

A framework for disaster management

Disaster management should never begin with the disaster, nor should it end when rescue operations are complete.

Rather, disaster management should be understood to be an ongoing process, from preparations that will reduce risks, to response, to mitigation based on lessons learned.

This edition of The Forum examines how Habitat for Humanity and its partners have approached each phase of the disaster management cycle.

The illustration of the disaster management cycle at right shows the different phases in the process of reducing the risk of disasters and responding to them when they occur. Although this framework shows each phase starting and

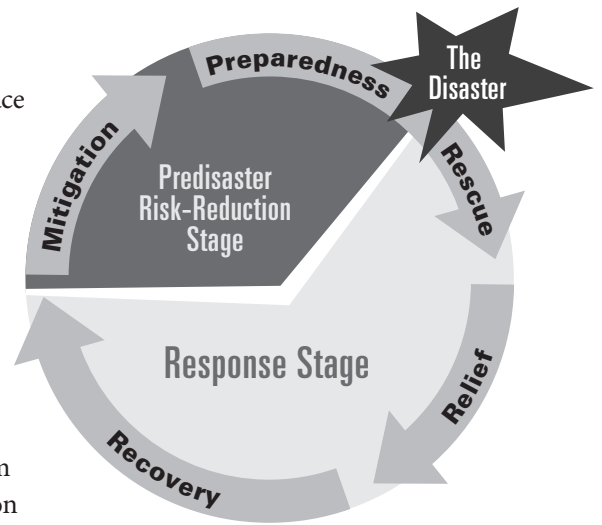
finishing independently, in reality several phases take place concurrently. For example, the recovery phase, which includes reconstruction, starts on Day One after a disaster, as families start to salvage materials to be used in the construction of shelters.

It is important to start reading this framework from the predisaster risk-reduction stage, because many interventions can be done before a disaster to reduce the vulnerability of nations, communities and families. Serving families and communities in this way allows Habitat to have meaningful shelter programs that aim to build more resilience to the hazards

families face.

These interventions can involve both physical shelter (such as structural retrofitting) and capacity building (such as community-based training in disaster risk

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Mission statement

The Forum exists to connect the worldwide partners of Habitat for Humanity International and provide a link to other organizations and individuals concerned with the effects of poverty by providing a means to:

- Explore issues related to housing and poverty.
- Describe the work that Habitat for Humanity is doing around the world to address housing and poverty issues.
- Present success factors and in-depth analysis of innovative and signature Habitat programs.



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A framework for disaster management

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management). A range of statistics shows that investments made within the risk-reduction phase of the cycle are significantly more efficient and save more lives than those made in the response phases.

This edition of The Forum highlights predisaster risk-reduction projects in Central America and gives an update on the award-winning mulberry twig technology used in Tajikistan for retrofitting adobe block homes. An article on business continuity planning also asks Habitat entities to look at their own preparedness.

Moving around the cycle to relief and recovery interventions, a working definition and principles are presented on the Pathways to Permanence methodology. This methodology, which was developed during the Haiti earthquake response program, aims to link development principles with

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humanitarian interventions.

The use of volunteers within response programs is highlighted through examples in Japan and the growth of the Disaster Corps program. Also highlighted are the use of emergency shelter kits and the way Habitat entities support one another.

Lastly, looking across the sector, there are articles

contributing to the newly revised Habitat Disaster Response Guidelines and the growing number of sector standards influencing our work, the expectations of donors and the growing accountability to beneficiaries. An interview with Chuck Setchell, shelter, settlements and hazard mitigation adviser for the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, looks at the key trends and challenges facing the humanitarian shelter sector.

Finally, the Asia/Pacific staff share their recent activities to increase Common Operational Recovery Essentials humanitarian training through the region; and there is an update from the latest Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency conference. 🏠

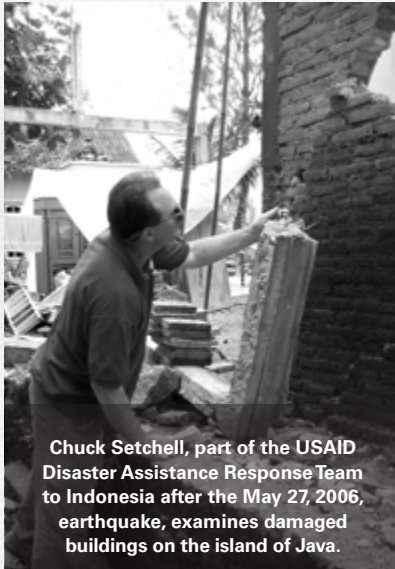
Q&A

Focusing on the long term after a disaster

An interview with Chuck Setchell, senior shelter, settlements and hazard mitigation adviser for the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

Habitat: *What is USAID/OFDA's shelter and settlements mandate?*

Setchell: First and foremost, I think the USAID/OFDA shelter and settlement sector mandate is really consistent with the support of the overall OFDA mandate: saving lives, reducing suffering, and reducing the social and economic impact of disasters. Within that overall OFDA mandate, the shelter and settlement sector mandate is to respond to disaster and crisis-generated shelter and settlements needs through the expeditious provision of safe and minimally adequate covered living space that can be readily occupied by disaster and crisis-affected populations. The key points there, I believe, are occupancy, safety and expeditious.



Chuck Setchell, part of the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team to Indonesia after the May 27, 2006, earthquake, examines damaged buildings on the island of Java.

USAID/AFR/D NAKATSUMA

Habitat: *What are the top three criteria you consider when reviewing proposals for OFDA funding?*

Setchell: As you know, there are many criteria that we use when reviewing proposals for possible funding. But three come to mind. I think the first two are definitely criteria, and the third one is perhaps more of a trend that we see that really does speak to its importance as a criterion. First, of course, the funding proposals must be consistent with both the OFDA mandate that I outlined earlier and internationally recognized humanitarian shelter and settlements guidelines such as The Sphere Project, which are primarily reflected in our own proposal guidelines.

Second, I think funding proposals must be context-driven. And you've heard me say this 100 times I'm sure, in that proposed actions must reflect, to the extent possible, a reliance on local materials and local labor markets to enhance both the kind of beneficial

economic impact that's associated with shelter and settlements assistance as well as the social acceptance of that assistance, which in turn can contribute to longer-term sustainability. And I'd say the third one is, perhaps surprisingly, multisectoral focused. Not only do we at OFDA seek to support humanitarian shelter assistance that results in safe, minimally adequate shelter, but there is also an emphasis placed on integrating other sectors to the extent possible — livelihoods, water and sanitation and hygiene, and DRR are three examples —

and doing so within identified project areas.

Habitat: *In Haiti, Habitat received a grant from OFDA for a nontraditional shelter project to assist in building the capacity of the host government, which was lacking in Haiti. Was that type of grant unique to the situation in Haiti, or would OFDA also be open to projects like that in other countries impacted by disasters when the host country lacks capacity in post-disasters?*

Setchell: Although unusual, the emergency and community assistance planning (ECAP) project you

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Focusing on the long term after a disaster

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refer to was not unprecedented. And it continues to be viewed as an important USAID/OFDA contribution in response to Haiti. And I think we view — and I view — that project as an excellent example of a focus on what I refer to as “the settlement side of the sector” — beyond the conventional four-walls-and-a-roof approach of shelter and settlement sector activities that’s often embraced by many humanitarian agencies. It is not unreasonable to assume that future disaster responses — particularly those large-scale events in urban settings — could entail a focus on capacity building activities along similar lines.

We have in fact focused on similar activities elsewhere.

Habitat: *Are there examples that come to mind where you’ve done something like that in the past?*

Setchell: I think we have in several countries of late really focused on post-disaster capacity building. Not precisely in the same manner as ECAP — again context is important. But I can think of projects we’ve supported in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Peru and Zimbabwe in the last five or six years. They have ranged from the direct technical assistance to city hall, so to speak, in Kabul, Afghanistan, to longer-term, multimonth technical assistance in a capacity building effort in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake. We’ve run the gamut. I think what we saw in Haiti was a real need to develop some critical focus on some of the larger, more macro policy issues with regard to settlements planning. If you recall, there were some real issues revolving around what will be the approach of recovery in Port-au-Prince proper. And there seemed to be a need for some technical assistance provided to both local and national government entities. I think the fact that (the ECAP project) has been extended is testimony to its positive contribution.

Habitat: *One very attractive part of the ECAP project was the use of diaspora. With the other ones that you’ve done in the past, were diaspora part of the project?*

Setchell: I think in nearly all of the examples I provided there were local experts that we tapped. Not necessarily diaspora. In a couple of the cases that was the case, but not exclusively so. We tried to access expertise wherever we could find it. Sometimes it’s in the diaspora community, sometimes it’s in the local community that may not be recognized or supported in a manner that would be of great benefit to the project activities at hand.

Habitat: *What do you see as shelter and settlement sector trends that agencies like Habitat should get in front of in order to assist OFDA with future response efforts?*

Setchell: An excellent question. I think that there are several trends. Four of them come to mind in my view. There will likely be an increasing emphasis on shelter and settlements activities as it will become increasingly difficult to separate or isolate shelter that is primarily physical structures from its physical context or setting. Programmatically, this could well mean an effort to define again that “settlements side of the sector” I referred to earlier in terms of social, economic, geographic and perhaps even administrative parameters — and proposing integrated multisectoral projects within those parameters.

A second trend is that a premium will be placed on the efficient and expeditious design and provision of sector outputs while also seeking linkages to longer-term outcomes such as a focus on transitional shelter and settlement activities where needed and appropriate.

