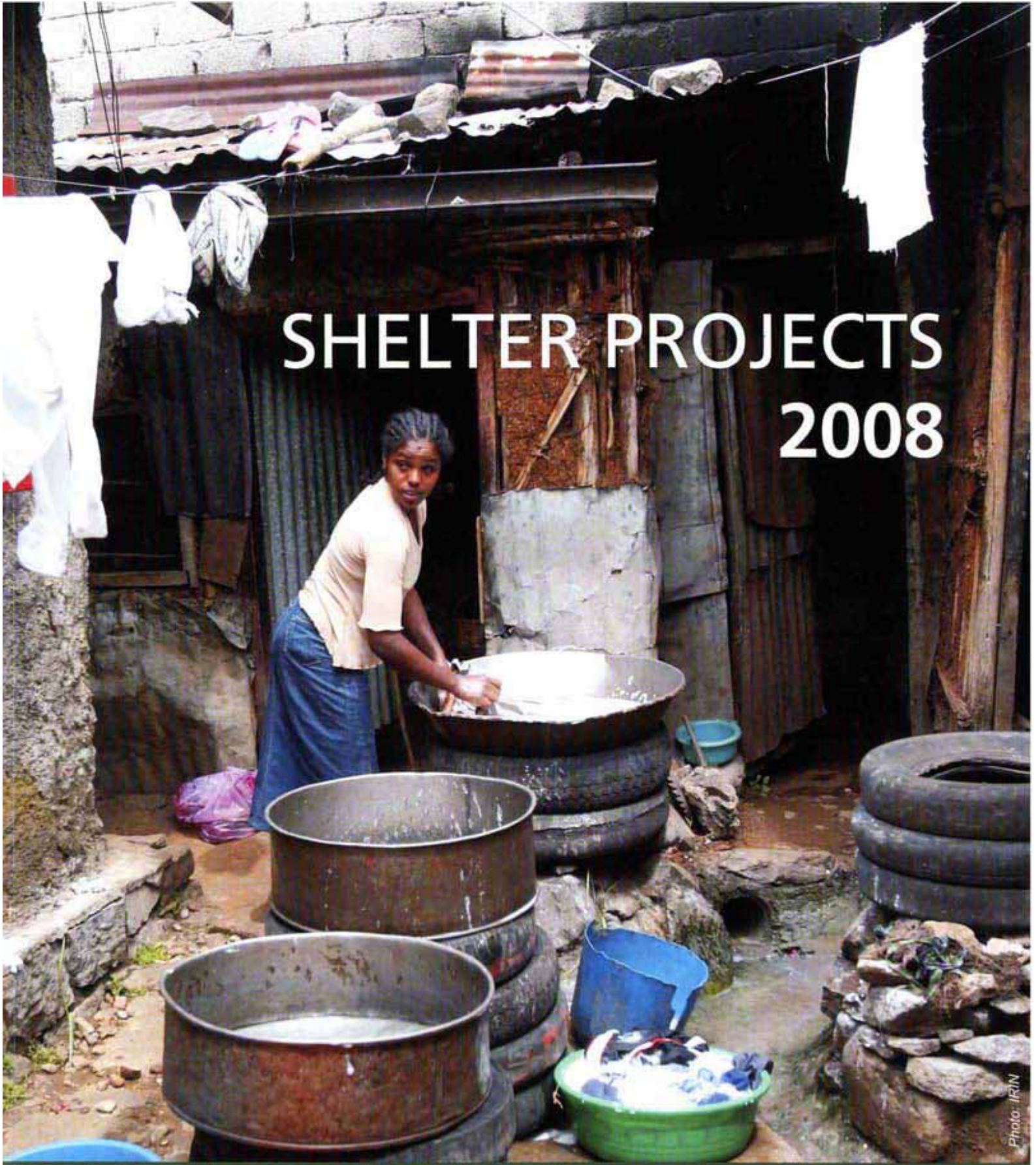

IASC Emergency Shelter Cluster

UN HABITAT

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Foreword

Shelter Options 2008

Much has been written over the years about the challenge of providing shelter for households affected by crises, whether they are human-made or result from natural events. In spite of the many reports commissioned by governments, donors, independent experts, multilateral and international aid organizations that provide a variety of recommendations on issues ranging from design to cost analysis methods, shelter remains one of the most controversial and challenging components of sustainable recovery from disasters.

