back better. Because the cadastral map was derived with significant community participation and based on local custom, a number of potential benefits result. For example, the cadastral map provides a solid basis to negotiate parcel changes for roads, drainage and physical infrastructure, and land-use planning for where housing, schools and community buildings should go. As the jurisdiction recovers and begins to develop a land system, the work done to create the proxy land system in the shelter program will be compatible and can be used to enhance the developing process. If the jurisdiction has no land survey policy, the survey work represented by the cadastral map can be integrated into any system the jurisdiction decides to create; this can be done by simply surveying the monument into that system.

The mapping created by the proxy land system described here is a crucial step in converting a homeowner's parcel and shelter from an uncertain possession into a meaningful economic asset. The proxy land system creates the practical means for establishing workable land tenure agreements. As a result, the land, and its various interests, is becoming transferable—able to be bought and sold in commerce.

Advancing shelter and settlement interventions

It is time for land intervention activities to rise to the same level of benefit and refinement as the related emergency shelter and settlement activities. The proxy land management system described above fills this gap and is well-suited to trends in humanitarian shelter and settlement strategies.

The objective of the current shelter programming—meeting minimal humanitarian shelter needs after the disaster—now recognizes that the emergency sheltering intervention is inherently the starting point for recovery, permanent housing programs and related community rebuilding. To accommodate this evolution in understanding, the shelter sector has adopted the transitional shelter approach: creating shelters that meet basic post-disaster needs, but also robust enough to be easily improved to meet permanent housing needs as the homeowner's assets and capacities improve and the broader recovery proceeds.

In a similar manner, settlement activity must both provide the service platform for the emergency shelter development, and serve as the starting point for the recovery of the community's physical infrastructure and social cohesion. To this end, the shelter sector has adopted the neighborhood approach: a holistic method that supports emergency shelter interventions and also can be easily adapted to meet the collective physical infrastructure and social cohesion needs of the population as the neighborhood's asset base grows and service demands develop.

Progress in each component (shelter, settlement and land) has benefits beyond the local level; it can also inform and improve national development programming. In addition, such progress can make it easier to integrate the national programming locally and to take advantage of its potential benefits, thereby accelerating recovery at the household and community levels.

A normative shift is underway in the dominant approach to emergency. We are moving away from *need* as the principle design parameter to a design that fills needs by creating options. Need is important, but it does not contribute to the future. At best, it stabilizes the present.

The humanitarian community has learned that the emergency response foreshadows the quality of the recovery. Therefore, everything done during the humanitarian response should also provide an effective path to recovery. This must include establishing the mechanisms that serve as starting points for recovery. They are necessary for an effective shelter and settlements program. They are not added extras.

In fact, these measures are the bedrock for efforts to support individual self-help and initiative. This, in turn, enables the process of shifting the provision shelter, housing and safe neighborhoods from a humanitarian activity conducted by relief organizations to a self-help model backed by humanitarian oversight and guidance. All of this will improve not only our emergency response programs but also the longer-term post-disaster recovery. MD

SETTLEMENTS 1.0: A WORKING DEFINITION

Definition of a Settlement

Settlements are socially, economically, geographically, and, often, politically and administratively, defined entities where humans live and interact.

Settlements Classification

In a humanitarian context, settlements can be classified very basically according to their size, temporality, condition, and legitimacy.

Settlements Classification				
	Code	1	2	3
Size	S	Cities	Towns	Neighborhoods
Duration	T	Permanent	Transitional	Emergency
Condition	C	Planned	Unplanned	
Legitimacy	L	Formal	Informal	

As an example, an unplanned, informal, permanent neighborhood could be codified as S-3/D-1/ C-2/ L-2.

Size

Cities, also known as urban areas, are the largest entities in any national settlements system. Cities often provide a focal point for the administrative, political, commercial, cultural, academic, and religious activities of the regions that surround them, and sometimes the nations they often dominate. In addition, cities often provide the most diverse income generation opportunities and populations available in a country or region.

Towns are secondary focal points within national settlements systems, with strong commercial linkages with one or more cities. Neighborhoods are typically associated with urban areas, so could be considered subunits of cities and towns. Neighborhoods can conceptually be found wherever people share a strong sense of belonging, identity and socio-economic connection, so neighborhoods can even conceptually extend to rural-based settlements, camps, transit centers, etc.