Recent disasters in such diverse locales as Haiti and Japan and Chile and Sudan suggest the need to increase efforts to integrate both DRR and capacity building activities into the sector outputs. And to do so on a neighborhood or settlementwide and perhaps even a regionwide basis in close collaboration with other humanitarian agencies, those countries’ civil societies and those countries’ governments. That’s the third trend. South Sudan in particular is a case in point in this regard, and we’ve seen some recent proposals that really seek to focus on how spatially or physically can settlements absorb the influx of returning citizens to South Sudan. This is a major, major humanitarian issue. It is not often perceived as a

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Habitat's structural and nonstructural mitigation projects in Central America

By Jaime Mok and Erwin Garzona

Habitat for Humanity International and the national organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have set quality standards for houses to ensure they are well-designed and built in safe areas and with quality materials to reduce the risk of disasters. There is also a process for Habitat national organizations to create strategies at regional and national levels, using structural and nonstructural projects for disaster prevention and mitigation. Structural interventions include repairs and retrofits to houses, along with disaster mitigation measures for settlements as a whole, such as rainwater drainage systems. Nonstructural

STRUCTURAL INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE REPAIRS AND RETROFITS TO HOUSES, ALONG WITH DISASTER MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SETTLEMENTS AS A WHOLE.

interventions include organizational strengthening, training and advocacy.

Latest structural projects

In 2011, El Salvador and Guatemala were heavily affected by Tropical Depression

E-12. Habitat national organizations in both countries are still responding, and repairing and retrofitting houses to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

In addition, Habitat Nicaragua has been digging ditches to drain the water runoff that affects many families in the community of Villa Habitat in Matagalpa during the rainy season. This mitigation will reduce the impact of floods in the community. In San Rafael del Sur, Habitat Nicaragua and the National University of Engineering, or UNI, are conducting an evaluation in three communities to determine the level of risk of about 140 future home construction sites.

Some nonstructural projects

Habitat Nicaragua and UNI in San Rafael del Sur are training three communities and local governments on

disaster prevention and mitigation. In partnership with Plan International-Nicaragua, a climate change and disaster prevention camp for 70 children, schoolteachers and community volunteers is being implemented, and a contest is under way for students to design disaster-prevention projects for their schools.

In 2008, Habitat Guatemala published a handbook for preventing and mitigating disasters triggered by natural causes. This handbook has been the main instrument for conducting more than 20 workshops for approximately 700

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PASSA

Shelter and settlement risks and vulnerabilities are increasing because of changes in disaster trends, the impact of climate change, and growing social and economic marginalization and urbanization.

A Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter

Awareness, or **PASSA**, aims to raise vulnerable people's awareness of the everyday risks related to their built environment and to foster locally appropriate and safe shelter and settlement practices.

The methodology sets out eight steps for the target community:

1. A historical profile, to learn from past events.
2. Frequency and impacts of hazards.
3. Community mapping.
4. Safe and unsafe shelter.
5. Options for solutions.
6. Planning for change.
7. A problem box, to voice concerns.
8. Monitoring.

View video: youtube.com/watch?v=tRCFxRNPIcY

Habitat's structural and nonstructural mitigation projects in Central America

Continued from page 5

people, including Habitat's operational staff, local committee members and the inhabitants of the building where Habitat's national office is located. In addition, all the families that have built their home with Habitat since 2008 are trained on disaster prevention and mitigation using the handbook. To date, more than 8,145 people have received this training.

Improving mitigation in the near future

In January 2012, Habitat joined the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to conduct the first training of the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness to Spanish-speaking users.



Children playing a game related to disaster risk reduction in a camp organized by HFH Nicaragua and Plan International-Nicaragua

Habitat national organizations implemented the methodology in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to produce baselines and working plans for strengthening resilience in vulnerable communities. This included both structural and nonstructural activities for prevention and mitigation.

Habitat and its national organizations in Central America are committed to strengthening the standards for safe housing and human settlements. Mainstreaming prevention and mitigation and climate change adaptation in structural projects will be essential moving forward. Efforts to multiply nonstructural projects that will strengthen the capabilities of local communities and governments while building up advocacy will also be important. 🏠

Jaime Mok is coordinator of risk management for Habitat Nicaragua. Erwin Garzona is disaster risk manager for HFHI Latin America and the Caribbean's Housing and Human Settlements department. Both authors focus on disaster risk reduction and disaster response.

LOCAL TECHNOLOGY

Disaster mitigation blooms on mulberry trees in Tajikistan

By Katerina Bezgachina


Every year, Tajikistan, located in the Pamir range in Central Asia, experiences more than 5,000 tremors and earthquakes, with magnitudes as high as 9.

Most mountainous homes and villages cannot withstand such strong vibrations. Destruction caused by natural disasters exacerbates poverty in Tajikistan, where almost half of the population lives on less than US\$2 a day.

Rebar and concrete, traditionally used to reinforce homes, are difficult to transport and are financially out of reach for many Tajik families. And so Habitat, in partnership with the local Institute of Seismology, researched and developed an inexpensive and sustainable house-reinforcement technology that provides much-needed safety to low-income rural communities. It uses the mulberry tree, which grows in abundance across the country.

Trees are cut seasonally to harvest silk cocoons, but the mulberry branches have no other use and are therefore freely available. In what is called "Sinj technology," the branches are bound into grids, attached to structural timber wall frames, and plastered with a mixture of mud, straw and wool.

This simple and affordable design ensures the homes meet national seismic building codes and facilitate a safe exit during an earthquake. Because the homes are more stable, families have time to escape during an earthquake, and the risk of being trapped,



THE MULBERRY BRANCH TECHNOLOGY
WAS RECOGNIZED BY THE WORLD BANK AS
INNOVATIVE, CULTURALLY ALIGNED,
LOW-COST AND RESILIENT.



Local community workers in Tajikistan are assembling grids from mulberry branches.

COURTESY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

injured or killed in the house is significantly reduced.

So far, homes reinforced with this mulberry branch technology have survived two earthquakes. The first one, with a magnitude of 5.8, occurred in December 2008. It sent tremors into Rasht district, where 80 homes had been reinforced. This January, an earthquake with its epicenter in Afghanistan had a magnitude of 6 and was felt in the remote, rural Kumsangir district of Tajikistan, where 120 homes were reinforced. A post-disaster survey in both locations showed that the reinforced houses were not damaged.

Another advantage of the mulberry tree technology is that it can either be built into new construction or applied to existing homes. It is 30 percent cheaper than the standard techniques used in the seismically unstable regions. When it is applied to existing houses, the construction costs can be reduced by five times.

In addition to this, there is no need to demolish and rebuild the damaged house from the foundation up — a factor of paramount importance in Tajikistan, where families often cannot afford new houses.

This was the case for Gani, the head of a family of eight who rebuilt his home with a Habitat loan. “The recommended ‘mulberry branch’ solution was just the very thing we needed to reinforce the house instead of rebuilding it,” Gani said. “It saved both resources and time, and I now know how to build a safe house with local materials.”

In Tajikistan, the mulberry branch and Sinj

technology has been incorporated into national construction norms and standards for rural, earthquake-resistant homes. Some 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Previously, there were no standards for this type of construction, so rural homes were more susceptible to damage from natural disasters.

Low-income beneficiaries of the program live in the Kumsangir, near the Afghan border. Working with a local partner organization, Habitat for Humanity set up a revolving fund from which eligible low-income families were offered loans to pay for the house reinforcements. After these loans are repaid, funds are accessible to other members of the community.

To date, more than 200 houses have been reinforced, 160 are awaiting transformation and 400 more are being assessed for future upgrades.

This technology was recognized by the World Bank as innovative, culturally aligned, low-cost and resilient, and was one of only three projects to win the opportunity to present at the World Bank World Reconstruction Conference at the United Nations facilities in Geneva in May 2011. 🏠

Katerina Bezgachina is the public relations and media manager in Habitat’s Europe and Central Asia area office.

Are you prepared? Disasters can have an impact within your organization

HOPE FOR THE BEST,
BUT PLAN
FOR THE WORST!

Imagine for a moment your workspace: your desk, the items on your desk, your computer and the data it holds, the folders and documents in your desk, the files on your bookcase. Then imagine the wider office environment: the accounting documents, the legal records, the office computer server, the fixed asset office equipment.

Now imagine that you don't have access to them, not even for a minute just to grab your laptop, and that you may not have access for a day, a week, a month — possibly never again.