In recent years, the humanitarian community has looked inward, learning from their past experiences in providing emergency shelter for the ever-increasing number of populations suffering from crises worldwide. The humanitarian reform process has helped widen the community of practitioners, reinforced global and country-based coordination systems, and required the agencies concerned to seek new and better means of ensuring integrated and robust humanitarian programming.

This publication is an example of a series of learning tools being produced to support improved response to crises. It has been developed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster through a group of agencies within the cluster led by UN-HABITAT. It contains summaries of a range of experiences applied in crisis situations, and an honest appraisal of their successes and failures. From these, a number of key principles emerge.

One key principle is that the survivors of these crises must be given every opportunity to engage in their own recovery. Disaster-affected households should no longer be treated as liabilities. This has significant implications on recommended approaches to post-disaster shelter and settlement responses, several of which are well illustrated in the case studies in this publication.

A second principle is that without immediate strategic planning covering land use, tenure, livelihoods and critical services, in addition to shelter options, there is a danger that temporary solutions become, de facto, permanent ones. As well as failing to address the risks and vulnerabilities that may have contributed to the scale of the crisis, poor or inadequate programmatic responses can increase shelter and settlement vulnerabilities. A number of the case studies illustrate these considerations.

A third principle follows from the above – that is, all change demands social mobilization, the involvement of the affected population and the appropriate local authorities, and legal compliance. Immediate shelter solutions *must* therefore consider long-term settlement issues, both for temporarily displaced populations and those who are able to return to the location of their damaged or destroyed shelters. The cultural, social and economic norms of the specific disaster-affected societies must be reflected in shelter and settlement responses that may potentially become durable, rather than transient, in nature. Non-tent based emergency shelter solutions that are rapid and cost effective can also be culturally acceptable to the populations they are designed for, in both the short term and over a longer period of recovery. This publication highlights a number of such examples.

A final principle follows from the three outlined above. Putting people (survivors and victims) first, planning and programming in advance, considering the potential of longer term solutions, and finally, creating space to address land and property-based losses following a crisis, all contribute to reducing demand on humanitarian capital while maximizing potential opportunities for recovery.

There are many more lessons in this book that will be of benefit to the reader. On behalf of our agencies, and in collaboration with our interagency partners from the Emergency Shelter Cluster, we encourage the study and widespread use of these lessons.

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Contents

Introduction

The case studies in this book are of real shelter projects that have been implemented. Each project is specific to an individual context and is the outcome of local assessments and monitoring.

None of the case studies in this book should be directly copied.

Because these projects were implemented in diverse and often challenging conditions, they illustrate both good and bad practices. From every case study there are lessons that should be learned, and aspects that should be repeated or avoided elsewhere.

Global shelter need

It is estimated that over 5 million people were made homeless by conflict and natural disasters in 2007[1]. This corresponds to approximately 1 million families. While the largest proportion of people made homeless by conflict are in Africa and the Middle East, the majority of those made homeless by natural disasters are in Asia. Although the numbers of people displaced by conflict and natural disasters over the past ten years run into the several millions, they are significantly lower in Latin America and the Caribbean than in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

There are approximately 40 million refugees and internally displaced people in the world - people who have been forced to leave their homes...

While the number of people made newly homeless in 2007 was in excess of 5 million, a significant proportion of people are not able to return to their place of origin for many years. As a result, the total number of people displaced in the world has remained roughly constant at approximately 15 million refugees[2] and a further 25 million internally displaced people (IDPs)[3].

IDP estimates by region (2007)

Region	Number of countries	IDPs (millions)
Africa	20	12.7
Americas	4	4.2
Asia and Middle East	18	6.6
Europe	10	2.5
Total	52	26

Estimated number of people made homeless by natural disasters (other than drought) 2000-2008[4]

Region	Number of homeless (in millions)
Africa	2
Asia	20
Latin America and Carribean (LAC)	1.5
Europe	0.1
North America	0.1

