



## 13<sup>th</sup> UK Shelter Forum

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The UK Shelter Forum is a community of practice for individuals and organisations involved in shelter and settlement reconstruction activities supported by twice yearly meetings (Shelter Forums), a website and a LinkedIn group. The thirteenth UK Shelter Forum was hosted by the Centre for Urban Sustainability and Resilience, UCL on the 20th September 2013. It was attended by approximately 50 participants from humanitarian and development organisations, academia and the private sector. There were multiple themes to the Forum, with parallel sessions running to achieve more depth in different areas. The main three themes that were explored during the day were **1) Urban response, 2) Shelter and Recovery, and 3) Measuring impact**. There were also parallel discussions around innovation, and the response to the Syria crisis. This document is intended to capture discussions from the UK Shelter Forum in a concise format for dissemination. For more details please visit <http://www.shelterforum.info/13th-uk-shelter-forum/>

### URBAN RESPONSE

Esteban Leon from UN-HABITAT opened the discussions on urban response and gave a short introduction, highlighting the increasing rate of urbanisation globally, and that the urban nature of the 2010 Haiti earthquake had been a 'wake up call' for many in the sector. Lucy Earle from DfID also introduced the topic, highlighting that a new urban crisis strategy is currently being worked on within DfID which focuses on 3 categories: 1) Built environment, 2) urban governance, and 3) markets.

A series of presentations, listed below, addressed a variety of aspects of urban response and highlighted key questions for discussion:

<b>Jo da Silva</b> , Arup International Development	<i>Urban Challenges</i>
<b>Seki Hirano</b> , CRS	<i>Work with the City</i>
<b>Amelia Rule</b> , British Red Cross	<i>Participatory Approach to Safer Shelter Awareness</i>
<b>Jim Kennedy</b> , Independent	<i>Strategising rubble removal</i>

Three breakout session questions also focussed on aspects of urban response:

- *What does the shelter sector need to have more confidence responding in urban areas?*
- *How does my organisation blend in? (to a city of 5 million people?)*
- *How can we better understand the context we are working in to build relationships with and capacity in local authorities?*

#### **Urban Challenges - Jo da Silva**, Arup International Development

In her presentation, Jo posed a series of six questions that are fundamental for actors and organisations involved in urban response and recovery to ask themselves, and which are useful in framing the discussion on urban humanitarian response. In asking 'What do we mean by urban?', Jo emphasised that all cities are different and highlighted that Haiti has polarised the discussion of urban response. There is a lot of interest in urban response currently because of the Syria crisis, but the urban fabric in Syria and surrounding countries is very different to that of Port-au-Prince, characterised by a lot of concrete construction and more complex infrastructure. Thus, lessons

need to be taken from examples such as reconstruction in Beirut and Kosovo, and also from disasters in developed countries, such as from New Orleans.

Jo asked ‘*What is different about urban areas?*’ and highlighted several challenges and issues to consider, as well mentioning other initiatives, such as ALNAP’s report: *Meeting the Urban Challenge: Adapting humanitarian efforts to an urban world*. Some issues highlighted include scale, mobility, and legitimacy. The third question, ‘*What are we trying to achieve?*’ asked us as humanitarians what our aims and priorities are, and it was noted that the shelter sector has moved beyond response to recovery and reconstruction.

‘*What are we able to influence?*’ asked more about the approaches involved in urban response, as the vulnerable groups that humanitarian actors have traditionally targeted are reliant on other groups in cities, and advocacy and stakeholder mapping play a key role in an urban setting. The final questions of ‘*Who do we need to work with?*’ and ‘*Who are we accountable to?*’ emphasized the need for collaboration and not just coordination.



**Figure 1: Cities recovering from disasters**  
(Image: Jo da Silva)

**Work with the City - Seki Hirano, CRS**

Through highlighting some of the differences and challenges in working in urban areas, Seki discussed how organisations need to change their structures and approaches in order to better respond to urban crises.

Given the complexity of city governance and politics, and the large amounts of time and effort spent for example in working out who makes decisions about land, Seki gave examples from the Philippines and highlighted the importance of the role of CRS’s Local Government Liaison Officers in order to have someone who understands city development and politics on staff to help to negotiate the complexity of the city. Seki also discussed the need for more integrated rather than sectoral approaches.