This is not an abstract exercise. For some Habitat organizations — whether because of natural disaster, fire, theft, utility outage, a computer virus, etc. — this has been the reality. Our most recent case followed the 2010 Haiti earthquake, when the office in Haiti collapsed, destroying

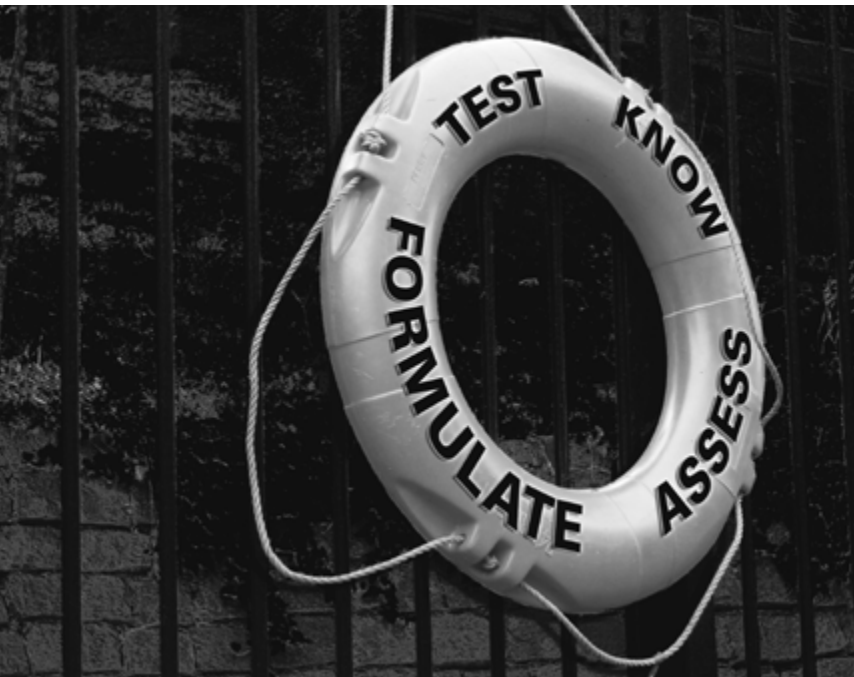
most of the items inside in just seconds.

In order for Habitat to assist families in need after a disaster, we need to be prepared for the disaster's impact on our own organization. Habitat needs to both minimize the effect a natural or man-made disaster has on staff and organization and to get operations back up and running as soon as possible in order to help families who have lost everything.

This process of preparedness is called business continuity planning. A business continuity plan is a collection of policies, procedures, protocols and information that is developed, compiled and kept ready for use in the event of a business interruption.

Plans need to encompass how employees will communicate, where they will go, how personal circumstances will be addressed, and how employees will return to doing their jobs. In addition to keeping the organization going, plans need to

incorporate how safeguards will be put in place to protect critical documents, electronic information and physical assets. The details can vary greatly, depending on the size and scope of an area or national office, along with the hazards or threats the organization could face.



Four basic steps for continuity planning

- 1. Know your organization:** The first step is to think about which parts of the organization are critical to keep running and operational. Each element of the organization should be reviewed from the perspective of staff, beneficiaries, vendors, IT systems, documentation, partnerships, assets and facilities.
- 2. Assess the risks:** The next step is to look at the most likely and greatest risks to the organization. What might happen? How likely is it to happen? What preventive measures do you have in place? How long could the negative impact last?
- 3. Formulate the plan:** The planning process should be collaborative and should receive full endorsement from senior leadership. It should focus on the most vital aspects of your organization and address the areas at most risk. It should include worst-case scenarios and their likelihood, and suggest ways of minimizing the risks. Any good plan should contain checklists, which provide a quick-look guide to what needs to be done during an emergency.
- 4. Communicate, train and test the plan:** Lastly, the plan needs to be communicated to all relevant stakeholders (staff, area office, partners, etc.). Training staff on what

needs to be done on a day-to-day basis (e.g., data backups; locking secure documents) and after the emergency or disaster (e.g., initiating contact trees) gives them an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues. Running simulations also allows for the plan to be tested and modified where necessary.

This is a cycle that requires periodic reviews to see if the plan is still current or if the situation, hazards or threats have changed. Additionally, as area offices and national organizations grow and expand their program areas, these new locations must be incorporated into the plan.

Lastly, this planning is not only internal. Our programs rely on partners, vendors, suppliers and other stakeholders. In your planning, determine how the services they provide might be affected by a disaster, how that will affect your work, and whether they have their own business continuity plans.

Remember the phrase we use many times in disaster response: Hope for the best, but plan for the worst! 🏠

Shelter Report 2012: 'Build Hope: Housing Cities after a Disaster'

Habitat for Humanity released its Shelter Report 2012, "Build Hope: Housing Cities after a Disaster," in October during its monthlong recognition of World Habitat Day. The report highlights the urgent need for safer urban housing conditions to improve resilience and recovery after disasters.

"Communities with inadequate housing built near natural hazards are disproportionately affected by disasters," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. "This impact to low-income families can be mitigated with sound community planning and safer construction standards both before and after disasters occur."

The Shelter Report details the importance of planning for long-term recovery as a part of disaster response, particularly in urban and developing areas with large populations that have grown rapidly. According to the report, the number of urban residents worldwide living in areas vulnerable to earthquakes and cyclones will grow from 680 million people in 2000 to 1.5 billion people by 2050. In many of these areas, infrastructure

cannot keep up with population growth, leaving families with little or no access to adequate shelter, health care or basic human services in the wake of disasters.

The report also underlines the pivotal role housing plays in disaster recovery and explores many of the obstacles to rebuilding permanent housing. Housing not only provides much-needed shelter for those affected or displaced in a disaster, it also tends to facilitate other aspects of recovery. Safe, adequate shelter benefits human health, therefore leveraging the investment of food and medical aid.

In the report, Habitat emphasizes that organizations involved in humanitarian shelter assistance incorporate long-term strategies in recovery efforts, prioritize coordination within and among different sectors providing disaster response, and identify land-tenure solutions before disaster strikes or the reconstruction process begins. 🏠

Copies of the 2012 Shelter Report are available at habitat.org/gov/take_action/shelter_report_2012.aspx.

Pathways to Permanence

By Mike Meaney

As emergency shelter kits were being assembled and distributed after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Haiti team started to develop the next steps in its response to the disaster. Given the scale of the need, Habitat for Humanity, along with the Shelter Cluster coordination body, decided that transitional shelter solutions would be appropriate for the significant number of families that had been affected and were facing the upcoming hurricane season. For this shelter solution, hazards were identified, specifications and designs were developed to address these hazards, and implementation began. However, the question remained: *Transition to what?*

Fragmentation in the shelter sector

There are many divisions within the humanitarian sector, and even more when shelter and settlements are discussed. For example, how do you link humanitarian aid and development, shelter and housing, relief and recovery, recovery and reconstruction? This fragmentation exists not only around programmatic decisions, but also among organizations (and sometimes among departments within those organizations) and in response to donor mandates.

Habitat for Humanity has an advantage when trying to conceptualize and break through these divisions. With the goal of providing a safe, decent place to live and a deep understanding of the need to build communities, settlements and social fabrics into programming, Habitat develops housing solutions and services that promote the early recovery of durable shelter to reduce vulnerability.

Early recovery is a multidimensional process that begins in the humanitarian settings¹. Although concepts vary, there are three linking aspects:

1. Applying development principles early on in emergency settings to ensure that ground for development is prepared.
2. Ensuring a smooth transition as well as continuity and coordination among interventions on the ground.

3. Using development cooperation to support prevention and disaster risk reduction.³

This thinking is central to Habitat's evolving Pathways to Permanence methodology and aims for humanitarian shelter interventions to become the foundation on which reconstruction can take place.

Pathways to Permanence

As a working definition, "Pathways to Permanence" is the process of sheltering disaster-affected families using holistic program interventions that enable, support and incrementally progress toward the achievement of permanent, durable shelter, while reducing the vulnerability of families and communities.

Some of the key concepts within this definition:

- **Pathways:** It is recognized that there are multiple paths to permanent, durable shelter and that families will have different circumstances, contexts, capacities and means. Habitat interventions should recognize these variables and support these different paths, targeting the most vulnerable members of the population.
- **Process:** Habitat's interventions recognize the incremental nature of shelter in the program design and the range of roles Habitat may play at different stages of the process. Support for this process can range from providing shelter elements to building shelter units; from developing housing support services to supporting the market housing value chain. Additionally, given that families will have different pathways toward permanent, durable shelter solutions, the support provided is likely to change over time.
- **Holistic program interventions:** Because Habitat sees that shelter and settlements are central to other critical interventions, a shelter program should entail not only rebuilding physical structures, but also restoring social, economic, natural and cultural environments and becoming a platform for health, water, sanitation, livelihoods,

protection, education and other post-disaster assistance.

- **Enable and support:** First, this recognizes that families and communities should be viewed not as victims of a disaster, but as partners in the reconstruction process. Empowering the capacities and strengths of families to participate in program design is critical to the outcome of the interventions. Secondly, program design should look at the environment in which reconstruction will take place and target interventions toward supporting government and community capacities, investing in the housing value chain, and enabling livelihoods to be rebuilt.
- **Incrementally:** Because Habitat recognizes that reconstruction can take years and is very capital-intensive, scaled shelter solutions for affected families are likely to use an incremental building methodology. It is also likely that Habitat's role would change throughout this incremental process from "provider" of solutions to "enabler" of housing support services.
- **Permanent, durable shelter:** The goal of permanent, durable shelter is what should drive all interventions throughout the process. This solution will look different based on the context (e.g., a country's housing mix) but could include owner occupancy, rental housing, cooperatives, public housing, etc.
- **Reducing vulnerabilities:** Finally, good recovery must leave communities safer by reducing risks and building resilience. Through the identification of hazards and vulnerabilities, the program should develop strategies that mitigate risks by structural and nonstructural means.

In addition to the definition above, it is important to highlight two cross-cutting issues central to this methodology: people-centered pathways and advocacy. Interventions in development or disaster response settings are more successful when the affected population participates in making decisions. Listening and responding to feedback from affected people when planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programs — and ensuring affected people understand and agree with the proposed pathways — ensures that interventions are supporting their choices.

There may also be significant regulatory barriers against achieving early recovery in durable housing solutions. Habitat's role in supporting the capacity and thinking of local authorities and national governments and in advocating for policies to be adopted or changed is important to ensure that immediate decisions take the longer-term implications into account.

