SHELTER PROJECTS
2009
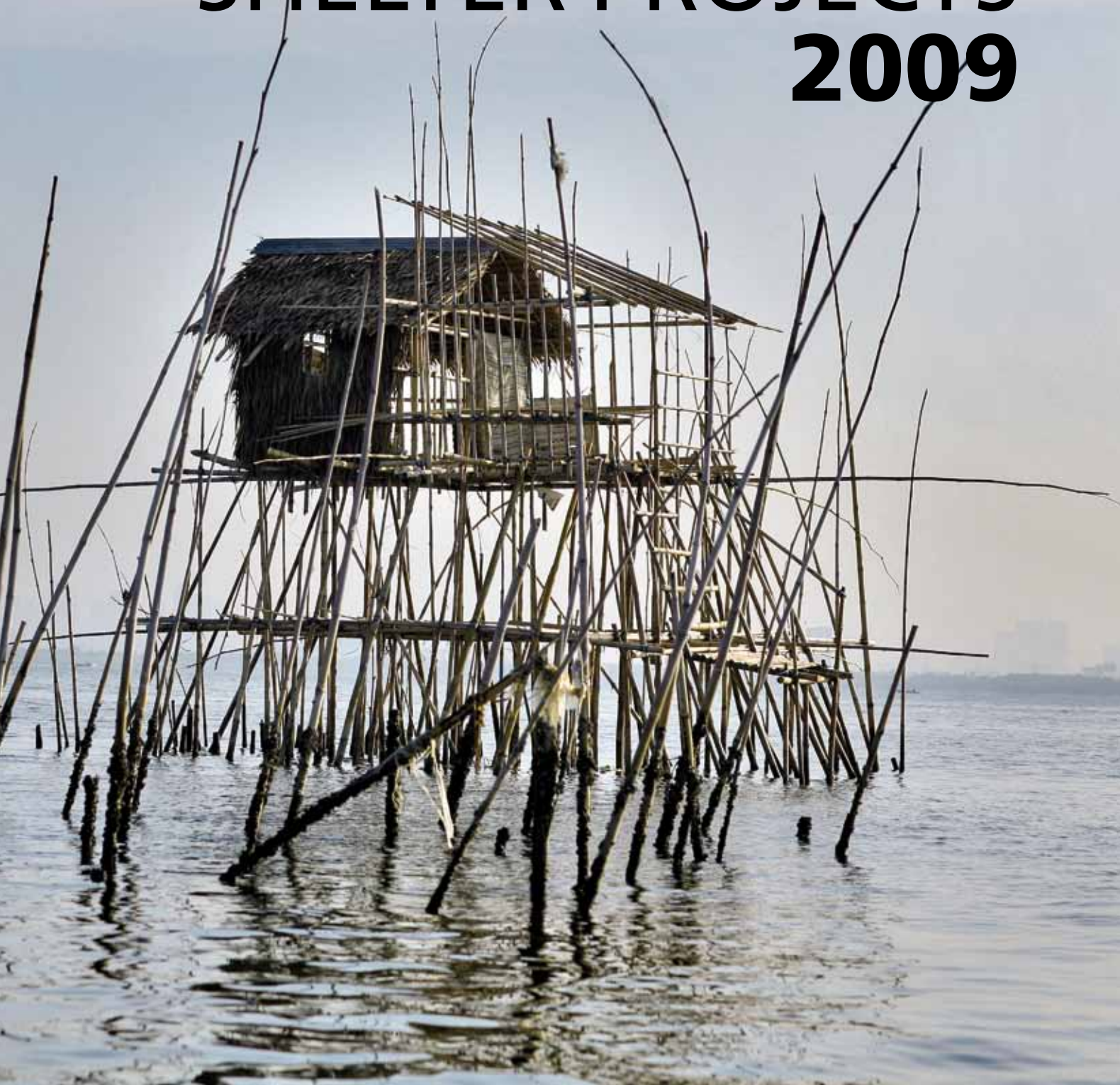
SHELTER PROJECTS
2009

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Shelter Projects 2009

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Front Cover: A fishermen's hut in Bacoor Cavite area south of Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, March 3, 2008. Fish is the primary source of protein in the Filipino diet. © Manoocher Deghati.

Back cover left to right: Afghanistan, 2009, © Shaun Scales. Hargeisa, Somalia, 2009, © Joseph Ashmore. Dadaab, Kenya, 2009, © Jake Zarins. Uganda 2007, © IFRC. Bangladesh, 2007, © Xavier Génot. Italy, 2009, © Dipartimento Protezione Civile. DRC, Goma, 2009, © Angela Rouse. Somalia, Hargeisa, 2009, © David Womble. Guatemala 1976, © Ian Davis.