**Figure 2: Work with the City**  
(Image: Seki Hirano)

Seki also highlighted a number of opportunities that come with working in urban areas, and discussed the importance of working *with* the city, stating that working with the city means we make conscious effort to work with the existing city structures including the informal structures together with all level of stakeholders – city officials, private sector, CBO, household.

**Participatory Approach to Safer Shelter Awareness - Amelia Rule, British Red Cross**

Amelia presented the Participatory Approach to Safer Shelter Awareness (PASSA) through the case of Delmas 19, a neighbourhood in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. PASSA is a participatory tool for DRR related to shelter safety, pre or post disaster. While it was originally developed in rural areas, this case demonstrated it’s use in a very urban context. Amelia’s presentation described the PASSA process, looking at how a series of activities including historical profiling and community mapping lead to problems being identified and prioritised by the community, and action plans being formed for how they would be addressed.

Amelia discussed some of the challenged faced during the PASSA process at the community level, such as high expectations for concrete results, the large amounts of time and energy needed to be put in by community members, and the mentality around aid dependency.



Figure 3: Delmas 19 mapping  
(Image: Amelia Rule)

In overcoming some of these challenges, Amelia discussed the need for strong facilitation, parallel activities in order to show visible outputs, and the need to set aside enough time for activities. It was also highlighted that it can be difficult to start this kind of process too quickly after a disaster, and that it takes time to build trust.

Some of the outcomes of the PASSA process included a mobilised community, a programme that responded to people's self determined needs, and PASSA having been adapted to an urban context.

### *Strategising rubble removal - Jim Kennedy, Independent*

Jim's presentation focused on the need for discussions and decisions around rubble removal to be more strategic. He highlighted that discussions around rubble removal in the Shelter Sector tend to focus on the small scale, with little strategic guidance on what to do at a larger or city-wide scale.

Jim emphasized that to be strategic about rubble removal we must consider how to maximise the impact of resources and efforts, while also aiming to have some sort of a multiplier effect. He proposed seven different strategic approaches, which are listed below:

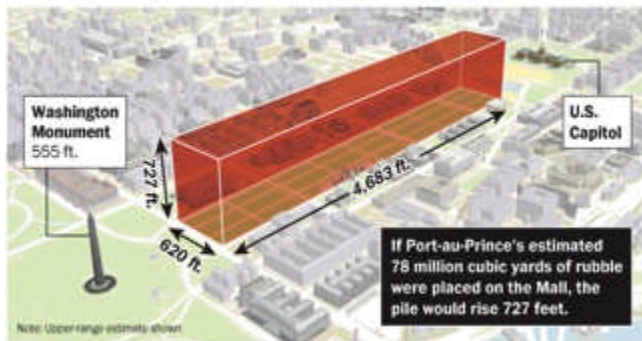


Figure 4: Haiti earthquake rubble estimations  
(Image: Jim Kennedy)

- 1) Clear the rubble first from the main commercial artery roads, as this will be the best way to get the major cogs of the economy moving again;
- 2) Clear the rubble first from all of the local retail and produce markets, as this will be the best way to get the personal economies of the affected population moving again;
- 3) Clear the rubble first from around the schools, as this will give the greatest spur to return to normal life, and the informal markets will cluster anew around the schools anyway;
- 4) Clear the rubble first from around the municipal buildings, as the municipalities and the communities need to have as much unimpeded access to each other as possible;
- 5) Clear the rubble first from all of the streets near the brick-makers, the welding workshops, and the hardware shops, as these will be at the forefront of the street-level accelerated reconstruction;
- 6) Clear the rubble first from the neighbourhoods identified in pre-disaster urban planning as neighbourhoods targeted for increased population growth, as these cleared areas will then be the places to which people move and begin their own reconstruction; or
- 7) Clear the rubble first from areas surrounding water supply points, as those points will then form the backbone of efforts to support displaced families return to their homes.