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Guiding principles of the "Pathways to Permanence" methodology

- Program design is centered on the "pathways" of the affected population, and priority is given to supporting the most vulnerable families wherever they are along their path.
- Program design begins with the goal of permanent, durable shelter in mind.
- Program interventions will evolve, recognizing the process of sheltering, as will the role of Habitat, including elements of both "provider" and "enabler" of shelter and support services.
- Shelter interventions in a humanitarian setting will be guided with development principles in mind (see the guiding principles for reconstruction below).

Guiding principles for reconstruction³

- A good reconstruction policy helps reactivate communities and empowers people to rebuild their housing, their lives and their livelihoods.
- Reconstruction begins the day of the disaster.
- Community members should be partners in policy-making and leaders of local implementation.
- Reconstruction policies and plans should be financially realistic but ambitious with respect to disaster risk reduction.
- Institutions matter, and coordination among them improves outcomes.
- Reconstruction is an opportunity to plan for the future and to conserve the past.
- Relocation disrupts lives and should be minimized.
- Civil society and the private sector are important parts of the solution.
- Assessment and monitoring can improve reconstruction outcomes.
- To contribute to long-term development, reconstruction must be sustainable.

The last word:

Every reconstruction project is unique.

A vision for the shelter continuum

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How this methodology is translated in the field will vary depending on the scale and nature of the disaster and the corresponding response of the population and the institutes and agencies involved. The allocation of resources will affect how far Habitat can support families on their pathway to permanence.

After a major disaster, emergency response and relief programs receive the overwhelming share of human, material and financial resources. Because of this, there are often funding shortfalls for reconstruction. This reality further highlights the need for shelter interventions to be oriented toward early recovery and to become the foundation on which reconstruction can take place.

Work in progress

Work continues to refine the approach of Pathways to Permanence, and lessons from the field continue to strengthen the case for this early-recovery shelter framework. Critical items for its continued development include the socialization of the methodology within Habitat, our peer organizations and donors; the development of a decision-making matrix to identify which

pathways achieve the greatest impact for disaster-affected families; the further development of shelter solutions and enabling strategies that promote early recovery linked to the Habitat Resource Center model; the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators that best highlight the impact of the methodology; and a determination of how best to visually communicate the complexity of this model to a wide range of stakeholders.

Your support, examples, promising practices, case studies, input and suggestions will help us further evolve this methodology into a guide for Habitat’s future disaster risk reduction and response programs. Please contact Mike Meaney at mmeaney@habitat.org. 🏠

Mike Meaney is the associate director of disaster response field operations at Habitat for Humanity International.

1 Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, 2008a. Guidance on Early Recovery, CWGER in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance Working Group on Transition.

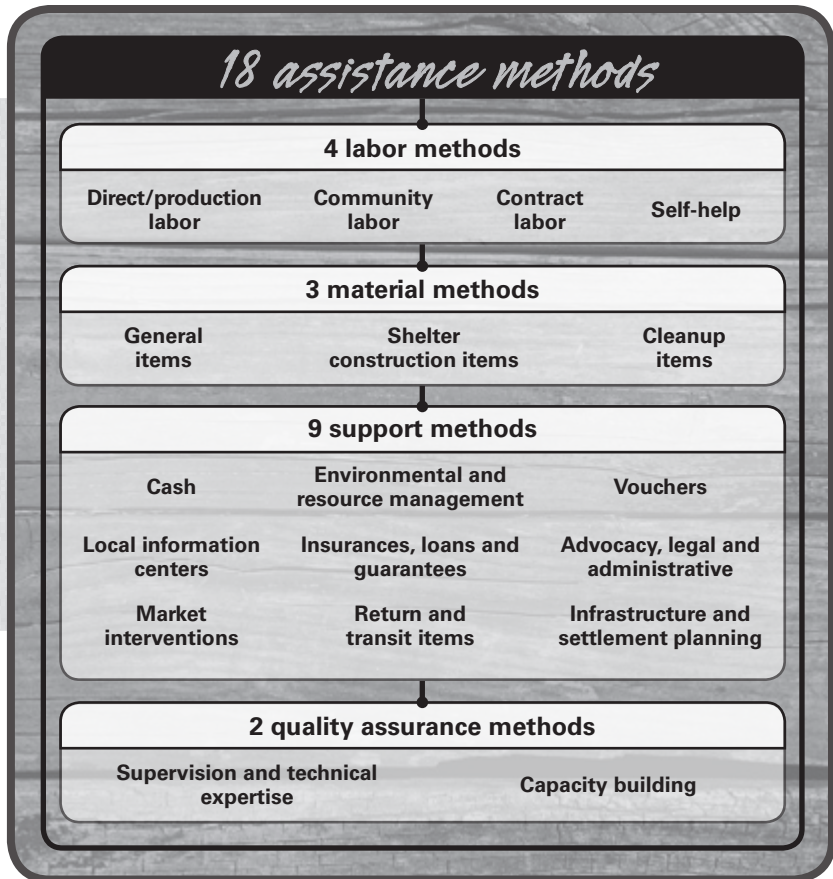
2 “Donor Strategies for Addressing the Transition Gap and Linking Humanitarian and Development Assistance,” June 2011, Global Public Policy Institute.

3 “Safer Homes, Stronger Communities,” The World Bank, 2010.

4 “Shelter After Disaster: Strategies for Transitional Settlement and Reconstruction,” p.114, 2011, Collaborative sector work organized by the Department for International Development (U.K.), UN-OCHA and Shelter Centre.

Assistance methods

In developing a Pathways to Permanence strategy, Habitat has a range of 18 assistance methods⁴ to achieve the goal of durable shelter. As conditions change in the field, this mix of methods would evolve depending on the needs of the target population.





Haiti

Community-based enumeration lessons learned in Simon-Pelé

Over the past 28 years, Habitat for Humanity had concentrated its Haiti efforts in the rural communities. But after the January 2010 earthquake left the capital, Port-au-Prince, nearly destroyed, shifting Habitat's work to the informal settlements of a dense urban environment required a different approach: community-based enumeration.

Community-based enumeration involves mobilizing members of the community to collect data about themselves, then using the data to develop a community action plan. The entire process is participatory, from inception

COMMUNITY-BASED ENUMERATION INVOLVES MOBILIZING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO COLLECT DATA ABOUT THEMSELVES, THEN USING THE DATA TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN.

through design, management and implementation to analysis and use of the data. As a community-based process, it can gain transparency and trust, improve the data gathering, empower the community, and ensure that all segments of vulnerable groups are included. In Haiti, this was the best way to ensure security for the staff and reduce risks to the project.

Simon-Pelé, an informal, densely populated settlement with approximately 30,000 people, was selected as the target community. The project, with financial support from UN-HABITAT, the Canadian International

Development Agency and Habitat for Humanity Canada, was able to mobilize the community to:

- Train 30 engineers to conduct detailed damage assessments.
- Conduct 625 detailed damage assessments, giving guidance to families on house repairs.
- Hire 40 enumerators from the community (65 percent of whom were women).
- Complete more than 6,500 household surveys.
- Map 2,700 houses and land boundaries.
- Complete a community database with linked maps.
- Complete 36 detailed maps of the community, representing topics such as security risks (for men and women), community capacities, critical infrastructure, flooding risks, fire risks, etc.
- Draw up a community action plan prioritized by the community.
- Create four community contracts managed by a committee to address the critical issues identified, including street lighting, a health clinic and water kiosk improvements.

Moving forward, Habitat Haiti has secured further funding for more community engagement and contracting, infrastructure projects, and house repairs and retrofits.

The process of community-based enumeration includes:

- **Building a team:** A local enumeration team is selected through engagement with community representatives, community-based organizations and camp committees. This team includes members

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Community-based enumeration lessons learned in Simon-Pelé, Haiti

Continued from page 13

of the target community, local authorities, academics and support professionals.

- **Rough mapping:** The enumeration team meets with local community leaders and city officials to “rough map” the settlement, identifying toilets, water taps, public services and transport systems. This exercise provides a general sense of issues to be addressed by the enumeration process, and informs the preparation of a questionnaire.
- **Training:** Community members build their skills and capacity to complete the survey form by conducting a trial run in a sample section of the settlement.
- **Launch:** The enumeration exercise is launched at a public ceremony. Ministers, mayors and local leaders attend to add political credibility.
- **Household survey:** A survey of each household is carried out, and staff members begin to assess and compile the data. A verification process enables areas of disagreement to be identified and mediated by community members. Detailed documentation — graphs, charts and narratives — is prepared by the support organization and given to the community, city officials and other stakeholders. The data

are then used by the settlement in future negotiations for resources.

- **Household mapping:** With clipboards, pencils, tape measures and GPS units, enumerators create a qualitative and quantitative map of their settlement. Their work is twofold: First, to survey each household, and then to number and measure every structure. This information gathering underpins the development of a physical and narrative picture of community-level challenges.
- **Community mapping:** Community mapping sessions further develop the initial rough mappings of the neighborhood. The focus remains on the bigger-picture elements of physical mapping, such as the mapping of social services or water and sanitation facilities. Several iterations of community mapping take place, creating a more comprehensive view of the neighborhood, and different versions of a community map will be produced that highlight different key themes within the community. Each map may be laid over another as required to build up a fuller picture of the neighborhood as a whole.
- **Community master planning:** Elements of the household and the cadastral survey are combined with the community mapping in order to provide a more in-depth and comprehensive view of the neighborhood. From these three elements, the community makes informed decisions on what is needed and desired in the community, how these things can be prioritized, and what can be sacrificed. Through further community workshops, this is worked into a physical and spatial master plan developed by the community.
- **Report-back:** The results of the enumeration are tabulated and presented to the community in a “validation” event designed both to test whether the results seem plausible to community members and to cement relationships with politicians and others initiated during the launch event.
- **Action plan:** The main goal of this process is to get to a position in which the community has an action plan that has been developed through their own participation. This allows them to advocate for their rights, to invite investments into their community, and in many cases to use their skills and capacities to address the issues identified.