Duration

Emergency settlements are those constructed as part of response efforts, often without the assistance of humanitarian actors, and are intended to be relatively short-lived.

Transitional settlements are constructed between few weeks or months after disaster events, often feature one or more forms of transitional shelter, and often evolve into permanent settlements.

Permanent settlements are those that have been populated for several years.

Condition

Planned settlements are those designed specifically for that purpose.

Unplanned settlements are an entity created spontaneously by their residents or other actors.

Legitimacy

Formal settlements are officially sanctioned by government authorities.

Informal settlements lack official recognition by government authorities.

Rural vs. Urban Classification

Often settlements are also classified in “urban” and “rural” mostly based on their population size, population density, and the presence and level of access to services (e.g., transportation, electricity, water and sewer systems, universities, hospitals, etc.). There are no universal definitions of “urban” and “rural,” but generally accepted notions of what urban and rural

settlements are within national settlements systems. Further, many settlements, especially in developing nations, have both “urban” and “rural” characteristics, and are sometimes referred to as “peri-urban”. For example, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, has both relative high population densities (near its commercial and administrative focal points) and low population density neighborhoods near its western limits, while the access to basic services throughout the city is variable, although limited or non-existent.

Elements of a Settlement

The basic elements of a settlement are the following:

1. Governance: the formal and/or informal organizational and power structures
2. Population: the people living in the settlement independently of their status (e.g. permanent or temporary residents)
3. Housing: includes all structures occupied exclusively or partially for residential purposes
4. Non-housing buildings, such as offices, businesses, and industries
5. Basic services: such as drinking water, health, education, etc.
6. Infrastructure: refers to the physical structures in the settlements such as streets, bridges, utilities, markets, parks, and other public facilities
7. Resources: includes assets such land, forests, air, water, minerals, etc.
8. Connectivity: includes the social and commercial relationships existing among people living in the settlement
9. Geography: refers to the physical space and its characteristics within settlements, and
10. Hazards: types, features, and related risks.

FISCAL YEAR 2016

SHELTER & SETTLEMENTS SECTOR UPDATE

USAID/OFDA engineering consultant assessing earthquake damage in Manta, Ecuador, April 2016. *Photo courtesy of Eddie Argenal, USAID/OFDA*

Engaged in Humanitarian "S&S" Activities Around the World

USAID/OFDA S&S advisors deployed throughout FY 2016 to serve on a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART), conduct field assessments, design sector strategies, and monitor project activities. Travel to affected areas entailed conducting land and housing market analyses to better understand impacts, needs, and resources, as well as engaging with affected populations, cluster lead agencies, host country institutions, and implementing partners. Following the April 2016 Ecuador earthquake, a S&S advisor served on the Ecuador DART to ensure timely access to shelter, and develop strategies to improve the living conditions of disaster-affected populations. Throughout FY 2016, S&S advisors worked closely with regional and field teams to provide guidance on sector strategies, including in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. The S&S team's contingency planning for a potential failure of Iraq's Mosul Dam, as well as contingency planning for potential conflict-induced displacement from the city of Mosul, are of particular note. S&S advisors also participated in discussions with USAID colleagues and other stakeholders on post-earthquake housing reconstruction in Nepal, reflecting growing engagement on recovery issues, such as more effective promotion of the transition from humanitarian shelter to housing reconstruction. Central to nearly all efforts throughout FY 2016 was the identification of opportunities for the incorporation of DRR measures into S&S sector programming, where needed and appropriate. Finally, S&S advisors participated in the research and evaluation of plastic sheeting, solar-powered lights, and other non-food items, often in concert with other humanitarian agencies.

"Ten Years On" Review of 2006 Post-Earthquake Shelter Response in Indonesia

At the request of USAID/OFDA, the SSWG conducted a "ten years on" review of the shelter response to a magnitude 6.3 earthquake that struck Java, Indonesia, on May 27, 2006.

Sector Overview

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) remains at the forefront of the humanitarian community's Shelter and Settlements (S&S) activities, which focus on a common goal: the expeditious and appropriate provision of covered living space to adequately shelter displaced populations, while also promoting safer, healthier settlements that link emergency S&S assistance to longer-term recovery efforts.

USAID/OFDA contributes to the international humanitarian community's broader S&S strategic framework through participation in the Shelter and Settlements Working Group (SSWG)—an open membership group hosted by InterAction—and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. USAID/OFDA also participates in Global Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster activities.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, USAID/OFDA provided nearly $81 million for humanitarian S&S assistance and shelter-related disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, including nearly $80 million for S&S interventions in 24 countries and more than $1.1 million for global and regional S&S initiatives.