Jim has written about strategic rubble removal in more detail on [www.resilienturbanism.org](http://www.resilienturbanism.org)

### **Knowledge Cafe: "What does the shelter sector need to have more confidence responding in urban areas?"**

This question asked participants to think positively and constructively about why the shelter sector lacks confidence in responding in urban areas, and what could be done in order to increase the sector's confidence in urban response and recovery. Revolving break out groups discussed the above question, and gave feedback in plenary. Some of the suggestions are summarised below:

**Aims and approaches:**

It was agreed that multi-disciplinary and joined-up approaches are required and that strategic planning (with relation to urban, government, and existing disaster management plans) needs to sit above the cluster and coordinate what the cluster is doing. The notion of 'strategicness' was also raised here, as it was asked how NGOs can add value in urban contexts, and how the needs of an individual can be addressed while also creating positive impacts at other scales.

Timescales for intervention were highlighted as needing to be different in urban response and recovery, and the need for more flexibility of donors was also raised. Protection was highlighted as needing to be integral to approaches in urban areas, and it was also mentioned that clearer understanding of different urban scales (town, municipality, city, metropolis etc.) would be useful.

**Capacities, skills and knowledge:**

Fundamentally it was highlighted that there are people who know about cities (in urban planning, urban development etc.), and there are people who know about humanitarian work, but more links need to be made between these different skill sets. In order to have more confidence in responding in urban areas, a better understanding of a) cities in general and b) the specific city in question is required. In order to achieve this a better combination of global and local knowledge is needed. It was also emphasized that NGOs need to put in place teams with a combination of skills to deliver successful programmes, but that it cannot be expected that all of these specific expertise can be found in one person.

**Six Thinking Hats: "How does my organisation blend in? (to a city of 5 million people?)"**

This break out group discussion was based on a question related to Seki Hirano's presentation. The discussion first asked about when an organisation may want to blend in and when it may want to stand out. The group discussed whether a culture change is needed in the humanitarian sector in order to engage in a more supportive and facilitatory fashion. Making the most of local capacity and engaging with existing structures was highlighted as being extremely important. How we engage and what we mean by engagement was also challenged, as this is a term that is used a lot but perhaps in different ways. It was also asked how to strike the balance between engaging with governance structures and remaining neutral, and it was asked whether humanitarian actors should be taking on more of an advocacy role in order to empower communities to question and advocate to their own governments.

How the shelter sector can speak with one common voice was also discussed, in contexts where there are so many different organisations and different mandates, how is this possible? There was a suggestion also of having roving experts who are able to be independent of one agency, and instead share information and advise multiple agencies on a certain topic.

**Six Thinking Hats: "How can we better understand the context we are working in to build relationships with and capacity in local authorities?"**

The discussion in this group was focussed on finding out what kind of tools currently exist or would be useful to be developed to help the sector be able to better understand the institutional, policy and stakeholder context in which they are working. The need for an in-depth understanding of the context has been highlighted in urban response, as there is a multiplicity of stakeholders and urban centres tend to be closer to centres of power and therefore influence by local and national authorities.

**Understanding context**

One participant shared that ASF-UK have been using the 'Web of Institutionalisation' – originally developed by Caren Levy of the Development Planning Unit, UCL – in their Change by Design workshops as an analytical and diagnostic tool. The web identifies 13 elements that are linked together and can be used both as a framework in which to organise the different institutions, policies and stakeholders and understand the strengths and weaknesses in the relations between them. It has also been utilised by UN-Habitat as a diagnostic and strategy development tool to understand the context and determine how programmes can best target specific entry points.

Discussing this tool highlighted the need to map out the context to understand different aspects (stakeholders, influence, institutions). Some guidance exists on this already (see for example



Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas: A Handbook, IFRC/SKAT, 2012). Participants also discussed the value of such an analysis being carried out at a cluster level and being shared with members so that each NGO is not expending resources chasing the same information.

### **Building relationships and capacity**

Participants then discussed the role of individual interpersonal skills in being able to build strong relationships as well as the challenges posed within the humanitarian context. Building relationships often takes a considerable amount of time and high turnover in staff can make building meaningful relationships with people in long-standing positions difficult. In addition, high turnover meant that insights that had been gained were lost. The importance of taking a longer term approach was also a large part of the conversation.