The Habitat Resource Center in Léogâne, Haiti.

After the experience in Simon-Pelé, it is possible to identify a number of lessons and items to be aware of as other communities use this methodology:

- This is a time-intensive process toward a long-term strategy.
- Many of the “outputs” from this process are not the traditional ones measured by Habitat, but the “outcomes” have the most impact and can be measured over time.
- Institutional donors like this type of programming.
- Security issues can stop the process, but the strong community relationship can keep things moving.
- Being embedded in the community with a Habitat Resource Center is critical.
- There are lots of “community representatives,” and navigating their agendas and influences is difficult.
- Building a relationship with the community based on being a facilitator and not an aid provider takes time.

- Technology is a great asset, but we have a knowledge gap in geographic information systems.
- It is important to establish who owns and has access to the data.
- It is important to establish common methodologies and data-collection tools between partners and other NGOs or community-based organizations running similar projects. 🏠

Recommended for further reading:

“Count Me In” by UN-HABITAT (www.unhabitat.org), and the website of **Shack/Slum Dwellers International**, www.sdinet.org.



A young Haitian woman takes a rest while transporting her nonfood item kits to her place of shelter.

Defining emergency shelter kits, aka nonfood items

Within the humanitarian sector, the correct term for emergency shelter kits is nonfood items, or NFIs. NFIs are distributed during the relief phase of disaster response to provide families with vital assistance until durable solutions are established.

Shelter NFIs, as defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Shelter Cluster, are divided into two categories:

- **General household support items:** Such as cooking sets, blankets, jerricans and buckets, which can usually be distributed without additional instruction, promotion or education.
- **Household shelter construction support items:** Such as tool kits and construction materials, which usually require additional instruction, promotion or education.

In addition to shelter NFIs, there are WASH (water sanitation and hygiene) NFIs, which include household WASH support items such as mosquito nets and house-

Continued on page 16

Emergency shelter kits, also known as nonfood items

Continued from page 15

hold water treatments, which usually require additional instruction, promotion or education.

To date, Habitat's largest use of NFIs was during the response to the January 2010 Haiti earthquake, when 28,000 kits were distributed, including emergency shelter kits, tool kits, and the household cleaning kits given out after the Hurricane Tomas flooding. However, as an as-

TO DATE, HABITAT'S LARGEST USE OF NFIS WAS DURING THE RESPONSE TO THE JANUARY 2010 HAITI EARTHQUAKE, WHEN 28,000 KITS WERE DISTRIBUTED, INCLUDING EMERGENCY SHELTER KITS, TOOL KITS, AND THE HOUSEHOLD CLEANING KITS GIVEN OUT AFTER THE HURRICANE TOMAS FLOODING.

sistance method to families after disaster, such kits have been used many times in the past, becoming a core solution offered by most disaster-prone countries in the Asia/Pacific region, and being used by Romania after extreme weather conditions in February 2012.


Through these experiences, Habitat has identified elements that are critical to the success of an NFI program:

- **Preparedness:** Planning by the local program is vital to get NFIs to families when they are most needed. This should include designing kits to have contents specific to the context of a disaster, identifying vendors and suppliers, planning distribution options and partners, creating donor relationships to speed up the response, and considering stockpiling material in strategic areas of high risk.
- **Usage options:** There are multiple uses for NFIs and emergency shelter kits, depending on their content and the context of the disaster. Program design should take this into consideration, especially to inform donors of the multiple uses. We have seen kits used to build emergency shelters, to repair homes, to restart livelihoods, and to clean homes after a flood.
- **Partnerships:** Partnerships have included logistical support from cluster partners, helping to navigate customs and move significant quantities from port locations to beneficiaries. In Haiti, this included a partnership with the United Nations to use helicopter support to reach otherwise inaccessible mountainous areas. Partners have also been used to identify and select beneficiaries. This

allowed the kits to reach multiple locations and for other NFIs, such as hygiene kits or kitchen kits, to be added to the shelter kits. Lastly, it is important to note the role of community committees and government agencies that have been critical to ensuring that the interventions are coordinated and that the most vulnerable families are reached.

- **Engagement with community and sector:** After a disaster, bringing a tangible shelter solution to the affected area allows Habitat both to engage with the community directly and to strengthen its relationships with other partner organizations and donors. Increasing Habitat's visibility and credibility has been crucial for continued dialogue and contributions for the longer-term rebuilding processes.
- **Volunteer engagement:** Many NFI programs have provided a positive opportunity to use the contributions of volunteers, both during the assembly of the kits and during their distribution.
- **Logistics:** Depending on the quantity of kits and the number of locations, challenges can be identified in the logistics of distributing NFIs, including mass production, shipping, transport, customs, security and field distribution. Completing more work in the preparation stage helps reduce the challenges that stem from logistics after a disaster.

As more Habitat programs incorporate NFIs into their preparedness plans and response interventions, it is important to be mindful of the standards and experience that exist within the humanitarian aid community. Of specific interest for further reading:

- **The Sphere Project:** Particularly the Core Standards and the Shelter and Settlement Chapter Non-Food Items (www.sphereproject.org).
- **"Selecting NFIs for Shelter":** Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Emergency Shelter Cluster (www.sheltercluster.org/References/Documents/Selecting%20NFIs%20for%20Shelter%202009.pdf).
- **IFRC Shelter Kit Guide:** (www.sheltercluster.org/References/Documents/IFRC%20Shelter%20Kit%202009.pdf)
- **The Plastic Sheeting Guidelines:** (www.plasticsheeting.org) 



By Irvin Adonis

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency held its sixth conference, titled Comprehensive Disaster Management: Reflection, Introspection and Moving Forward, in December 2011 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. CDEMA is the coordinating arm of the governments in the region; its agenda focuses on comprehensive disaster management, which calls for attention to all phases of the disaster management cycle — prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response, recovery and rehabilitation — in addition to reducing risk.

Habitat’s presentation addressed the concept of “Pathways to Permanence,” emphasizing Habitat’s strategy for comprehensive disaster management (see the article on Pathways to Permanence on page 10).

The conference brings together regional players involved in disaster management (national emergency management agencies and institutions), the donor community, international agencies (U.N. representatives, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, etc.), and other external interest groups. It often promotes an exchange between the southern islands of the Pacific and the southern countries of the Caribbean, but this year’s high-level session with Margareta Wahlström, special representative of the United Nations secretary general, was a notable addition. Wahlström delivered a feature presentation among a panel of national government ministers.

It has been long felt that assembling regional practitioners would go only so far in advancing the cause of comprehensive disaster management. The voices and actions of the decision-makers of the region must harmonize with those of the practitioners if a real comprehensive mandate is to be achieved, particularly with the NGO sector, which has a somewhat weak presence in the Caribbean.

This conference, which marked CDEMA’s 20th year of existence — it has changed its name twice — now stands poised to push governments in the region and all the relevant stakeholders to do more than acknowledge that disaster risk reduction and response and climate change adaptation require attention. It is pushing for true mainstreaming, in which every facet of development must also use the lens of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Wahlström said it is recognized that high-level discussions and decisions have to be localized to have a durable, sustainable effect. She mentioned three elements critical to ensuring full compliance: political authority, realistic decentralization and a culture of partnership. In addition to governments being willing to make the necessary policies and laws and ensuring that they are enacted, adequate provisions must be accorded to the stakeholders who will either implement or live by the rules. Effective partnering will result in all having a say in the outcomes. One of the main tenets of effective comprehensive disaster management must be evaluated on the basis of the partnerships that are developed for sustainable development.

As a final highlight of the conference, and under an initiative from the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, mayors of cities in Dominica and Haiti signed up their cities for the “Making Cities Resilient: My City Is Getting Ready”¹ project. It will be of particular interest for Habitat to know which cities are signed on, since this may prove key to our disaster risk reduction programs. 🏠

Irvin Adonis is country coordinator, English-speaking Caribbean, for Habitat’s Latin America/Caribbean area office.

¹ <http://www.unisdr.org/english/campaigns/campaign2010-2015/>



Effectively using those who just want to help

By Kristin Wright

Mobilizing and properly managing an influx of volunteers after a disaster can be challenging, often adding to the workload of the affected Habitat organization rather than easing the burden. Community-based responses using volunteers require strategic planning and tactical partnerships before, during and after the disaster and immediate relief stages.

There are ways to mitigate this added challenge, which include engaging volunteers in the preparedness phase of a disaster. During the relief and response phases, it is important to identify direct and indirect volunteer placement within a collaborative network. Using skilled volunteers who have trained especially for disaster preparedness and response can also provide leadership and increase capacity building in any phase of a disaster. This synergy of organizational structure and a volunteer's willingness to serve can enhance disaster recovery efforts and restoration of hope.

Before a disaster strikes

There are many ways to engage volunteers to reduce community vulnerability and build resilience before a disaster strikes.

Appointing volunteers to risk-reduction activities such as identifying available resources, assessing risks and developing a preparedness plan can mitigate the impact of disasters.