Transitional shelter provided in 2006 after the magnitude 6.3 earthquake in Java, Indonesia, upgraded to permanence. See summary of SSWG post-project "ten years on" review. *Photo courtesy of Mohamed Hilmi, InterAction*

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The earthquake resulted in nearly 6,000 fatalities, damaged or destroyed 628,000 homes, and displaced approximately 1.5 million people. The earthquake response was also one of the first to be directed by the newly-adopted cluster system—the coordinating mechanism for humanitarian response activities, comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders.

USAID/OFDA was fully engaged from the outset in working with cluster members and government actors to develop strategies and design assessment protocols. In addition to other response activities, USAID/OFDA implemented a $4.8 million shelter and settlements strategy that featured the use of insecticide-treated plastic sheeting as a key input to emergency shelter for more than 4,000 households; durable, transitional shelter units for approximately 10,000 households; and training on seismic-resistant building techniques in more than 340 earthquake-affected settlements. Within a few months of the disaster, Shelter Cluster members provided more than 300,000 households with shelter assistance, including 80,000 transitional shelters. One of the most important factors in explaining the rapid and effective response was the strength of existing social coping mechanisms, such as reliance on the cultural practice of *gotong royong*, which emphasizes communal volunteerism to promote general welfare and recovery. Most of the assistance provided to affected communities utilized these coping mechanisms, with support from both government and non-government actors.

Although intended for two years of continuous occupancy, the SSWG team found that transitional shelters were still in large-scale use as recently as 2013, largely due to household-level factors related to limited resources and capacities to engage in reconstruction. Thus, the transitional shelters served as a valuable form of assistance well beyond the intended two-year duration. Transitional shelter use for most assisted households evolved, however, from sheltering entire households to sheltering fewer household members, to serving as storage or to support livelihood activities. By June 2016, during the SSWG field visit, most transitional shelters had been absorbed into the housing market, although remnant materials were still visible or being stored for potential future use, and thus clearly viewed as valuable household assets.

The post-project review concluded that transitional shelter laid the foundation for immediate recovery, and was thus a fundamental step in the overall recovery process, including supporting community members' livelihoods, education, and health needs. This success can be attributed in large part to engagement with community social structures, early implementation of development housing programs, functioning local and national government structures, and active local civil society organizations.

Update on the "Neighborhood Approach"

The USAID/OFDA-supported Barrio Mio ("My Neighborhood," in Spanish) project in Guatemala that began in 2012 has evolved from a small-scale neighborhood intervention to a focal point in Government of Guatemala efforts to nationalize the "neighborhood approach" as the official basis for responding to urban disasters and implementing DRR-based upgrading activities in high-risk informal settlements. The neighborhood approach is a participatory, evidence-based, multi-sector process for responding to needs in hazard-prone urban areas that features engagement with residents, local officials, and the private sector to create safer shelters and settlements.

Training and Outreach: One-Day Events, Online Courses, and Requested Talks

Throughout FY 2016, S&S advisors presented the one-day USAID/OFDA S&S training course for both in-house staff and those from numerous other humanitarian organizations. The online version of the course, which launched in April 2015, is available at OFDA Academy, USAID University, and publically accessible websites. FY 2017 plans include translating the course into Spanish for broader distribution.

USAID/OFDA advisors also presented on a multitude of S&S and DRR topics for various organizations during FY 2016, including the Governments of Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, the CCCM Cluster, RedR, the World Bank, InterAction Forum, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Emory University, Harvard University's Humanitarian Academy, University of Vermont, Saint Michael's College, and George Washington University.

Training and Outreach: Graduate Student Fellowships in S&S

USAID/OFDA awarded two graduate student fellowships in May 2016, as part of larger efforts to improve S&S sector programming, increase awareness of the sector in North America, and expand career options for S&S activities. The successful candidates, from graduate programs in Civil Engineering at the University of Colorado and Emergency and Development at Oxford-Brookes University in London, are focusing field activities on post-Haiyan S&S recovery activities and developing guidelines for rent-based shelter recovery programs, respectively.

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BASIC ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SHELTER PROPOSAL

Note: Adherence to the following does not guarantee USAID/OFDA funding.