There was also a discussion around the neutrality of NGOs and to what extent this meant they should not become too closely involved with political authorities. Paul Harvey argues in *Towards good humanitarian government: The role of the affected state in disaster response* that ‘in practice, aid workers in the field often interpret independence and neutrality as meaning keeping the state at arm’s length: too often, neutrality and independence are taken as shorthand for disengagement from state structures, rather than necessitating principled engagement with them. Not taking sides in a conflict and maintaining independence can be perfectly consistent with working through government structures to provide services’ (2009: p20). However, in the discussions, the role of NGOs and UN organisations was contrasted particularly in their access and ability to influence.

In terms of tools that would be useful, a need was identified for a tool that prompted mapping out of the context in a format that captured the knowledge that had been gathered and facilitate handover of knowledge. In particular, a tool that set out a structure for the identification of the various bodies or institutions that exist with responsibility for land and housing and how they are connected both formally and informally would be immensely useful. It was speculated that most countries, although differing in title and location, have a generic structure that could form the basis for this format. However, it needs to avoid becoming a tick box exercise and must be seen as a dynamic process rather than etched in stone once it has been created. It was also suggested that this was first attempted for a context that we were familiar with, e.g. the UK which can then be tested.

## **SHELTER AND RECOVERY**

Jim Kennedy started the introduction to this theme by discussing the Global Shelter Cluster Shelter and Recovery Working Group, and introducing it’s aims and focuses, including that it aims to improve the way the Shelter Cluster engages in longer-term sheltering and reconstruction activities, and address the key challenges of interconnectedness through different phases of the disaster management cycle.

### ***Transition between relief and development - Richard Luff, Independent***

Richard’s presentation looked at some of the differences between relief and development approaches, and through discussing LRRD (Linking relief, rehabilitation and development) emphasized that there are distinct characteristics of relief and development that need to be acknowledged and managed. In order to move from relief to development (via recovery) you have to know what you are moving from and then moving to. In order to start recovery /development (better), you need to stop doing relief. Richard highlighted that clear triggers, for example the government calling an end to relief, are needed in order for certain activities to end so as to not inhibit longer term recovery through creating dependency.



**Figure 6: Relief in Bihar**  
(Image: Richard Luff)

Jim introduced the questions for discussion within the Shelter and Recovery theme and discussed pre and post disaster housing development. He highlighted that the words 'phases', 'mandates', and 'handover' are words that are commonly used by international organisations in discussing recovery, but these words are the construct of the international organisations and do not relate to the experiences of disaster-affected people on the ground. Jim also noted that it has been said that 'Recovery starts on Day 1', but that this is not always the case for everyone due to specific barriers in some cases and also due to the sheer volume of need.

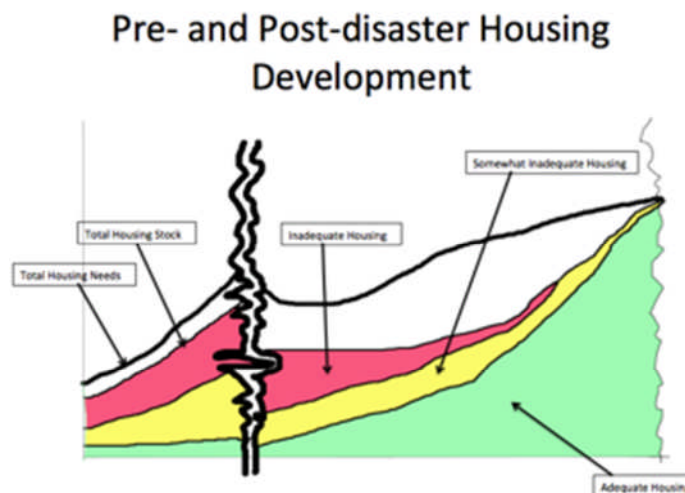


Figure 5: Pre and post disaster housing development  
(Image: Jim Kennedy)

### **Breakout sessions:**

Two breakout sessions took place looking at different questions within this theme, one asking *"What activities should be done and prioritised to kick start recovery from day 1 (in a 10 million people case)?"*, and another asking *"How do we create effective recovery mechanisms from Day 1 which are cross sectoral, can function at Settlements level, for up to 10 million people?"*

In discussions participants felt that there is currently an opportunity for change, with an emphasis on urban integration and settlements being back on the agenda, and with less preoccupation with the singular shelter unit. It was emphasized that it is hard to balance immediate response with longer-term planning, but that actions taken in early stages and throughout recovery should aim to achieve a multiplier effect. Discussions highlighted different areas of information that need to be known when developing recovery plans, including knowledge of social and administrative boundaries between neighbourhoods and regions; socio-economic information across different scales; an understanding of existing market trends and activities; and an understanding of existing resources which could be capitalised on.