Foreword

The attempt to build institutional memory of past disaster responses has always been a challenge within any implementing organisation. Building this memory collectively has been an even greater challenge. Shelter programmes, both the strategy and adopted technical solutions, are at best captured in evaluations, final reports or annual reviews. Most often these sit on the shelves of agency headquarters, are buried inside field manager's laptops or become anecdotal 'snapshots' passed on by the people involved. If not properly documented, memories fade away, year after year, disaster after disaster.

The second edition of the 'Shelter Projects 2009' contributes to changing this trend. It is an institutional collaboration between two key organisations involved in shelter and settlements after disasters, IFRC and UN-HABITAT. It offers a concrete tool for investigation and knowledge-sharing within the sector. It aims to serve the entire community of shelter practitioners, who are called to respond to natural disasters and conflicts both nationally and internationally year in, year out.

As a philosophy, 'Shelter Projects 2009' promotes the idea that each intervention, whatever its impact on the community, offers us lessons learned. Highlighting both good and bad practices will serve to improve quality and accountability of our actions.

Shelter Projects 2009 draws the attention to the following three key findings:

Firstly, several examples show that the use of cash grants, material vouchers and other non-conventional approaches to shelter perform well in emergencies. Not yet mainstreamed, this approach has increased and encourages agencies to move away from standard emergency relief solutions such as tents and tarpaulins, while balancing advantages and disadvantages of this form of assistance with tangible examples at hand.

Secondly, there is increasing evidence that the world is going urban, and so are disasters. Although Haiti's and Chile's 2010 earthquake responses will be captured only in next year's Shelter Projects publication, other examples in this edition address the challenges in providing shelter in cities. How are collective centres and multi-occupancy buildings planned and used in Azerbaijan to host refugees? Does this affect the affected population's ability and willingness to return home or find more sustainable solutions? Can a cash assistance programme still work when there is not much to buy, as is the case in Gaza city? What are the skills needed in urban damage assessments? Do these assessments inform both short term shelter solutions and housing policies?

Thirdly, 2009 has also witnessed disasters in the so-called 'developed' world. The earthquake that struck the Abruzzi region in Italy and left a whole provincial city and its historic core in ruins. The case study tackles disaster response and reconstruction from an angle that humanitarians are less familiar with. It also highlights that, although available resources are considerably higher, many of the issues and bottlenecks are similar to those of the 'developing' countries: loss of human lives, property and assets, pressure to identify interim locations to resettle people, political and legal constraints, equity issues, loss of memory and identity.

On behalf of our agencies, we hope that readers find the case studies relevant to their work and feel inspired to find out more about past projects and to apply this knowledge for future projects. Many of our readers are familiar with the projects or have contributed directly by providing examples and lessons learned from their field work for this edition. Their experiences are also writing the pages of the future editions. Without their contribution there would be no story to tell.

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This book contains summaries of shelter projects that have been implemented in response to conflicts and complex emergencies (Section A, page 1) and to natural disasters (Section B, page 39). It also contains summaries of historical shelter projects (Section C, page 83) that took place before 2000.

The case studies in this book were implemented by many different organisations, a full list of which can be found in the acknowledgements section (page iv). In order to allow weaknesses of programmes to be openly shared, none of the case studies are directly attributed to individual organisations.

This book also contains summaries of case studies that have a fuller write up in 📖 Shelter Projects 2008. Where there is significant new information, updates are included with the project summaries.

As a result of the projects being implemented in diverse and often challenging conditions, they illustrate both good and bad practices. From every case study there are lessons that can be learnt, and aspects that should be repeated or avoided elsewhere.

All projects in this book were implemented in different contexts. The case study Georgia 2009 (A.8 page 16) gives a good examples of how many projects must be

- A minimum of five hundred families had improved shelter as a result of the project activities.
- The project was implemented largely within the first year following natural disaster. For conflict-affected populations, chronic emergencies and returns processes, longer timescales were considered.
- Accurate project information had to be available from staff involved in the project implementation.

The case studies that have been selected illustrate a diversity of approaches to meet shelter need. In all of them, providing shelter is more than simply designing architecturally impressive structures.

As a result of challenging contexts, nothing was built at all in some of the projects. In other projects, the advocacy and learning support components of the project had a larger impact than the organisation was able to achieve through construction alone.

Shelter responses in 2009

In 2009, 335 reported natural disasters, killed over 10,000 people and affected more than 119 million people[1].

In 2009 there were also substantial new displacements due to conflict in countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Somalia. By the end of 2009, 43.3 million people worldwide had been

Disasters and conflict have had different impacts in different regions. Asian countries were most affected by natural disasters whilst countries in Africa were most affected by conflict.

As many of the responses to disasters in 2009 are still ongoing, many of them are not written up in this book. Instead we include the following new case studies, as well as updates to case studies previously documented in 📖 Shelter Projects 2008.

New case studies in Shelter Projects 2009
1945
UK (post conflict) - page 116
1982
Haiti - page 54
2007
Bangladesh (Cyclone Sidr) - page 116
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