

Promoting Safer Building Working Group

April Workshop - Activity Report

1st April 2020
Online



The Promoting Safer Building Working Group met on 1st April 2020 online. The workshop was attended by several NGOs, international organisations, researchers from universities and independent consultants. The aims of the workshop were threefold:

1. Updates on Working Group activities and progress
2. Update on the GCRF Translations self-recovery project
3. Discussion on how a “context analysis” (needs assessment) should be conducted as part of a self-recovery project.

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1. Workshop Agenda

Session	Time
1. Arrival and figuring out Zoom	0945 - 1000
2. Welcome, Introductions & Housekeeping	1000 - 1020
3. PSB Working Group Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. IOM IEC Project b. CRAterre updates c. GCRF Translations - inc Protocol 	1020 - 1100
4. Introductory discussion	1100 - 1130
Break	1130 - 1145
5. Breakout Group Session - What's your plan?	1145 - 1245
Lunch	1245 - 1325
5. Consolidation of Breakout Group Session	1325 - 1400
6. Group Feedback	1400 - 1450
Break	1450 - 1500
7. Final plenary, discussion	1500 - 1545
8. Closing comments and the way forward	1545 - 1615

2. List of Participants

- **Australian Red Cross:** Leeanne Marshall
- **CARE International UK:** Bill Flinn, Step Haiselden, James Morgan, Beth Simons, Emma Weinstein-Sheffield
- **CENDEP:** Charles Parrack, Sue Webb
- **Consultants:** David Delgado, Rob Fielding, Gareth Lewis, Loren Lockwood
- **CRAterre-AE&CC:** Eugénie Crété, Florie Dejeant, Philippe Garnier, Olivier Moles, Enrique Sevillano Gutiérrez.
- **CRS:** Jamie Richardson
- **French Red Cross:** Xavier Genot
- **German Red Cross:** Sonia Molina Metzger
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Pia Jensen, Gregg McDonald, Jake Zarins
- **IFRC:** Cecilia Schmölzer
- **IOM:** Joseph Ashmore, Laura Heykoop, Boshra Khoshnevis
- **Open University:** Lizzie Babister
- **UIC:** Taylor Raeburn

3. Working Group Updates

a. IOM IEC Project

Boshra Koshnevis, IOM (Geneva) provided an update on the IEC Material Compendium project, which is running until December 2020. The project aims to collate, review and store IEC in an online library hosted on the Shelter Cluster website in a format that can easily be searched according to various factors. IEC information from the final database can be easily retrieved and modified according to the context and adapted to the most appropriate form of communication.

KoBo is being used for both tagging and review. Tagging utilises a taxonomy capturing file data (e.g. location, producer), context (e.g. settlement type, type of hazard) and content (e.g. building material, cross cutting themes). The review stage is designed to be conducted by both non-specialists and technical experts alongside being validated at regional or country level. IEC that undergoes review will be evaluated for a range of parameters including technical accuracy, clarity and imagery. Anyone that wishes to support the IEC project should contact Boshra at IOM. ([Link](#) to presentation).

b. CRAterre Updates

Enrique Sevillano updated the working group about ongoing work on the *Shelter Response Profiles* series which now includes 7 profiles, with the recent addition of DRC ([Online](#)) and the Tonga profile currently under validation. Work on the compendiums of local good practices and technical solutions continues, with recent work in eastern DRC highlighted ([Online](#)). The compendiums aim to support shelter practitioners with identifying local solutions, including building practices and DRR techniques, during preliminary field assessments. CRAterre also presented the assessment methodology for compiling the compendiums, noting the assessment tool is continually evolving and is context specific.

An update on the recent mission to Timor-Leste to conduct training and assessments for a compendium in 8 regions was provided. Alongside the new Timor-Leste compendium ([Online](#)), guidelines were developed for the national shelter programme, community training on safer construction practices was conducted and a document on safe schools and infrastructure was developed.