Habitat for Humanity volunteers can be used to implement a disaster preparedness planning curriculum for new partner families or to research mitigation

construction techniques to fight natural hazards. Most importantly, volunteers can be liaisons with local, state, regional and national organizations, helping to build a collective of like-minded partners that can work in coordination to better manage an influx of volunteers.

According to the Sphere Handbook, "Self-help and community-led initiatives contribute to psychological and social well-being through restoring dignity and a degree of control to disaster-affected populations." Local volun-



HFHI Disaster Corps volunteers Joyce and Bob Daugherty on a Habitat build site in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

teers, joining hands with their affected neighbors and friends, can play an important part in building that social well-being.

Response and recovery

An organization's capacity to engage volunteers immediately after a disaster is tested as citizens witness

the impact of the disaster and are compelled to help. Emergencies are best managed at the most local level possible, therefore it is important that Habitat be a part of a collaborative network to avoid gaps, share resources and exchange information to reach as many people as possible.

Social media, newsletter systems and updated websites can help coordinate volunteers, manage expectations, and keep donors and advocates in the community updated on progress and changing needs.

Depending on the size and location of a disaster and the capacity of the affected community, the parameters for managing volunteers change. If a Habitat-affiliated organization does not have the capacity or proper engagement opportunity to facilitate and manage volunteer interests, indirect service can be used. This requires knowing what services local and partner organizations are providing so you can direct volunteers and people in need their way. This allows Habitat to build on the existing capacity of partners, volunteer reception centers and the government to place and deploy volunteers.

Ariane Aligay, manager of volunteer programs for Habitat for Humanity International's Asia/Pacific area office, explained, "In my experience with the Japan disaster, the government played a critical role in coordinating these efforts. Volunteers wanting to help were directed to register through the government volunteer coordination unit or

accredited volunteer organizations."

Being a part of this collaborative network is the best approach to making sure all interested volunteers are engaged effectively and affirms Habitat's dedication to disaster recovery and awareness of community needs.

Disasters pose many challenges to organizations dedicated to community-based development. Engaging volunteers in the predisaster phase through preparedness and forming a collaborative partnership network, understanding how to directly and indirectly place volunteers, and obtaining skilled volunteers for capacity building are important ways to effectively use volunteers in a disaster. 🏠

Kristin Wright is a Disaster Corps specialist in HFHI's Disaster Response department, based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Learn more:

"The Sphere Handbook"; The Sphere Project, 2011: sphereproject.org/handbook.

OTHER RESOURCES

Disaster Corps resources can be found on the Habitat extranet website at my.habitat.org/kc/showRegions/disaster-response/disaster-volunteers or on the Habitat public website at habitat.org/disaster/default.aspx.

Skilled volunteerism: Disaster Corps – A case study from the U.S.

The leadership and assistance of skilled volunteers is another great opportunity for internal capacity building.

Created with special funding during Habitat for Humanity International's response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Disaster Corps is a specialized program aimed at developing a consortium of volunteer professionals to support Habitat disaster response and preparedness initiatives nationwide. Disaster Corps volunteers are skilled and experienced leaders trained to work in disaster settings while providing field and technical support to affiliates. Accounting for more than 6,000 hours served in 2011 alone, these volunteers work behind the scenes with affiliate staff

and help maintain typical business operations after a disaster. At the request of an affiliate, volunteers are sent around the country to fulfill a variety of projects, such as volunteer coordination, strategic planning and resource development. These skilled volunteers can deploy on short notice and for lengthy periods, carry a higher level of expertise, and can provide business continuity support not found in a typical volunteer.

Using skilled volunteers such as Disaster Corps can greatly increase an organization's ability to respond to and assist more families vulnerable to disaster. 🏠

Habitat national organizations and affiliates help one another after disasters

By Giovanni Taylor-Peace

Less than 24 hours after the magnitude-7.0 earthquake hit Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010, the calls came pouring into the offices of Habitat for Humanity Dominican Republic, the country on the other side of the island of Hispaniola. Habitat's Latin America and the Caribbean area office asked Cesarina Fabián, the executive director of Habitat Dominican Republic, and her team for help obtaining the status of staff in the Habitat Haiti offices. Shortly thereafter, Habitat Dominican Republic received the first of many visits from Habitat for Humanity International staff in Santo Domingo to begin the assessment and implementation of a large-scale response to the devastation in Haiti.

We can all empathize with our colleagues who have the burden of dealing with the fallout from a disaster. The ministry of Habitat for Humanity empowers us to carry out the mission and the principles in our own context and makes us connected to a global network of similarly minded people. It should be no surprise that national organizations and affiliates have come to each other's aid in dealing with disasters. But the extent of this assistance is worth noting and celebrating, based on recent experiences in several places.

Disasters can easily reduce

or cripple the limited capacity of a national organization, so mobilizing skilled people becomes essential. In Santo Domingo, the staff morphed from their normal roles into drivers to carry Habitat for Humanity International staff, equipment and shelter kits across the border into

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Haiti; volunteers to assemble shelter kits that would be distributed to earthquake survivors; and representatives at cluster meetings trying to understand how they could help the neighboring country.

Similarly, after the February 2010 Chile earthquake, Habitat Argentina was busy pulling together people to provide technical assistance to Habitat Chile as it considered a proposal to help rebuild one municipality. We also saw U.S. affiliate staff who have been dealing with long-term recovery from hurricanes Katrina and Rita connect with affiliates affected by the devastating tornadoes that struck the Southeastern United States earlier this year.

Pulling essential staff off of their normal projects to help elsewhere

can be a big challenge. Ideally, these arrangements between national organizations and affiliates would be discussed before a disaster occurs. But this also requires an investment of time and planning on the giving and receiving end. Recognizing this, Habitat for Humanity International has an initiative under way to identify key resources at the area office and national organization levels for future disasters, to get buy-in from supervisors on mobilizing staff for defined periods to assist in major responses, and to streamline the human resource processes behind this. It is hoped that national organizations and affiliates can build on this by talking to their counterparts in their region and taking steps to build appropriate actions with their disaster preparedness and response plans. As Habitat Dominican Republic CEO Cesarina Fabián stated, "We have to be ready to help our neighboring countries, because you never know — we are all vulnerable." 🏠

Giovanni Taylor-Peace is manager of disaster response field operations for Habitat for Humanity International, based in Atlanta.

Shelter sector trends and Habitat for Humanity disaster response guidelines

By Mario Flores

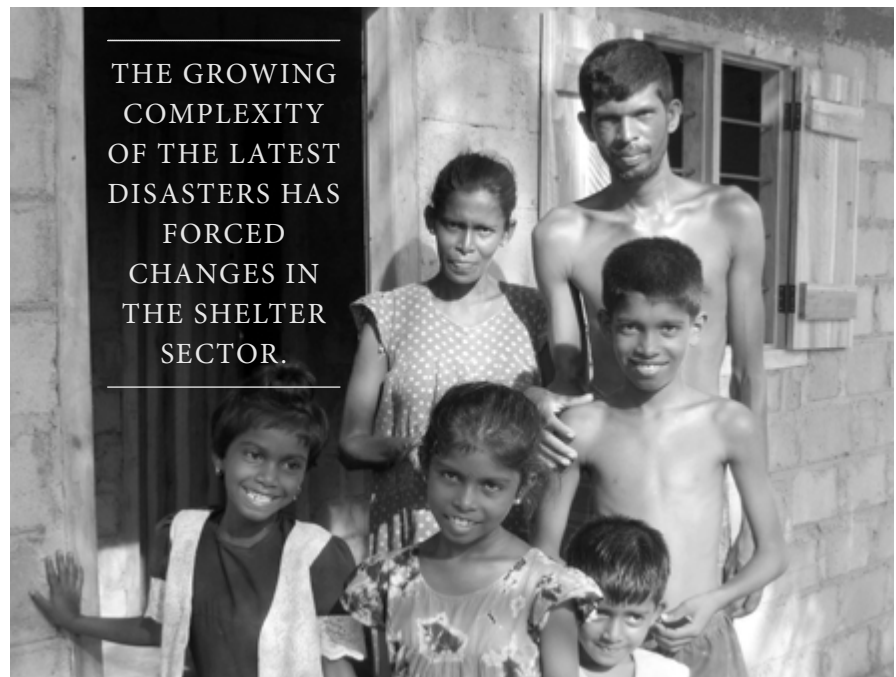
The environment in which disaster response takes place is constantly changing. This is particularly true for the shelter and settlements sector, where Habitat for Humanity plays a significant role in alleviating the suffering of disaster-affected families. The growing complexity of the latest disasters has forced changes in the shelter sector. Although responses to disasters have never been simple, when they take place in the dynamics of urban settings with densely populated areas — or in the context of fragile or failing states — the response can be very challenging. These conditions add to the vulnerability that makes disasters what they are: overwhelming situations that go beyond the capacity of local communities and governments to cope and overcome. Reviews and changes in the way sector coordination takes place and how shelter strategies are devised constitute some of the ongoing changes to address these challenges.

Additional changes respond to the need to review standards and regulations that guide interventions, with a special focus on the humanitarian imperative and the affected population's right to assistance. A good example is the recently concluded revision of the Sphere Handbook, which resulted in the revamped 2011 edition of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

Internally, a number of changes and initiatives are helping to position Habitat as one of the key players in the humanitarian shelter sector, allowing for increased knowledge sharing, networking and enhanced

partnerships as we firm up our post-disaster shelter strategies, better understand our humanitarian approach and incorporate collaborative work in the sector.