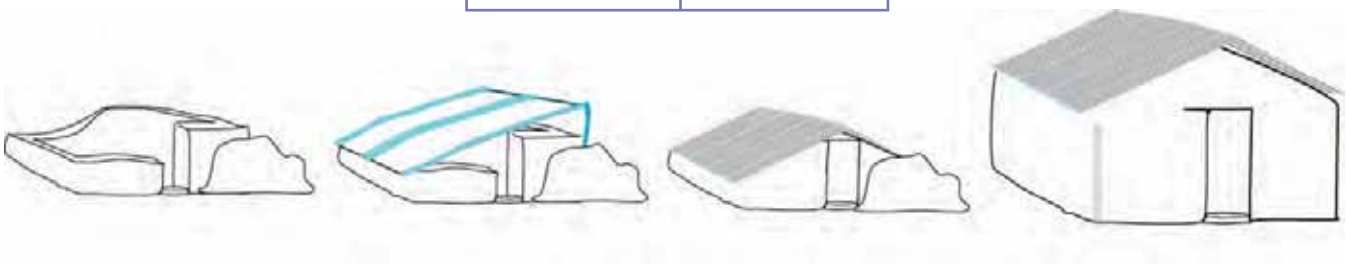
Selection of case studies

Given the scale of emergency shelter need every year, the case studies in this book focus on implemented projects rather than small-scale trials or concepts that were not implemented on any scale. There is also a regional bias towards Africa and Asia, where the post-disaster and post-conflict shelter needs are largest.

The case studies were selected according to the following criteria:

- The shelter project had to have been implemented in full.
- A minimum of 500 families were sheltered by the project's activities.
- The project was implemented largely within the first year following a natural disaster. For conflict-affected populations, chronic emergencies and returns processes, longer timescales were considered.
- Accurate project information was available from the staff involved in the project implementation.

The case studies that have been selected are intended to illustrate a diversity of approaches to helping meet shelter need. Most of them go beyond 'throwing shelter relief items off the back of a lorry' or delivering shelters as a design or a product.



1. This figure was reached by combining the figure from the Emergency Events Database (http://www.emdat.be) for the number of people made homeless with the figure of 3.7 million new IDPs quoted in *Internal displacement: Global overview of trends and developments in 2007* (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre). This figure excludes new refugees.
2. A refugee is a person who has crossed an international border and is unable to return through well-founded fear of persecution (see UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies*, 3rd edition, 2007, for a fuller definition).
3. IDPs are broadly defined as people who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violation of human rights or natural or man-made disasters and who are within the territory of their country.
4. This data is sourced from the Emergency Events Database (http://www.emdat.be) on 30 July 2008.

Overview of case studies

The case studies in this book cover a diversity of projects, from support for families in collective buildings over an eight-year period (Azerbaijan, B.2), to emergency distributions of plastic sheeting within hours of an earthquake (Jogyakarta, B.7). Despite the projects' differences, there are many recurring themes. Some of these themes are discussed in the following pages.

Support the people affected

The first and main effort in all responses is made by the people who are themselves affected. Of the case studies listed in this book, the more effective projects all had the close involvement of the people affected, often through existing community groups or specially established committees.

📖 Sphere standards and indicators (Annex) provide common standards on participation, initial assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

📖 Supporting the people affected is the first principle outlined in the guidelines of *Transitional Settlement and Reconstruction after Natural Disasters* (Annex).

	Non-food item distribution		Shelter construction			Labour			
	Household	Shelter	Transitional	Permanent	Cash	Community	Contracted	Direct	Technical expertise
A.1 D.R. Congo - 2002		●	●					●	●
A.2 Eritrea - 2002	●	●							●
A.3 Kenya - 2007			●			●			
A.4 Kenya - 2007		●	●						●
A.5 Liberia - 2007		●		●	●				●
A.6 Mozambique - 2007		●							
A.7 Rwanda - 2006		●		●		●		●	●
A.8 Somalia - 2007				●					●
A.9 Sudan - 2004	●	●							
B.1 Afghanistan - 2002	●	●		●	●			●	●
B.2 Azerbaijan - 1997			●				●		●
B.3 India (Gujarat) - 2002	●		●					●	●
B.4 Indonesia - 2004		●		●	●	●	●	●	●
B.6 Indonesia - 2006	●		●		●	●		●	●
B.7 Indonesia - 2006	●	●	●						●
B.8 Ingushetia - 1999			●		●	●	●	●	●
B.10 Pakistan - 2006	●		●			●		●	●
B.11 Pakistan - 2006	●	●				●			
B.12 Sri lanka - 2007			●	●	●	●			●
B.13 Sri lanka - 2005	●		●		●	●		●	●
C.1 Honduras -1998			●		●	●			●
C.3 Peru - 2007			●			●			
C.4 Peru - 2007			●		●	●		●	●
C.5 Peru - 2007			●		●	●	●		●