Discussions on engagement and collaboration with government asked about the capacity of NGOs to do this, and there was discussion about placing people with technical expertise inside government bodies to support and build capacity. Examples of this being done after the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, and following the 2010 Chile earthquake were mentioned. It was also highlighted that each case is different and would depend on the country's capacities, but this was seen as an effective way to add value at scale.

Much discussion was had on integrated approaches. It was highlighted that they can work at neighbourhood level, but the question was asked of how they can achieve scale. It was noted that if using an integrated approach, international organisations and NGOs need to be conscious and open about their limitations, for example when it comes to service provision and technical issues. It was also noted that integrated approaches require multiple specialties, and as not all organisations work across all sectors, more partnerships and coordination is required. Humanitarian coordination structures were also questioned, with regard to how they support integrated approaches at a wider scale, and it was also asked how integrated neighbourhood approaches could inform the Early Recovery Cluster's future development. Supporting self-recovery and supporting livelihoods were also highlighted as being key areas to add value.

It was noted that there are other areas to look to for learning where many aspects may be transferable to recovery. These include information, tools and skills from the Camp Management sector that could apply to settlements outside of camps too, and also the potential to capitalize on examples of slum upgrading approaches. It was also mentioned that it would be useful to look in more depth at different ways of approaching community mobilization as this is often non-sector specific and a point at which different technical specialisms meet on the ground.

## MEASURING IMPACT

While the outputs of post-disaster shelter and housing programmes are easily quantifiable, their outcomes and impact are much more difficult to evaluate. With several impact measurement tools currently under development by the humanitarian shelter sector this session brought together presenters from different organisations to share, compare, and learn from the different tools.

### **ASPIRE – Jo da Silva, Arup International Development**

Jo presented the ASPIRE tool developed by Arup International Development and Engineers Against Poverty ([www.oasys-software.com/aspire](http://www.oasys-software.com/aspire)). Although designed to assess infrastructure interventions in developing countries it has successfully been applied to post-disaster housing. The tool is divided in four dimensions (environment, society, economics and institutions) which are further sub-divided into 20 themes and 96 indicators. The tool's software is visual, showing qualitative results through a coloured scale (going from the worst to the best scenario) and additional information through text. The tool is useful for understanding the holistic impacts of a project. It also highlights key strengths while identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. Next steps in developing the tool are: to translate it to Spanish and French; to create sector specific versions/guidelines; to define more specific quantitative indicators; to tailor it for agency specific technology and guidelines; and to aggregate individual assessments.

### **Looking back at reconstruction and disaster risk reduction in housing – Jelly Mae Moring, Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF)**

Jelly presented research that BSHF is currently undertaking. The purpose of the research is to investigate the long term impact of reconstruction through qualitative analysis. The themes of the research are: user satisfaction; beneficiary targeting; replication; technical performance; impact on livelihood. The first theme - user satisfaction - questions whether people like or dislike their houses through questions such as: are users happy with their houses? This theme also covers how people change their perceptions over time. The second theme - beneficiary targeting - analyses if the programme is targeting the right beneficiaries or if it should target other vulnerable groups. The third theme is related to replication, because inappropriate shelters are not typically replicated. The fourth theme is about technical performance, studying if the houses are durable, secure and if they require maintenance. The final theme is livelihood impacts, and whether the project stimulates wider economic recovery. A conference will be held on 15-16 January 2014 in Coventry University to present the fieldwork results and discuss about the findings. Further details on this research and event are available [here](#).