Olivier Moles outlined lessons learned from the current work, with suggestions for the way forward with the protocol and decision-making capacities should be assessed as part of a continuous process to better help define support. Assessments are much more than only technical data. ([Link](#) to presentation).

c. GCRF Translations Project, including Protocol

Charles Parrack, CENDEP, introduced the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Global Research Translations Award (GRTA) project “Self-recovery from Humanitarian Crisis” running from October 2019 to March 2021. The project aims to learn about, and further develop the support of shelter self-recovery ([project website](#)). The three workstreams of the project were presented:

1. Further testing and refining the Informing Choice for Better Choice Protocol ([Online](#)), including developing the Protocol as a preparedness tool.
2. Co-developing best-practice Guidance for shelter projects adopting a self-recovery approach.
3. Defining a wider measure of shelter impacts, including physical and mental health, livelihoods and protection.

Charles outlined the relationships between the main project partners (CENDEP, CARE, CRS, CRAterre and Habitat for Humanity) as well as other contributors (IFRC, ODI and OU). The overall emphasis of the overlapping desk and field activities planned by the project partners is the eventual ‘translation’ of their research into significant positive impacts for people affected by natural disasters and conflict. Due to their operational experience and global networks of country offices, the project partners are well placed to leverage research into impact through changes to practice and advocacy within and beyond the humanitarian shelter sector. CENDEP’s role is to facilitate these wide networks and to ensure quality of research methods, analysis and overall project outputs.

Cecilia Schmöelzer (IFRC) summarised the plans for further testing the Protocol in Malawi during 2020, field research permitting. Steps 0 (forming the TWiG) and 1 (understanding the context) of the Protocol ([Online](#)) are seen to be the most relevant for this meeting’s focus on the ‘assessment’ or ‘entry point’ aspects of shelter projects.

4. Context Analysis - What’s your plan?

a. Introduction & aims

Bill Flinn (CARE UK) and Lizzie Babister (Open University) outlined the background to the third, major part of the meeting: [Preparing a self-recovery strategy - is it a needs assessment, context analysis or something else?](#)

Bill outlined that humanitarian work is seen as being based either in “rights” or in “needs”. Both require examination in the light of an approach that puts people’s agency centre stage. The first step is always to conduct a Needs Assessment, but “needs” suggests a “transaction”. For example, those affected describe a gap and the international community fills this gap, rather than looking at how those affected plan to fill the gap. Should our approach align more closely with: “What are your priorities, what is your plan, and how might it change with time?”. What, as a working group, did we think the self-recovery guidance should look like?

Lizzie outlined the numerous themes that often emerge when considering needs assessments including: participation, agency, localisation and adaptive programming. Supporting self-recovery should shift the power of the process towards the affected communities, therefore becoming more truly participative, in line with the tenets of a self-recovery approach. So how can we best enable this?

Bill noted that the Five Points of Action, which were described in a recent ALNAP meeting on “Relevant for Whom?”, aligned well with the principles of a self-recovery approach: 1. Expand the repertoire; 2. Default to inclusion; 3. Assume agency; 4. Work iteratively; 5. Think systemically.

For the breakout groups, workshop participants were asked to take a critical look at existing practice by considering a number of questions such as: “What would a needs assessment, termed a context analysis in the following text, look like given a clean slate and alignment with global agendas?”. Prompt questions and pre-reading were shared prior to the meeting. Lizzie noted that context analyses mark the entry point for us as a shelter sector in the participation in other people’s recovery.

b. Themes emerging throughout the day

The group split into four smaller breakout groups, before returning to share ideas and discuss the ways forward for developing the needs assessment / context analysis part of the guidance for self-recovery (SR). The complete notes are online: Breakout groups ([link](#)), Group feedback ([link](#)).

Barriers to self-recovery: There can be numerous barriers to SR, relating to institutions or community capacities, HLP, finance access or lack of experience of SR in implementing partners. Given the wide range of factors, context analyses should effectively map stakeholders within a community-identified recovery process. How can we design a context analysis process to understand the pathways that people take and reflects the baseline for communities to enable SR? Understanding the process will indicate what success might look like for affected communities, and how this might change over time.

Barriers to conducting context analyses for a self-recovery approach: As with barriers to SR, these can be numerous, and may relate to funding structures, government and community expectations, perceived time pressure or resources available. Guidance should acknowledge these, but provide support on how to navigate. Capacity of local staff may also restrict what is ideally meant to be an iterative process and a more open question style assessment will require greater resources to manage more complex qualitative data. You can also bias assessments within your area of expertise.