BACKGROUND

GOAL: The goal of any USAID/OFDA Shelter and Settlements (S&S) activity will be *occupancy of covered living space that can serve as minimally adequate shelter for disaster/crisis affected populations in an expeditious and appropriate manner*.

APPROACH: USAID/OFDA emphasizes the use of *market-based assessments of damage and need to better gauge impacts, resources, and opportunities in disaster/crisis affected areas*. The core target group of proposed actions will be the most vulnerable among affected populations. Provision of support to this group may require technical assistance, rather than a reliance on self-help capacity.

Shelter will be *adequate, habitable, safe, private, and secure*, cognizant of Sphere Project and USAID/OFDA guidelines, and the related, possible need to engage in disaster risk reduction.

Where possible and appropriate, USAID/OFDA will emphasize community-based approaches and reliance on local materials and labor, to enhance prospects for sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and livelihood generation. USAID/OFDA will, therefore, *support shelter sector interventions that feature a settlements approach*, thereby permitting identification of, and linkages with, other sectors, particularly agriculture and food security, livelihoods, WASH, and protection.

Shelter sector interventions will be designed to facilitate or "jump-start" the recovery of affected populations by emphasizing transitions to longer-term housing.

SPECIFICS

***Overall Mandate*:** Do proposed activities relate to the overall OFDA mandate of saving lives, relieving human suffering, and reducing the economic impacts of disasters?

***Assessment Data*:** Do baseline data appear to be reliable benchmarks for evaluating identified issues and needs? Who did the studies? Is a damage profile presented, showing the range of shelter damage (from none to total)? Are market impacts and opportunities discussed? What is the size of the total housing stock in the affected area? How are the data linked to others, in terms of sharing,

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17 Feb. '09

coordination, analysis, linkage to sector coordinating agencies?

***Terminology*:** Are important terms (e.g., houses, dwelling units, households, families, vulnerable households, etc.) defined clearly, and used consistently in discussions and documents?

Households and Linkage to Sphere Project and OFDA Guidelines: What is the average household size of the affected population and proposed beneficiary group, if different? Is this figure linked to the Sphere Project- and OFDA-identified "minimally adequate" total of 3.5 square meters of "covered living space" per person? In this regard, please refer to S&S Sector Indicators in the USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines "APDR"s to ensure that proposed activities are consistent with OFDA guidelines.

Shelter Design: To ensure cost effectiveness, cost consciousness, and the presence of shelter framing, sketches of proposed shelters are requested, along with a detailed Bill of Materials (BOM) needed to create the proposed shelters. The BOM must include, indeed feature, framing material to support use of the plastic sheeting or other materials in a manner that creates adequate, habitable, safe, private, secure, and appropriate shelter for identified beneficiaries.

Sheltering Process: How was housing built in the area before it was damaged? Who built the housing? Describe the process of provision, to include a discussion of who has been selected for assistance, based on what criteria. Who participated in identifying beneficiaries? Who will construct the shelters? Over what time frame? How will proposed implementing partners ensure that those who may be unable to construct shelter are assisted as a priority activity?

***Supply-side Issues*:** Have local homebuilding "industry" capacity/capabilities been examined? What is the availability of local building materials? What are industry constraints? To what extent can industry engagement in repair activities help stimulate economic recovery/growth? How will this be documented/monitored?

***Disaster Risk Reduction*:** Have opportunities for mitigating/preventing FUTURE disasters been identified (e.g., seismic-resistant construction)? Have they been made integral components of proposed activities?

Shelter Transition and Sustainability: Please discuss proposed locations of shelters, the sustainability of those shelter locations over time, the possible need for risk reduction measures, how shelter and supporting services (e.g., water, sanitation, etc.) are linked to support beneficiary existence over time, i.e., how proposed activities link to longer-term efforts.

***Government/Authority*:** To what extent is relevant host country government support/tolerance of proposed actions reflected in the proposal? What role is identified for local governments/organizations, if present? How do proposed actions relate to Sphere Project and OFDA Guidelines? How are any differences between these guidelines and local regulations/practices/expectations reconciled? What role will local authorities have in identifying beneficiaries? How will the proponent ensure the interests/needs of beneficiaries throughout the duration of the proposed activity?

***Reporting/Monitoring*:** How, how often, and where, will results be reported? Is occupancy progress (e.g., "people assisted") being reported, in addition to logistical progress (e.g., "materials distributed," or "shelters completed")?

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