### **Shelter and Settlement Impact Evaluation Tool – Oyvind Nordlie, UN-Habitat**

Oyvind presented the shelter and settlement impact evaluation tool (SSIET) developed by UN-Habitat on behalf of the Global Shelter Cluster. Oyvind explained how to measure the impact of shelters and settlements with this evaluation tool, through three phases: phase 1 focused on measuring and assessing potential long term impact during the implementation; phase 2 focused on measuring impact in the long-term on the consolidated setting; and phase 3 including data and impact of self-recovery in all tools during the whole process of implementation and consolidation. The tool is divided in five sectors (physical, financial, human, social and natural), 10 impact recovery targets (such as risk reduction, secure income, etc.) and 15 impact indicator topics (such as shelter design, durability quality and maintenance, etc.). The tool was pilot-tested in Mindanao in 2013 following the humanitarian response to Typhoon Pablo. The main conclusions from developing and using the tool is that: the relevance of impact indicators is dependent on the context; there is a need to establish links with other sectors and clusters in order to secure data and context adapted indicators; the integration with other measure and evaluation tools would benefit the evaluation; the tool can be used as a stand-alone version for single agency use; finally, it would be beneficial to provide the sector with a uniform and recognised impact evaluation tool with a consistent use of terms and definitions.

## ***A socio-economic Impact Assessment Tool for post-disaster temporary housing solutions – Simone van Dijk, The Netherlands Red Cross and Technische Universiteit Eindhoven***

Simone presented a tool developed the Netherlands Red Cross in collaboration with the TU Eindhoven. There were two objectives for this tool: to develop a comprehensive impact assessment methodology for measuring long-term impact of a household's socioeconomic situation; and to develop a general methodology suitable for different types of post-disaster housing programs. The methodology used mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative data. The focus was to link socio-economic dimensions to post-disaster housing using direct effects (such as protection from climate conditions, vulnerability to hazards, costs of maintenance) and indirect effects (such as satisfaction, health condition and income generating activities). The tool has been tested in three different contexts: Vietnam 2007; Indonesia 2008; and Colombia 2012. It will shortly be available online and on the IFRC's FedNet.

### **SYRIA RESPONSE**

The Syria session highlighted the difficulties of finding comprehensive information given the scale of displacement across the region, information on shelter conditions inside Syria and the challenges facing coordination. There are a variety of different sheltering typologies being utilised by refugees, including planned camps, informally self-settled camps, collective centres, temporary rental accommodation and host families, which vary across the region. Organisations have therefore been using a variety of programmes to try and address the different shelter needs of refugees. A response review was undertaken by the DEC of their members in Lebanon and Jordan to gather lessons learnt so far and provide suggestions on moving forward. This report will be published in December and launched via ODI/ALNAP.

In Syria the focus has been more on the provision of NFIs for winterisation of shelters. Research is also being carried out on providing humanitarian assistance in middle and high income countries and the possibilities of cash programming where markets are still functioning. Cash is already being used in some areas, for example, the WFP have been using Smart Cards that allow registered refugees to receive a monthly stipend which can be spent in identified outlets, and which allows other agencies to add funds to as well.

In Jordan, one organisation has been running an interesting programme developed through their work with Iraqi refugees, providing information centres pointing to further assistance, accessed through self-referral and which is largely based on word of mouth. Another NGO has been carrying out upgrades to shelter and providing legal support to secure tenure through the formalisation of arrangements with landlords. Agencies are also providing coordination support to UNHCR and service delivery within planned camps. The resourcefulness of Syrians was noted in particular, resulting in a dynamic internal economy in Za'tari camp in Jordan.

In Lebanon, the primary trend is informally self-settled camps and collective centres. Agencies are responding through provision of shelter materials in informal settlements, service provision and rental support where possible but are seeing rising prices. New approaches are being implemented that try to identify unfinished housing stock or buildings not intended as dwellings and to negotiate the rental of units to refugees in exchange for investment towards completion of the building. This has been successful although increasingly challenging as the crisis continues.

In both Jordan and Lebanon approximately 80% of refugees have self-settled in urban areas, are not in camps or settlements, and are receiving very little assistance. The discussion recognised the huge outstanding needs and further challenges ahead as the situation continues, but also the innovation being shown by both refugees and responding organisations.

### **UPDATES**

- Ram Kishan, Christian Aid: India Shelter in Emergencies Forum
- Bill Flinn, CENDEP: Building for safety initiative
- Jamie Richardson, Shelter Consultant: Timber frame research project

Please visit [www.shelterforum.info](http://www.shelterforum.info) to view and download all the presentations at this event.