Measuring success: We need to move from measuring outputs to outcomes - a context analysis should reflect this. As part of a context analysis, we should be working with communities to understand what success looks like to them, understand that this will evolve, and use this to measure outcomes. We are a typically technical sector, but need to find ways to measure beyond our usual metrics.

Cash: As one participant noted: "Cash is a game-changer; like it or not". We need to leverage the benefits of cash programming and focus on the relevant technical/social assistance to run alongside cash. Understanding the context of cash and the role it could play in SR is important; linked services may require more support (e.g. markets, labourers), and a need for access to longer term microfinance. How do we simultaneously support people who don't receive cash?

Scale: How best to avoid pockets of excellence, through selective targeting? Scaling context analyses with additional aspects and more flexible approaches to programming may be challenging. How can local context analyses apply to a larger area? What is possible is strongly controlled by the expected scale of a response. What is sufficient for a context analysis - and when do we compromise?

Protracted displacement: Links with cash and access to microfinance. Is there anything we can learn from assessments in ongoing displacement scenarios to feed into context analyses in disaster settings? Can we learn anything from CCCM complaints and feedback mechanisms for context analyses / needs assessments?

Honesty, trust & transparency: Managing expectations (affected communities, implementing partners, donors etc.) is paramount from the context analysis stage with SR. We can begin to understand how we can participate in SR more easily if we are upfront from the start about what resources are available. Appropriate communication mechanisms from our entry point into the process are key.

Advocacy: Shelter is not just about counting damaged houses and building new ones. The SR model is well placed to communicate this. Context analyses can show the impact across a wide range of sectors and the part that shelter plays in recovery timelines.

Donors: There is potentially a need to develop guidance for donors. Donors have varied mandates, some have very restrictive remits. If we are advocating changing the 'power arrows', will donors accept this? How can we influence risk aversion and work with private sector / non-traditional donors, particularly as funding mechanisms change? There will be M&E implications for donors of an iterative model.

Development: As with donors, we need to engage with development actors. Big issues of different actors being involved at different stages/phases of a crisis and response, as SR spans across the different stages. Comes back to a good, iterative context analysis, a need to understand the pathway and how this links with rebuilding institutions (development).

Alignment with global agendas: Self-recovery should by default inform the Nexus dynamic as context analyses should identify the key enabling factors to facilitate SR. We should highlight that SR is about localisation beyond handing funding to local partners and about participation in community processes.

5. The way forward

a. Outputs - thoughts for the guidance

- Main output is best-practice guidance for the support of self-recovery for practitioners:
 - o Still need to decide what format the guidance should take (e.g. checklist, flowchart?).
- Need to clearly outline what we mean by SR - it can seem both positive and negative.
- Key inclusions within the Guidance for Practitioners:
 - o Requirement to consider **linked sectors**, but not be as rigid as MIRA style assessments. A list of issues not to miss would be helpful.
 - o Requirement to **capture aspects beyond technical metrics** (e.g. capacities, priorities).
 - o Guidance should outline that many **different institutional and political factors** can influence SR, these need to be assessed as part of a context analysis.
 - o Need for **adaptive programming** and flexible log frames. Outcomes can be set by the communities at the start of the process.
 - o Different challenges / **barriers to self-recovery** in urban and rural settings.
 - o Section on **cash**.
 - o Include **case studies** with strong context analyses and self-recovery e.g. PASSA usage in Haiti and Mozambique, CRAterre Timor-Leste work. CRS community-based monitoring and evaluation, CRS - Nepal.
 - o Key question we are asking should be central in the guidance: **What's your plan and how are you going to get there?** We need to assess how this might **change with time**.
- Need to consider overtly the links between the Protocol and the Guidance and framing the guidance within the PSB WG objectives.
- Additional possible outputs:
 - o Guidance for donors (including private sector) and development actors.
 - o Training and support for local staff – it is a change in their job roles.

b. Next steps

- Guidance development – smaller group meetings to push forward whilst we are all grounded by the Coronavirus.
 - o **Action: CARE / CENDEP team to work on arranging the future meetings.**
- Find a tool where we can develop the guidance together – on the web. Google Drive?
 - o **Action: CARE / CENDEP team to find a method of working collaboratively.**
- IOM IEC Project - people to input into the review process.
 - o **Action: WG members to contact Boshra about conducting IEC reviews.**