Overview of assistance methods used in projects

Graphics: Transitional Settlement and Reconstruction after Natural Disasters

Settlement Options

The case studies illustrate support for disaster-affected people in a variety of settlements. These include host families (Ingushetia, B.8), collective centres (Azerbaijan, B.2), both rural (Pakistan, B.9) and urban (Somalia, A.8) contexts, and planned and unplanned camps (Bangladesh, D.4).

It was relatively difficult to find case studies of supporting host families.

Finding shelter with friends and relationsor by renting are common coping mechanisms for families who have lost their house in a disaster. However, it was difficult to find case studies of organisations providing support for hosting or rental arrangements.

📖 *Transitional settlement: displaced populations* (Annex)

In most case studies, land ownership was a defining factor in what types of shelter support were offered.

Land ownership

Those without land are often among the most vulnerable people in society. Approaches to land ownership varied between the case studies. For example, in Peru (C.2-C.5) organisations built primarily only on the land of people who could offer proof of land title. Building lighter shelters allowed people to later move them.

A more active approach to establishing land for families is illustrated by the case study in Aceh, Indonesia (B.4) after the tsunami, where the organisation helped to negotiate land with title deeds for entire villages.

Phases of response

Responses to disasters or conflict are commonly split into the phases of:

- preparedness before the disaster;
- emergency response;
- the recovery phase; and
- durable solutions.

Many of the case studies include shelter responses aimed at bridging the gap between emergency shelter and durable housing solutions. Housing programmes can take many years to complete, especially when implemented on a large scale. The project in Rwanda (A.7), illustrates a housing project that took two years to build 220 houses. The speed of durable shelter construction can leave a gap, with families in emergency shelter for many years. Transitional responses aim to bridge this gap.

A comparison of the strategies adopted in Aceh (B.4) and Sri Lanka (B.11) following the 2004 tsunami illustrates how long housing can take to complete in comparison to transitional projects. However, as the case studies note, in implementing the transitional response there should be a vision of what is being transitioned to. Often, there is not follow-on funding or land identified for permanent houses.

Scale of programme

The responses illustrate the challenge of whether to implement high quality programmes for fewer people or poorer quality responses to support more people. The case studies in Pakistan (B.9-B.11) illustrate this challenge. One project delivered materials to over 2% of the affected population without support, while the other project built transitional shelters for 0.2% of the affected population.

Which is better: a high level of support for fewer people or a lower level of support for more people?

Self-build and contractor models of construction

Different projects used different ways of organising the labour required to build shelters. The case studies in Peru illustrate a mixture from self-build (C.4) to supported self-build (C.3) approaches, to contractors prefabricating shelter components that were then erected by homeowners (C.5). Many of the projects in this book provided carpenters or masons to support self-build projects. In many projects, families were provided with some money to either support them while building or to allow them to employ others to build.

Logistics and supply

In many projects, logistics and supply issues had significant impacts on both the design of shelters and the timescale for implementation. The scale of some procurements was huge (e.g. Gujarat (B.3)). Many projects, such as the one in Honduras (C.1), employed specific shelter logistics staff to ensure that shelter projects were implemented. Shelter staff had to work closely with these staff members.

Assistance methods

The case studies selected include: giving money to host families, upgrading squatted communal blocks, establishing an inter-agency pipeline of shelter items and constructing shelters through both unpaid volunteers and contractors.

It was difficult to find sufficient detail on projects where families were given vouchers that they could redeem with certain suppliers, although according to anecdotal evidence this type of project has been successfully conducted. No case studies were found of loans being provided to support families through the emergency or transitional phases of the response.

Other sectors

Many of the more effective projects were integrated with other sectors of the response, especially water supply and sanitation.

📖 The Sphere Project (Annex) provides useful guidance on integration with other sectors.

Effective shelter programmes are developed and implemented by involving the affected communities