Habitat for Humanity International recently joined the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, a multi-agency initiative working to improve the accountability of



THE GROWING
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THE SHELTER
SECTOR.

Habitat partner family in Sri Lanka.

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humanitarian action to people affected by disasters and conflicts. Habitat also has been appointed as a co-chair of the Shelter and Settlements Working Group at Interaction, the largest alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations working in the humanitarian and development fields.

Developing and adapting the capacities and competencies of Habitat-affiliated organizations involved in

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Shelter sector trends and Habitat for Humanity disaster response guidelines

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disaster response are the keys to delivering high-quality programs that align with promising practices and globally recognized and accepted standards. To support Habitat's disaster response work, Habitat for Humanity's disaster response guidelines have been updated to reflect the latest sector trends. The guidelines define the principles, the standards and the developmental and collaborative framework for Habitat's disaster response initiatives so they are aligned with our mission and receive effective coordination and support by the Habitat global network. While keeping our commitment to the humanitarian imperative, the guidelines have been modified to better reflect Habitat's commitment to universally accepted humanitarian principles — humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence — and accountability to donors, partners and primary stakeholders (beneficiaries).

Focusing on an identified gap, the most important modification to the guidelines is the inclusion of standards of behavior to address relationships between Habitat staff involved in humanitarian operations and beneficiaries. The standards address interactions at the field level and contribute provisions to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, instructing Habitat-affiliated organizations to establish a safe mechanism to redress complaints arising from beneficiaries. These standards fully complement the provisions of the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, of which Habitat became a signatory in 2004.

The Habitat for Humanity disaster response guidelines and the standards of behavior may be downloaded from the Knowledge Center in My.Habitat at my.habitat.org/download/g35ac1.

As next steps, we will develop guidance to help Habitat-affiliated organizations develop context-appropriate mechanisms for beneficiaries and other stakeholders to submit complaints in case of violation of the standards of behavior. By including such provisions in the design of disaster response initiatives, Habitat for Humanity will be enhancing accountability to the ones we serve, an indispensable element in the pursuit of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. 🏠

Mario Flores is director of disaster response field operations at Habitat for Humanity International, based in Atlanta.

CORE TRAINING

Workshops provide technical training for disaster response in Asia/Pacific

By James Samuel

Common Operational Recovery Essentials is a pilot project by the Shelter Centre to deliver common, basic technical training to all disaster response stakeholders as a foundation for capacity building in disaster response and recovery.

As a regional host, Habitat for Humanity is supporting the Shelter Centre in this initiative throughout Asia by establishing CORE training workshops. As a basis for these workshops, Habitat has established an advisory group, marketed CORE to a larger structural and organizational base, and garnered support from stakeholders, including the U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ministries of defense, and other international non-governmental organizations.

The Regional Advisory Group for Southeast Asia oversees the development of the workshop program and supports the accreditation of workshop trainers. The support of international and regional organizations through the advisory group ensures that the training program is standardized and accredited and responds to organizational needs.

Current members of the advisory group include Oxfam International, Plan International, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, International Organization for Migration, and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center.

From July to September 2011, two CORE workshops were conducted. One was a training of trainers, and the other was a direct training workshop.

Workshop participants included Habitat for Humanity Asia/Pacific regional staff, regional technical

staff from national and international nongovernmental organizations, local government departments and line ministries, United Nations bodies, representatives of IASC, and 15 government and nongovernmental organizations. More than 15 countries were represented.

The key objectives of the training are to:

- Share knowledge about planning, coordination and technical humanitarian response.
- Support the community of practice between stakeholder groups to improve appropriateness, collaboration, consistency and quality in disaster response.
- Be cross-sector, integrating key messages of IASC clusters.

These trainings were designed to provide an introduction to the humanitarian sector through the principles and legal framework for humanitarian work, followed by the first step of any emergency response: assessments. The sessions are also integrated with the disaster cycle — which consists of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery — to reflect the links between disaster response, disaster risk reduction and development and the key role assessments and continual monitoring play throughout the disaster cycle.

Consistent, standardized and regular training workshops in Asia will be conducted on topics such as emergency shelter; reconstruction; strategic and program planning; implementation; options for displaced and nondisplaced populations; assistance methods; assessments; beneficiary identification; distributions of nonfood items; hazard mapping and mitigation; climatic design; environmental design; settlement planning; gender; disability and vulnerability; camp planning and management; recovery; protection; and water, sanitation and health.

Adding humanitarian skill sets to the Habitat network is an important organizational learning initiative that aims to increase our capacity to respond after a disaster. For more information on CORE and the training resources available, contact James Samuel at jsamuel@habitat.org.

James Samuel is disaster response manager for Habitat for Humanity International's Asia/Pacific area office, based in Bangkok, Thailand.



COURTESY OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

A participant in the CORE “training for trainers” workshop leads an exercise in Monitoring and Evaluation during the July 2011 training session in Pattaya, Thailand.

Focusing on the long term after a disaster

Continued from page 4

spatial or physical parameter; it is often viewed in kind of a sector-by-sector basis as a health or a nutrition or food security issue, or an agriculture issue, but not in spatial terms. So I think that is going to be a major trend: looking at the spatial implications of some of the work that we do and how to respond.

And I think the final one is that the increasing demands of the humanitarian agencies reflected in the three trends I just outlined will really require some investment in training and capacity building within and across those agencies. As an initial step and contribution in this direction, OFDA recently funded a North American shelter and settlement sector network through InterAction, of which Habitat for Humanity is a big part. This network seeks to promote better sector practice or engagement training and identification of better practices. The more that we can do that, I think, the better we will all be when it comes to the next disaster.

Habitat: *By 2030, the global population will stand at 9 billion, and the global urban population will account for up to 60 percent of that figure. How does that change the role of humanitarian shelter?*

Setchell: This is quite a profound question that you pose. In part, my previous responses constitute a partial reply. But I will add at least three more. When I look at the data, I see that roughly 90 percent of total global population growth over the next 20 years or so will be located in the cities of developing countries. And this rapid concentration of people in urban areas will likely result in increased vulnerability to a range of hazard risks as people locate in these hazard-prone areas, which could well result in greater impacts when disasters strike — and increasing strains on both host country and international agencies when they do respond.

So the working environment of humanitarian agencies will most likely get a whole lot more complex,

even as the scales of disasters increase and even as the scales of urban disasters increase. Second, I think climate change and most particularly sea-level rise related to that, as well as other hydrometeorological events, could well adversely impact entire urban regions in the coming decades, suggesting the need to not only plan ahead for future development with macro-level changes in mind but also to consider the impacts of large-scale reconfiguration of urban regions.

These activities suggest a re-emphasis on DRR initiatives in shelter sector activities as well as other sectors. Heretofore we've seen with regard to urban

activities on the development side, in particular not exclusively humanitarian activity, a real focus on, for example, slum upgrading. That's necessary, but it appears not to be sufficient. Thinking over the horizon given that rate and scale of urban growth, then, it will be very, very imperative in the next few years. And I think we're really talking about the next 15 to 20 years in terms of this very large bubble of urban growth.

A third activity, or response programmatically with regard to

the increasingly urban location of global population in coming years, suggests the need to change units of assessment and planning analysis from a near exclusive focus on households, the traditional basis of humanitarian programming, to neighborhoods and larger physical areas so the resources, constraints and opportunities can be more readily identified and analyzed. In programmatic terms, as we say, when the rubber meets the road, how does that manifest? How does programming manifest itself on the ground? Again, recalibrating how we view settlements and urban settlements in particular will be very important.

Habitat: *Can you think of some examples where that's done well?*

Setchell: One example is the general experience in Yogyakarta in central Java after the 2006 earthquake. I think there's been a lot written about that experience. Those were not necessarily cast as neighborhood-

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based or a neighborhood approach to shelter and settlements response, but in almost every case (it involved the) partners that were engaged in the response writ large — not just OFDA partners. (The partners) really focused on specific communities in their response and really attempted to integrate again a multisectoral approach in a very collaborative way to the extent possible to promote retention of earthquake-affected households in their home communities. And I think that worked out really well.

In Pakistan in 2005, an earthquake hit in the northern part of the country — the Hindu Kush Mountains — in early October. Winter was coming, and there was great concern that there would be a huge rush of people out of the mountains into the valleys and lower-elevation communities, so there would be a huge need for tent camps and support to people through the winter. Well, I think some of us early on decided that after being there and visiting some of the affected communities in the higher elevations — 7,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation — that people wanted to stay. They didn't want to go anywhere. There were a whole host of reasons for that, but our strategy and the strategy of the shelter and settlements sector was one of the first applications of the cluster approach. That was, I think, essentially a community- or village-based, largely rural-based, response that really focused on retention of people in their home villages. So that is kind of the rural counterpart to what we are calling the neighborhood approach in places like Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The same idea. We're looking at confined physical areas, identified and multisectoral applications within that confined area, integrating several sectors again, including DRR.

Instead of the projected 80 percent displacement to the lower-elevation communities, we had 80 percent retention in the upland mountain villages. So that strategy worked out very, very well. A lot has been written on it, as you know, and I think many in the humanitarian community think the Pakistan earthquake response is a good case study, and I would subscribe to that. I think in Haiti we're seeing the possible emergence of some well-documented neighborhood-approach applications by numerous humanitarian agencies. Of course, it's still a work in progress, so we're going to monitor this very closely.

Habitat: *Were there more examples of urban areas and how that might change humanitarian aid?*

Setchell: The only thing I would add would be that when we work in many of the urban areas, we now have a fairly low base of development and institutional capacity to respond to everyday development issues, let alone catastrophic disaster events. An increasing number of the newcomers into urban areas are located in the more hazard-prone areas. As an effort and initiative of not just the international humanitarian community but also local NGOs, civil society organizations and host country governments, there should really be a focus on looking at how urban development on a regular basis — an everyday basis — is addressed. And then we can ask how humanitarian agencies in particular can develop programs of preparedness and planning, preparation, DRR to address some of those underlying issues. I think that's going to be another item that will be a provocative discussion point in the next couple of years at least.

Habitat: *There have been a range of ratios discussed around the cost-benefit of disaster risk reduction, all of them stating that an investment before the disaster reduces the amount of funding needed after disaster. Where do you see the critical investment points in DRR around shelter, and how can these be brought to the forefront of donor policies?*

Setchell: Another excellent question. As you know, there's a wide range of published ratios from a \$2 return for every dollar invested in DRR to as high as some of our work at \$45 return for every dollar invested. And these are commonly referred to in discussing the cost-benefit analysis of DRR. But I think in truth there are currently no established targets or established thresholds to be met to ascertain whether a project is good or not good with regard to payback.

I also think it's difficult in pre-event settings to make strong cases for this, for cost-benefit analysis. It's always important to do the analysis well and to make strong presentations. DRR still has to compete with other priorities, so the better case that can be made, all to the good. But rather than attempt to define the correct ratio, I think it might be more useful to focus

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Focusing on the long term after a disaster

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available DRR sector resources and to first identify an area that can be considered in harm's way in various at-risk communities. And then focus DRR investments in those areas, rather than a blanket approach or communitywide approach. Of course, harm's way is a dynamic thing. It's not set in stone. But there are always red zones in communities as opposed to green zones. So community-based and multihazard risk-reduction programs are one means of effectively investing available DRR resources, particularly so if those programs include measures to inform decision-making on development activities.

What we've done in many cases in the past is to develop a series of protocols and measures and maps to identify a given hazard but not parlay that activity or that knowledge base, that information, into a decision-making process with regard to future development activities. And I think to make communities and settlements safer, that's kind of the next step, the next generation of activity.

Habitat: *As you've seen in the past, families start the recovery process as soon as the life-saving actions have been addressed — and sometimes while they are being addressed, especially families with additional needs. What early-recovery shelter activities or strategies do you see as most successful in terms of getting families back into permanent shelters more quickly?*

Setchell: I think that we have found that a number of different interventions, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, are often effective in facilitating this kind of transition to early recovery and getting people back, including repair of damaged permanent housing. We've done that in several places, most recently of course in Haiti. That's certainly not the scale required. I think the international community has quite a ways to go before we address the bulk of the damaged housing.

As you will recall, the habitability assessment that was conducted in Haiti after the earthquake suggested maybe that 30 to 35 percent or so of the houses in the earthquake-affected area were actually repairable. The

number of actual repairs — and the number of repairs actually done well — is still quite low, unfortunately. The repair and recovery of damaged housing is a real fast-track means of getting people back into permanent housing.

Actually hosting support that can lead to permanent housing solutions is something we just did research on in a couple of places, and I think most recently in Haiti, where we have found that we provided hosting support to far more families than we thought and then a very sizable percentage — perhaps 70 percent — of those who received some form of hosting support actually view their current situation as a permanent housing solution.

So we're seeing not only hosting support as an effective means of addressing a kind of near-term humanitarian shelter need, but also it seems to be a means of evolving in many cases into permanent housing solutions. One example I've given is that of having your grandparents show up on your doorstep after their home has been destroyed or damaged or they've been forced to leave through some form of crisis-induced displacement. And having grandparents around often turns out to be a solution for everybody. So the upgrading of the hosting family compound to better support hosted families — displaced families — may well prove to have greater levels of permanence than we thought. I think that's an activity that probably heretofore has not been viewed in relation to permanence.

Also, I think that you know that for some time we've been proponents of something we might call transitional shelter, which is really shelter that's intended to jumpstart the early recovery process. I think that has proven in several places to be successful in starting that longer-term housing development process that's typically very incremental in most countries that we work in — and something we will continue to look at as a possible transition to permanence. Also, the support of the neighborhood-based shelter and settlement initiatives that we talked about earlier is really designed to rapidly increase the supplies of both land and shelter, and to do so within given parameters — having that kind of community-driven process — really does lead to permanent housing solutions. So that's something that begins on the settlement side of the sector, if you will. It's

beginning to emerge as something that really does generate opportunities and establish a process to permanence.

Habitat: *As a final question, what are three major lessons the humanitarian community learned from our response to major disasters over the past two years? And how should the INGO community incorporate those lessons into future disaster response strategies?*

Setchell: There are several lessons, of which three stand out for me. First, recent response efforts in urban areas seem to indicate that those urban areas pose a particular challenge to humanitarian agencies, which have their genesis, institutional memories and expertise rooted largely in rural camp-based activities of the past. So retooling agency protocols and expertise appears needed. It's within agencies and across agencies. As we see in the last two or three years, we've had these major urban disasters — and I would include urban and regional disasters, with regard to, say, the Japan disaster last year, Chile, as well as the urban-focused disaster in Haiti. Those types of disasters — and I think we will probably see more of them — really do pose a particular challenge.

Second, The Sphere Project guidelines were recently revised and republished amidst the response in Haiti. And many of us in various humanitarian agencies were quite consumed with Haiti at the time. I think the humanitarian guidelines, which are the very documents meant to inform our action as humanitarian community actors, were also rooted in these past rural experiences.

Those also need to be revised and, I think, reinterpreted so that they remain relevant in urban areas. I think what we saw in Haiti is a good case in point, where there was an effort on the part of the shelter cluster to essentially downsize the basic physical metric of The Sphere Project indicators, the per capita

living space. That doesn't negate any of the other objectives of The Sphere Project with regard to safety and protection and habitability, the ventilation and all those other parameters that we talk about. But I think we need to be thinking how The Sphere Project fits into urban areas and how our kind of diagnostic, our analytic tools, can be relevant in urban areas. I saw an analytic tool that I'd actually helped write back in the Balkans years ago that was still referenced as the village assessment tool, and that was being used in Haiti. And I think there were categories for how many chickens and pigs and ducks, cows and horses were in your compound, and clearly that was not as relevant in downtown Port-au-Prince as it might have been

in some upland area in Jacmel or Petit-Goâve or some of the other areas. So we need to be thinking how we look at urban areas and how our guidelines are reflective of that.

And finally, disasters are generating large-scale impacts, be they in rural — again, Pakistan is a good example — or in urban — again, Haiti is a good example — areas, and compel humanitarian actors to embrace shelter and settlement responses to meet basic needs that are easily replicable and reflect relatively low per-unit costs so that they are widely

replicable. This can be a challenge when host country governments or other entities press humanitarian agencies for higher cost and more permanent solution shelter needs. And this in turn raises the issue of defining clearly what humanitarian shelter and settlement activities are and are not as we enter what seems like a new era of increasing humanitarian needs, so that limited resources and expertise can be applied most effectively. Your earlier reference to a description of what humanitarian shelter and settlements activities are is really an attempt on our part to define some of the parameters a bit more clearly. 🏠

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By Kristin Wright

Rebuilding JAPAN

A magnitude-9.0 earthquake struck off the coast of Japan on March 11, 2011, resulting in aftershocks and a tsunami that destroyed homes and killed thousands of people. Habitat for Humanity Japan immediately got to work assessing damage, appealing for donations, and partnering with local and international organizations to engage in disaster recovery.

Partnerships with All Hands Volunteers and Peace Boat were an essential part of the response because Habitat Japan's programmatic focus before the disasters was Global Village recruitment. Eric Arndt, acting disaster response director of Habitat Japan, describes their response operations as "providing volunteers for debris and mud clearing, distributing shelter and winterization supplies, and supporting house repairs through funding, volunteer and technical or programmatic support."

Focusing on helping families return to permanent shelter, Habitat Japan also distributed home starter kits and winter kits, which included heated floor mats, portable heaters and *kotatsu* heated table sets, to almost 4,000 families in tsunami-affected areas by February 2012.

The Rebuilding Japan program is now shifting into community revitalization activities, Arndt said, "upgrading temporary community facilities serving

families in temporary shelters, and providing house repairs in affected communities. Additionally, HFH is collaborating with local organizations and universities to explore possible permanent community facility design and construction projects."

Late last year, Habitat Japan received a \$672,000 grant from the Japan Platform to rehabilitate 100 houses and provide consulting to up to 1,000 families in Ofunato, Iwate prefecture, in addition to a more recent \$50,000 grant to repair six more homes in

Ofunato. Habitat Japan is also operating in Miyagi prefecture, where it is focusing on upgrading community space and mobilizing volunteers.

At an earthquake memorial event at the Bloomberg Tokyo office on March 3, Habitat Japan shared its 2012 program vision, which includes repairing up to 125 homes, upgrading at least five community spaces, and mobilizing more than 750 volunteers throughout the next year.

To achieve this goal, Habitat Japan has mobilized an

international technical expert from Habitat for Humanity International's Disaster Corps and is coordinating with other partners worldwide to secure further resources and expertise.

Kristin Wright is a Disaster Corps specialist for Habitat for Humanity International, based in Atlanta.



Habitat for Humanity volunteer Daisuke Kaneko works on the wood framing of a hotel in Rikuzentakata that was heavily damaged in the March 2011 tsunami.

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